

THE MESSENGER

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RICHLAND COUNTY REMINISCENCES.

By A. J. BAUGHMAN, in Mansfield News.

The second settlement within the present limits of Richland county was made at Bellville by James McCluer in 1809 and was known as the McCluer settlement.

James McCluer came to that locality in the fall of 1808, entered land and built a cabin, but spent the following winter in Pickaway county. The next spring he brought his family and made his abode in the cabin he had built the fall previous, making the date of the settlement 1809.

The first road in the county was known as the Wooster road, running from Wooster via Greentown to Mansfield and the second road was from Mt Vernon via the McCluer settlement to Mansfield and north to Huron on the lake and was called the state road.

James McCluer was so favorably impressed with the Clearfork country and gave such glowing description of the same that several relatives and others joined him the same season. Samuel and Thomas McCluer and Jonathan Oldfield were among the newcomers. The first marriage in the township was Jonathan Oldfield to Betsey McCluer, in 1813, and the "knot was tied" by 'Squire Coffinberry. The first child born was Mary McCluer. Henry C. McCluer, of South Main street, Mansfield, is a descendant of Thomas McCluer. Abner Oldfield is a son of Jonathan Oldfield and lives two miles south of Bellville on the old state road and owns one of the most valuable farms in the Honey Creek valley, formerly known as the Major Morrow place.

Upon the organization of the county in 1813 James McCluer was appointed one of the associate judges of the court of common pleas and sold his land to Robert Bell, who, in 1815, laid out a town plat of 48 lots and the town was named Bellville.

Judge McCluer removed to Mansfield and lived in a cabin on the north-west corner of Main and Fourth streets the present site of the Savings bank. The last years of Judge McCluer

minister preached in Bellville in 1815 and that denomination was the first to occupy the religious field. The Baptists, Disciples, Universalists, Presbyterians and Lutherans came later.

Joseph Carter was the first merchant and had his store in a room at Ogle's tavern. Carter was succeeded by Joseph Hildreth, who was afterwards well known as a lawyer and physician. Mr. Hildreth has two children living in Mansfield—Thomas Hildreth and Mrs. Hiltabidler. Mrs. Hildreth is still living, aged about 90 years. Her maiden name was Piatt.

John Zent located in Jefferson township in 1810, and of his children, David Zent and Mrs. Wright Gaddes are residents of Bellville.

John Leedy was one of the 1810 settlers and his descendants live mostly in the southern part of the township. Mr. Leedy's daughter Catherine married Samuel Garber, and of their children, Jehu is perhaps the most widely known, as he served two terms as county commissioner. Of this numerous family, I should like to give each a separate mention, did space admit, for the names Garber and Leedy are synonymous with honesty and integrity.

Lewis K. Leedy came in 1811 and was the pioneer "singing master" of his time, and it seems but a few short years since he attended our pioneer meetings and joined his marvelous gift of voice with those of Joseph Fleming, William Pollock, I. N. Thompson, John Schrack, Samuel Bell, Mrs. Yingling, Mrs. Kooken et al. in singing the old-time melodies of the "Missouri Harmony."

Mention should here be made of Gov. Leedy and many, many others, but at present I must pass on to other matters.

Jefferson township, is six miles square, being one of the original townships and contains 36 sections of land, five being situated on section one, a mile south of the north line of

threw the stick away.

When Tocomoco returned to America and reported to Powhatan, he told the Indian Chieftain to "Count the stars in the sky, the leaves on the trees and the sands on the sea shore, for such is the number of the people of England."

While Powhatan may, from the report of Tocomoco, have seen the "handwriting on the wall," it is often difficult to apply theories to ourselves and to accept the inevitable.

While a few Indians have been Christianized, they were but isolated cases—the exceptions and not the rule. When Pocahontas became a convert to the Christian faith and knelt at the fount and received holy baptism from the hands of Bishop Whittaker, much good in the missionary line was expected to follow, but the majority of the Indians are today, as they were then, heathens and savages, notwithstanding the efforts and money expended to convert them.

Although the Indians could not be civilized, many of them possessed ability. Take the great Pontiac, who was the chief of the mighty confederacy of the Ottawas, the Ojibwas and the Pottawattamies. The genius of this mighty chieftain had spread his fame and influence not only throughout what is now Michigan, which was geographically the center of his power but over the greater part of the continent. His intellect was broad, powerful and far-seeing. In him were combined the qualities of a leader, a statesman and a warrior.

A writer has said that the world is full of wasted genius; that great minds can seize opportunities, but cannot create them. That Cromwell without the English revolution, Washington without the revolutionary war and Grant without the rebellion would never have risen to fame.

Pontiac was not only great, but had great opportunities. The account of his colossal conspiracy reads like a tale of fiction. His eloquence was irresistible and he could both plan and execute. He was a Napoleon in war and a Chase in finance. As a war measure, he issued notes drawn upon birch bark and signed with the figure of an otter, the totem to which he belonged. These notes were used as a circulating medium, as were our greenbacks during the war of the rebellion and were

were passed at Leesville, where they died ripe in years and in honors.

The McCluer cabin at Bellville stood on the lot now owned by David Zent, south of the railroad and east of Main street and on the part of the lot he now cultivates as a garden. The blockhouse, built in September, 1812, stood near the present site of S. N. Ford's grain elevator.

The first death in the township was that of Stephen Dodge, in 1811. He was buried on Snake Hill, now called Beulah cemetery.

A postoffice was established in 1824, with Isaac Hoy as postmaster.

Private schools were taught by William Spears in 1815-'16-'17. The first public school in the township was taught by Timothy Evarts in 1818 and the school house stood on the old state road, a short distance north of Honey Creek.

At the school house that afterward stood near that old site, the writer first went to school. Mrs. Lucy Oldfield was the teacher and among the pupils were Calvin Robinson, who now owns and lives on the Palmer place, a half-mile south of the old red tavern on the new state road, south of Bellville.

Henry N. Hamilton was also among the number. The war came 15 years later, in which Mr. Hamilton served his country as a lieutenant in Col. William L. Tibbal's 59th New York regiment and now resides in Bellville. Among the girl pupils was Olive Howard, now the wife of Simon B. Young, and they are blessed with full garners, and live at the old homestead which has been for many years in the possession of the Young family, situated two miles south of Bellville, at the fountain spring, on the new state road.

And there were Solon and Amelia Morrow, of Morrow's Inn and Andrew Eli and Levi Eyarts, sons of the late Squire Reuben Evarts.

Added to these at the winter term (1847-8) I recall the Howard and the Morrow boys, Abner Oldfield, Dolph Hamilton, David and Samuel Beal, the Wentlingers, the Carpenters, Miss Cross and others.

Mrs. Oldfield, whose maiden name was Lucy Palmer, was an exemplary Christian lady, and one of the best of teachers. That first day at school seemed a long one, for I was homesick, and wished for the closing hour to come, that I might go to my mother and a similar wish is the theme of my longing today.

The Rev. James Smith, a Methodist

township.

The Clear Fork of the Mohican is the principal stream of the water and its north and south branches unite a mile west of Bellville and after passing the town, courses in a southeastern direction, leaving the township about midway at its eastern border. There is scenery along the banks of the Clear Fork at several places that is beautiful in picturesqueness and the pastoral charms of the landscape are entrancing, while the valley through which this clear stream flows is unexcelled in its fertility.

Honey Creek, a stream that in the years ago, was wont to turn the wheels of both saw and grist mills, runs from west to east through a broad valley, a mile and a half south of Bellville and empties into the Clear Fork at the Fox farm—now owned by Dr. Stofer—a short distance above the former site of Greenwood Mills. One of the most appalling and cowardly assassinations—the murder of John Fox—that ever disgraced Ohio, took place near the western confines of this Fox farm.

There was a block house at Bellville for the protection of the settlers, but no Indian outbreaks ever occurred there. While the savages frequently hunted game in that locality, they had no abiding place there and therefore the settlers were not troubled much with them.

Since engaged in writing these sketches, I have been asked why the pioneers did not Christianize and civilize the savages. My purpose has been to state facts and not to elaborate theories. But, ere dismissing the red man for the time, will again state that there is an unwritten law that has come down to us from a period "beyond which the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," and that is the law that the weakest goes to the wall, and like the edicts of the Medes and Persians, it is immutable, unchangeable. It is a science of historical physics that the lesser force yields to the greater.

The Indians themselves acknowledged this rule of fate. When Pocahontas went to England as the bride of Rolfe her father, the great Powhatan, sent her brother-in-law, Tocomoco, with the party to count the people in England to enable him to estimate the relative strength of the white and the red men. Upon arriving in England, Tocomoco, got a long stick and began to cut a notch for every man he met, but soon wearied of the task and

as faithfully redeemed.

With the advance of civilization from the east, there was a recession of barbarism to the west until the red man was relegated towards the setting sun, but soon there will be no west and the Indian will disappear with his habitat.