

## PERRY TOWNSHIP

This township, which in many respects is second to none in the county, is in the northern part of the county, and is bounded upon the north by Brown county, on the east by Fairmount township, on the south by Griggsville, and on the west by Chambersburg township. When it was first settled there was but little prairie land within its borders; almost the entire surface was covered with timber; much of it, however, was of small growth. We now behold highly improved and cultivated farms throughout the township, the result of the well-directed labor of the pioneers, their descendants, and those who came here in later years. Among the early pilgrims who located here prior and up to 1835, we mention James H. Chenoweth, Robert Gregory, William Browning, James Ritchie, Matthew Dale, Gideon Bentley, Joseph King, David Johnson, B. L. Matthews, Nicholas James, David Callis, John Bond, Chas. Dorsey, Joseph Cavender, John Hume, Abel Shelley, John Matthews, Mr. Lovelady and John Gillaspie. The latter six gentlemen came to the county as early as or even before 1829. James Wells came in 1825, and his son, Stephen V. Wells, who was born the same year, was the first white child born in the township. George Bright, a veteran of the Revolutionary war, came in 1827. Only two or three of these pioneers are living in the township at the present time. Some have moved to other scenes of labor, but by far the greatest number are dead. After 1835 settlers came in quite rapidly, and improvements were made throughout the township.

The following very interesting historical article was furnished us by Mr. A. Hinman, and is given in his own language:

"Go back with me 50 years and compare our condition then with what it is at present. Fifty years ago our inhabitants consisted of a few hundred hardy pioneers who settled along the river bluffs and around the edges of groves of timber, and were living in little log cabins and subsisting on corn bread, wild game and honey, with such vegetables as they could raise on their new improvements. We had very few roads then, only such as were naturally made by the settlers passing from one settlement to another. We had no bridges across streams, nor conveyance of any kind except by horseback or in an ox wagon; no railroads or steamboats in those days; what little transportation was done in those days was done with keel- boats. We had no schools nor free-school system, and when our little log school-houses began to spring up it was by the individual effort of the poor settlers. Although these schools were of a very poor character, they were a great benefit to the children of pioneers, who were able to

attend one or two winters. We had no churches, stores, shops or manufacturing establishments; we had no railroads in the State, or telegraph lines; but many of us have lived to see the wonderful changes that have taken place in half a century. From a few hundred settlers we have multiplied to many thousands. The land that was bought by the early settlers for \$1.25 per acre has advanced in price until it is worth from \$40 to \$100 per acre. Public roads have been laid out, graded and bridged. The log school-house has given place to fine frame and brick structures, which are supplied with competent teachers, good books, etc. Instead of horseback and ox-wagon rides we have fine carriages, spring wagons, etc.; and instead of keel-boats we have magnificent steamers plying up and down our noble rivers. In the last few years over 100 miles of railroad have been built within our county, with two bridges spanning the Father of Waters, connecting us with our Western States and Territories. Fifty years ago our State had not a single rod of railroad; now she has 10,000 miles. The first of this grand system of railroads was commenced in 1837 or 1838, at Naples, on the Illinois river, and was built to Jacksonville. A few days ago I was on this road at Naples and found still in use some of the old original ties upon which the road was first built. They are red cedar, and were brought from Tennessee.

"We have seen the time when our grand old county's credit was so poor that she could not borrow \$200 to buy the 160 acres of land upon which to locate our county-seat. I have seen the credit of our State so poor that the interest-bearing bonds could not be sold for 25 cents on the dollar; but now these things are all changed; and I feel thankful to the Giver of all Good that I have been permitted to live out so nearly the time allotted for man's existence here. Among all those improvements for the good of our people none has given me more satisfaction than our free-school system, when every child in the land has an equal chance to gain an education. I pay no tax more cheerfully than my school-tax, although individually I never had the benefit of one cent of the public money for my education, for the reason that I lived a little too early in a new country to get an education at all."

The first school taught in the township was in 1830, in the southeastern corner; John Cavender was the teacher. He was one of the strict "old masters" who have lived their day of usefulness and have given place to the more modern teacher. Our free-school system was not inaugurated until many years after this school was taught. So much per quarter was charged for each pupil. Evidently Mr. Cavender carried on an excellent school, &acirc;&euro;&ldquo; at least in his own estimation, for his charges were high. Each pupil was required to pay \$3.50 per term. Mr. Cavender was remarkably strict as to the deportment of his pupils. He would "blaze" the trees between the boys and girls, keeping them separate; and the one who dared overstep the bounds suffered for it. He made it a rule to "flog" at least one-half the scholars each day.

Perry Springs -- These springs are located in the east part of the township, and are greatly valued for their curative properties.

We quote the following descriptive and historical article concerning these springs, published in 1872:

"Perry Springs have received a national celebrity, being the most noted resort in the West. They are situated most beautifully near a creel among the hills west of the Illinois river, and at the confluence of several deep ravines. The surrounding country is very broken, hills are steep, and covered with a beautiful forest growth. These springs have long been known by the Indians. What is now known as the Magnesia Spring gushes through a rock in great quantities, and was called by them "spring in the rock."

Its medicinal qualities were well known to them, and they brought their sick to it from great distances to be healed. Little cabins were used by invalids until 1856, when Zack Wade, who was attracted there for his health, erected a very good hotel building. To B. A. Watson, Esq., of Springfield, Ill., is due the credit of developing not only this spring but also others in close proximity, erecting another very large hotel, with many extensive improvements; and to his indefatigable energy and determination through numerous unforeseen obstacles, is to be given the praise of furnishing the country the finest natural resort in America. The water is strongly impregnated with magnesia, lime, iron, potassa, soda, salt, etc., etc. There are three springs within a few steps of the hotel building, called respectively magnesia, Iron and Sulphur springs. Each not only tastes differently, but operates differently; and what a wise provision of Providence is here illustrated, &acirc;&euro;&ldquo; three springs but a few rods apart, all strongly medicated and having each different medicinal properties; and of all the diseases that afflict the human family but very few of them but what one of these springs would relieve, if not wholly cure. It is a singular fact that these springs are not affected in their flow of water by dry or wet weather, or their temperature by either hot or cold weather. In the summer the water ranges at 50\*, and in the winter at 48\* Fahr."

The name of the township was derived from the town situated near its center, and the histories of the two are so closely identified that we pass from the history of the township to that of the town.

## PERRY

This beautiful little village is situated on sections 21 and 28 of Perry township. It was laid out by Joseph S. King, Feb. 16, 1836, and first christened "Booneville," in honor of the famous Kentucky hunter. It was settled largely by Kentuckians, and a great many of these people and their descendants still reside here; but a majority of the population are Eastern people: the German predominate above every other foreign class. There is not a negro in the town. When one occasionally "strikes" the place the boys all gather around him, anxious to see this curious colored man, which annoys

this dark-skinned gentleman not a little, and he consequently makes his stay brief.

As above mentioned, the town was first named Booneville, but was subsequently changed to Perry, in honor of Com. Perry, of lake Erie fame. This name was given by David Callis, with whom the honor of naming the town was left. Mr. Callis was the father of Mrs. Reynolds, wife of Thos. Reynolds, now living near Perry.

Joseph S. King, who came to Perry in 1832, was its first merchant. Dr. Sutphin, who came in 1835, was its first physician. The town has enjoyed its season of prosperity as well as adversity, and is now quite a business point. It contains several good stores, three of which are quite large establishments. They carry a general line of merchandise, and a large and well selected assortment. Among the business men and the business houses are the following: Shastid & Cockill, A. S. Whittaker, and J. F. Metz, all general dealers; Dunn & Brengelman and Dana Ayers, druggists; three restaurants; one hotel, kept by H. J. Chenoweth; two barber shops; one livery stable; four blacksmith shops, and one mill. It also contains one school-house, six churches, and one newspaper.

The first school-house in the town was built in 1835. It was a log structure and school was taught here by Hannah French. The present school building was erected at a cost of \$4,000. It contains four rooms. There are in attendance at present an average of 200 pupils. Prominent among the teachers who have taught here are Mr. Freeman, Richard Noyes and Allen C. mason. Mr. Luce is the present teacher.

The Perry Cornet Band was organized in 1876. They have fine instruments, and the band is one of the best in the county. Geo. W. Ham, B. Hume, C. Norris and Frank Bright are all that were members when it was organized. A. Gregory was the first leader, and A. A. Hinman is the present leader.