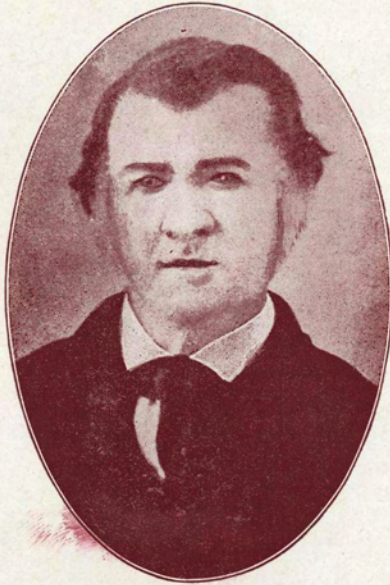


A CENTURY IN RICHLAND COUNTY.

By Sade E. Baughman.



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Standing almost upon the threshold of another century in the history of Mansfield, a retrospective glance at the progress made in Richland County in the hundred years past, reveals achievements of which the first settlers never dreamed. We are blessed with natural resources, with a healthful climate and a fertile soil, which combined with the industry and activity of an enterprising people made our success and prosperity go steadily forward. It is a surprising fact this beautiful city of Mansfield—Richland's County seat—with a population of nearly twenty-five thousand—less than a century ago had neither habitation nor name, and its site was a part of that vast, unexplored territory, whose western boundary was supposed to be lost in the golden twilight of the setting sun, and whose wild domain seemed destined to remain forever hushed in the silence of its solitude, save when awakened here and there by the dismal howl of the wolf, or the fearful whoop of the savage.

Into the depth of the vast forest came the Richland County pioneers and their advent marked a period in American history of absorbing interest alike to old and young. It is proper that it should be so. These hardy pioneers coupled virtue with courage, humanity and love of country with the stern duties and hard battles of frontier life, and the example of their lives not only interests but strengthens our faith and admiration in human courage and unselfish purpose.

A large portion of the first settlers of Richland County came from Pennsylvania, but no matter where they came from, they were a superior class of men who first traversed our hills and valleys, by dimly marked and winding paths. The first settlements were largely made along the branches of the Mohican. None can now correctly imagine nor portray the features of this wild country at the time the first cabins were built. Then there were dangers to be encountered and numerous difficulties to overcome. The gigantic forest had to be cleared, and the work was so enormous that only the strongest, the bravest and the most courageous dared to attempt to accomplish it. But the pioneers transformed the dense woodlands into fertile fields, and made the waste places blossom as the rose.

As the roads were mere bridle paths, the people walked or rode on horseback. The cabins were built of logs, and the first ones had greased paper windows. The chimneys were on the outside and were made of sticks and mortar. The floors were of puncheon. The fireplaces were large enough for "back-logs" and "fore-sticks." Very few families had clocks. They guessed the hour of noon, or ascertained it by the creeping of the sunlight up to the "noon mark" drawn upon the floor. The furniture of a