

Indiana territory his father was so much interested as to be willing to sell his house, worth \$10,000, to make investments in prairie land. At the same time he did not approve of John's inspiring his next brother, Daniel, with the western fever. The father was a pious man and advised his son "hope you will not be so much elated with things temporal as not to remember that your spiritual concerns are vastly more important." The father, with an eastern idea, was not willing to live in a western village, but suggested building a "mansion house" two to four miles out, an idea that was carried out by the Jenckes family and several of the early settlers who had better houses out in the country than could be found in the village.

#### THE FIRST PUBLIC LIBRARY.

There is quite a collection of letters dated in the thirties that passed between Joseph Jenckes and his future wife, Miss Belle Greene. Farther than enough to notice the quaint formality of the old model letters one does not like to read them too closely. But it is noted that among the attractions of Terre Haute in 1832 was the county library of 700 to 800 volumes, most of which Mr. Jenckes bought in Providence. That was a pretty good library for a village of 800 or 900 people. A receipt dated April 11th, 1823, acknowledges \$200 for books, received from the county library fund, and a number of lists of books bought by Mr. Jenckes, appear, from 1822 onward. They were such books as a university man might select. He stated that every county in Indiana had a library, and that Vincennes, founded the same year as Philadelphia, had 3,000 books (in 1832.)

Among a lot of books bought at auction in 1823 at Providence were some volumes of magazines, Homer's *Odyssey*, Fielding's plays in six volumes, one Testament, Grote's *Greece*, four volumes, *Las Casas Journal*, etc.

#### EARLY USE OF TOMATOES.

Among the letters preserved in the Jenckes family collection is the following:

Mrs. Dewees' compliments to Mr. Jenckes and will be greatly obliged to him for a few tomatoes for the purpose of making catsup, pickles, etc., provided he has them to spare.

"The Lawn," Sept. 25, 1830.

("The Lawn" was the place on East Poplar, so long occupied by Mrs. Charlotte Preston.)

The interest in the tomato transaction arises from fact that we are

told in the encyclopedias that in 1830 tomatoes were cultivated only as curiosities. Terre Haute then was one of the first places where the old "love apple" was cultivated for the purpose of making catsup, pickles, etc., as Mrs. Dewees said, and not as a curiosity.

Ezra Jones, county commissioner, with his wife and nine children, was originally from Vermont, whence he came overland by sleigh during the winter of 1815 to the Allegheny river in western Pennsylvania, and floated down that stream and the Ohio in a rude boat, to join his brother in Kentucky. Then the two brothers on horseback came to Vincennes and Fort Harrison looking for homes. In the following spring the settlement of the family was made in Vigo county. Of the family that was added to the pioneers at that time, were the sons-in-law of Oliver Jones—James and John Chestnut, and James Wilson—and also a brother-in-law, Elisha Bentley, all of whom settled on Honey Creek prairie. Ezra, with his four sons, settled nearer Terre Haute. The latter was skilled as a mechanic, millwright, architect, and was indeed one of the builders of Vigo county. He built the Markle mill on Otter creek in 1817, and was among the first, if not the first, to build flatboats and ship produce to New Orleans. He built the first frame house on Fort Harrison prairie. Ezra Jones became an associate judge of the circuit court, and was one of the first commissioners of the county. His eldest son, Ezra, was sheriff of the county, 1835-36, and in 1838 moved to Iowa and thence to Santa Fe, New Mexico. The father died while returning from New Orleans, when 48 years old.

General Peter B. Allen, who landed at old Terre Haute with his family, June 4, 1818, was from Ontario county, New York, and a descendant of the family to which Ethan Allen belonged. From the timbers of the boat on which the family had come up the Wabash, one of the sons built a house (located on the Preston farm). Peter B. Allen entered land at 12½ cents an acre, and paid for it in Canadian warrants. (Markle, who came about the same time, paid for his land in the same kind of scrip). His land included the grounds on which the Polytechnic is located, also the poor house farm, and the Jackson or Preston farm. Though a New Englander it is noteworthy that he had ten acres of cotton on his place, sending his product to the Jackson gin at the cross roads near the present east line of the fair grounds. He was a man of literary tastes and had a fine library.

#### THE FIRST BORN.

The death of William Hodges at his home at York, Illinois, January 26, 1908, is especially interesting since it is the death of the first child born in Terre Haute. It is claimed that Mr. Hodges was born in this

city May 23, 1818, and lived here until 1843, since which time he had lived at York. Mr. Hodges attended school in Terre Haute and for several years clerked in a general store owned by Chauncey Rose. He became quite well-to-do at York, being merchant, miller and postmaster. He also held many positions of trust in his county during his residence there. His birth preceded by only a few months that of Captain William Earl, who was born in Terre Haute September 22, 1818, and was for a long time considered the first white child born in the city.

Daniel Durham, born in Virginia in 1801, came to Vigo county with his brother William in 1822. In emigrating westward he had first located in Tennessee and then in Kentucky. He had brought with him forty or fifty slaves, but conversion to Quakerism caused him to free them all. Not only that, but he bought a large tract of land in Kentucky, raised on it a big crop, and then turned it all over to the freed slaves to enable them to live until able to become self-supporting. When he came to Vigo county he was accompanied by a few of his former slaves. One of them, a girl, died and was buried in the family plot on the Lyman Durham farm. One was Si Lewis, who settled in Knox county and became the owner of 1,300 to 1,400 acres of land near Carlisle. The name of another was Armistead Stewart. Daniel Durham settled about a mile and a half south of the village, but he owned land from near Honey creek up to Hulman street and from the river to Seventh street. He owned the Chestnut property and nearly all the land down that way. Daniel was the father of John, Thomas, William, Daniel Robert, and David, and their generations are still represented in the county.

#### PIONEER HOMES.

Scattered over the county and even in the town was many a log cabin whose small square windows might be of glass or oiled paper, and whose wooden latch, raised with a leather thong, let one into a room with puncheon floor, the roof above of clapboards (long oak shingles hewn out with an ax), the chinks in the log walls filled with clay or clay and stones, the big fire place lined with stones, while the chimney outside was built up with lath and clay, and inside its ample mouth swung the iron pot from the crane. At one side was the spinning wheel or loom, sometimes both. For a clothes and hat rack many a house had the antlers of a buck killed by the settler. On pegs in the wall or in a corner was the long rifle, with flint-lock, for percussion caps did not come into general use until after the Mexican war. Other articles there were that would cause the twentieth century citizen to wonder at their use. The mortar and pestle, the grater for making cornmeal, the sieve of deerskin punched full of holes, the iron kettles for rendering lard in winter and for boiling maple

sap in spring, the ash barrel through which percolated the water to come out as lye for making soft soap or to steep the corn for lye hominy—all these homely domestic articles could be seen at any of the homes on Vigo county prairies, of half a century ago. There were, of course, the threshing floors in the barn or in the open, where men beat out the grains with flails or horses walked round and round in a circle treading the seed from the straw.

We burned candles made by mother, and smoky-lard-oil lamps, is one old settler's retrospective view of early days. We wore boots that even a boot-jack would hardly pull off. In the high crowns of our hats we carried letters, papers and handkerchiefs. Many a man owned a pair of saddle-bags to carry behind him and stout leggings coming to his knees to protect him from the brush when he rode on his journeys over the primitive highways. Or in his buggy was his carpetbag, rightly named (for it was made of figured carpet).

Droves of fat hogs were seen waddling through the streets from early winter to late spring, is another observation of this pioneer. The farmer wives brought in rolls of Kentucky jeans and linseys, made on their spinning wheels and looms. Common articles of merchandise at the stores were indigo, madder and copperas, which dyestuffs account for the blue and butternut jeans. But dyes were also made from the hulls of walnuts and butternuts and maple bark, and from these the flannels and linsey-wolseys were given the colors that prevailed throughout the pioneer communities. The cotton chain used in weaving cloth and carpet was bought at the stores, but otherwise these articles were entirely home-made.

The swallow-tailed coat, the tall-crowned "beaver" hat, the black silk stock and the black silk handkerchief (a yard square of silk to be folded into a scarf or cravat and tied in a bow), these articles of stylish wear for men that are now familiar only through portraits or other representations. In Terre Haute Uncle Harry Ross was one of the last to abandon these old manners or customs. Many an old man will remember how he used to soak his boots in melted tallow or linseed oil.

Familiar articles about every home of the early days were the ash barrel and soap kettle. The wood ash was carefully collected and preserved, was leached out in the ash hopper, and then on some bright day in spring the housewife started the fire under the kettle and in the lye boiled the jowls and other waste parts of the hogs that had been slaughtered the previous winter, until the grease and alkali were combined into soap.

The "soap grease" for this manufacture was brought out from the smoke house, which was also an essential feature of every home. The

smoke house, the apple and potato cave, the spring house or well house, remain of vivid memory in the minds of all who lived any part of the old times.

The practice of killing pork and curing it for family use is not uncommon even in this day of central meat packeries, but some years ago it was a periodic duty in every domestic economy. It is related that the grandfather of one of our refined women of this generation, himself one of the prosperous gentlemen of the time, had made ready one New Year's eve to start on a long trip overland by horseback to Virginia. His wife asked him if he would have time to kill a hog before he went. He replied, no, he would not. He had not traveled far on his journey before the good dame had done the bloody deed with her own hands, and in time had reduced the porker to all its component hams, shoulders, jowls, sides and lard.

#### THE FIRST CARRIAGE.

There was a dispute among the old settlers about the arrival of the first carriage in Terre Haute. The concluding word on the subject was said in the following card which appeared in the Terre Haute Express of November 27, 1873, from George B. Richardson, viz.: "It is stated that the first carriage brought to Terre Haute was brought by Lucius H. Scott, and that statement was corrected by saying that William C. Linton brought the first in 1827. I have a distinct recollection of a fine carriage with calash top, and silver-mounted harness, which my father, Joseph Richardson, brought to the county in June, 1816. It was used frequently by the officers of the fort and their ladies in taking rides over the smooth, level prairie, with neither fences nor roads to disturb their course. On one occasion in attempting to cross Honey creek (no road work had been done yet) the carriage was capsized in the creek, the top broken in pieces, and the occupants got a good wetting. The carriage was never repaired, as there were no mechanics here at that time capable of making such repairs. This carriage was made in Connecticut, and bought in western New York by my father, taken over the mountains to the Allegheny river, and brought down that river to the Ohio and up the Wabash to old Fort Harrison on our family emigrant boat. It was started from Olean May 1st and arrived June 27, 1816."

#### COTTON RAISING.

Cotton raising, spinning and weaving were known to the first settlers of Vigo county. This seems a strange intrusion of a distinctly southern crop into a northern state. The only cotton field of which we have knowledge was near the site of the poor farm, which the venerable Henry

Allen well remembers. And in many parts of Indiana, especially about Vincennes, was to be seen that beautiful sight, a field filled with closely set green plants, with a snowy drift over them as the cotton was bursting from the bolls. The task of picking the cotton gave employment to some of the country boys and girls, and the farmers' wives spun it on their spinning wheels and wove it on their looms. Possibly some of it was carded at the old Fuller ox mill in Cherry street east of Sixth street.

E. B. Allen remembered a cotton gin on the Jackson farm two miles north of the fair grounds. He had seen a ten-acre field of cotton growing in this neighborhood. The cotton was spun on small wheels, for home use, and the product was not an uncommon one in this part of Indiana in the days before the steamboat trade sprang up and it became cheaper to import this commodity from its more native southern fields.

Some years ago Mr. J. O. Jones, in a letter to the author of this history, corroborated Captain Allen's recollections about cotton raising in this county, and went on to say: "I well remember seeing cotton grow and ripen on my father's farm; also on the ridge west of us. The stalks were about three feet in height, branching out, and full of good-sized bolls, well ripened and cotton ready to pick before frost time. I think it was raised on the prairie only, and to what extent I cannot say."

#### HEMP, FLAX, ETC.

Following his testimony about cotton growing, Mr. Jones, in the same letter, told about some other products of early agriculture. "My father," he stated, "raised hemp, of which he made cordage for his flat-boats and other purposes; also flax, made into linen for summer use; also sheep, whose wool, made into cloth, clothed us in winter. He brought all sorts of seeds wanted in a new country, among them apple, peach and cherry, and soon had an abundance of fruit. This was an ideal land for the Vermont farmer, where, as he expressed it, he worked six months in the year to make feed to keep his stock the other six months. Here with the feed of prairie hay the stock wintered well in the range; hogs fattened on the mast, and instead of having to spend the best part of a lifetime in clearing up a farm of timber he found half of his land already cleared; all he had to do was to fence, plough and plant it. And such crops as this land produced in those early years—corn, eighty bushels to the acre, wheat forty, and other crops proportionately. Strawberries, blackberries and raspberries abundant in their season; also grapes, plums, cherries, mulberries, pawpaws and persimmons. In the way of nuts we had the black walnut, butternut, hickory and hazel nuts and pecans, the best of all, in vast abundance. Then the prairie was a vast flower garden, blooming with beauty and fragrance."

It is but reiteration of an oft-told story to repeat the ills and troubles that beset the first settlers while making homes here. Newcomers were pretty sure to have malarial fever, chills, and "fever'n ager," etc. until they became acclimated. They were also affected by the limestone water, and eastern people carried bottles from which "40 drops" were put into the water before drinking. Farmers bought mixtures for chills and fever as regularly as they bought groceries. Mosquitoes, though a pest, were probably not recognized then as disease carriers. The water hogshead beside every cabin, with its stagnant water, was a favorable breeding place for these insects, and no doubt was a source of danger to the residents. It is remarkable that mosquitoes as a regularly recurring nuisance disappeared from this vicinity in the '70s about the same time with the epidemics of fevers and chills. Quinine, the sovereign remedy of settlers, was once very expensive, being sold at from \$2.40 to \$2.85 an ounce. The removal of the tariff duty from this drug finally cut down the cost, and it is now one of the cheapest of household medicines.

#### 1820 A SICKLY YEAR.

Sickness prevailed along the Wabash country in 1820 to the extent of an epidemic. It nearly depopulated some of the early settlements. During the summer months the fatal disease showed some of the characteristics of yellow fever. Dr. Hubbard M. Smith, the historian of Vincennes, an old physician, judging from all that he had heard, thought it might be yellow fever. The same conditions which propagated the disease in the vicinity of New Orleans existed along the Wabash, including the species of mosquito *stegomyia fasciata*, which transmits the disease. In 1820 the water was so low in the Wabash that the grass grew luxuriantly far out from the shores, and decaying vegetation was the hotbed of malaria and the breeding place of the mosquito. At least it can be concluded that the sickness which carried off so many of the early settlers in Terre Haute and along the Wabash was a serious malarial disease caused by stagnant water, rank vegetation and numerous mosquitoes of the time.

#### FUNERAL NOTICES.

Very early in the history of Terre Haute it was the custom to distribute funeral notices by carrier through the town on the day of the funeral or the day before. The custom originated when there were only weekly papers, and continued until after 1860. The notice was printed with a black border. Several examples still exist. One dated as late as 1879 comes from a German family and is printed in both German and English.

FUNERAL NOTICE.

The friends and acquaintances of the family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral of MRS. EMELINE F., wife of A. C. King, from the residence at 4 p. m.

Terre Haute, October 22, 1842.

FUNERAL NOTICE.

Yourself and family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral of THOMAS DURHAM from his late residence in Honey Creek township this afternoon at one o'clock.

Terre Haute, November 19, 1855.

FUNERAL INVITATION.

Yourself and family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral of SALMON WRIGHT from his late residence, South Market street, this afternoon at 2 o'clock.

Terre Haute, Ind., Jan. 15, 1857.

TREES.

How the native trees were used to designate boundaries in the early days is illustrated in a record in the circuit court of September, 1819. Moses Hoggatt, J. Butler and Elisha Bentley, having been appointed to divide the 200-acre estate of Henry Winter on the river bank in Honey Creek prairie, ran lines, the corners of which were marked by the following different trees: mulberry, black walnut, sugar maple, elm, hackberry, butternut, white ash, white oak, white walnut, buckeye, red bud. A similar case occurs in the marking of one of Terre Haute's streets, when the street corners were designated by trees.