

One of the many things that our late President, Harold Kerr, did was the production of the regular newsletters in which he included tidbits gleaned from early newspapers about Howard County.

We want to continue the newsletters. This is Issue Number One in the post-Harold era.

I will not presume to exactly follow his pattern, but will attempt to present some interesting Howard County history in a different format.

This issue will feature material written by R. S. Walton in 1913. Mr. Walton was the long time publisher and editor of the Armstrong Herald, published in Armstrong, MO. The Herald and Mr Walton enjoyed a very positive national reputation. He was a personal friend of many famous people including William Jennings Bryan (famous for the "Cross of Gold" speech in 1896 during the debate on changing from the Gold Standard for the country's money system. He is also remembered for the "Scopes Money Trial" in 1925. At Mr. Walton's invitation, Bryan came to Armstrong and spoke.

The Society recently received from Carolyn Gordon of Pullman, Washington the issues of the Herald from 1958 as well as copies of some high school yearbooks.

In 1913 MR. Walton wrote about the history of Howard County It was published in Williams' "History of Northeast Missouri- Volume 1" . This is a partial transcription. More may follow in future newsletters.

The history of Howard County, from the date of its organization on January 16, 1816, to 1860, is in a great measure a history of the state. The history of the county antedates the history of the state nearly ten years.

These ten primitive years of the county were filled with stirring scenes and thrilling events of the pioneers of the Boon's Lick country. It was these hardy settlers, who by their heroic deeds blazed a way in the wilderness and thus opened up a new and wonderful country to those who were to follow after them. All honor to those men and women who first cast their lots for weal or woe in this New Eldorado. They were a noble and grand body of men and women, they were imbued with a laudable ambition to succeed in establishing for this ancestry happy homes in this far off country. How well these early pioneers laid the ground work for their descendants to reap in the years to follow is to be seen in the splendid homes, here and there on hilltop and in valley. Other fruits of their labors can be seen in the school houses and stately churches. These pioneers were not without their reward, for through the many privations they suffered those to come after them have obtained happy homes.

Agriculture is the greatest among all the arts of man, as it is the first in supplying his necessities. It creates and maintains manufactures, gives employment to navigation and furnishes material to commerce. It animates every species of industry and opens to nations the safest channels of wealth. It is the strongest bond of well-regulated society, the surest basis of internal peace, and the natural associate of correct morals. Among all occupations of life there is none more honorable, none more independent, and none more conducive to the health and happiness of the individual or community. As an agricultural county Howard is the farmer's paradise, where he may always reap an abundant harvest from the soil. The soil has an open, flexible structure which quickly absorbs the most excessive rains and retains moisture with great tenacity. This being the case, it is not easily affected by a drought. The prairie portion of the county is covered with a sweet, luxuriant grass equally as good for grazing and hay as the famous Kentucky bluegrass. The rich sandy loam soil of Howard County produces from year to year enormous crops of corn, wheat and oats, with a boundless pasturage.

The water supply is not only inexhaustible but everywhere convenient. There are few cereals, only a very few, that the soil of Howard County will not produce at a profit in the mart of commerce.

The following products of the soil yield in abundance, broom corn, sorghum, beans, peas, hops, sweet potatoes and in fact, all kinds of garden vegetables. Fruits of the orchard of every variety, including the apple, pear, peach, cherries, apricots, strawberry, raspberry, and blackberry are cultivated with great success. With the building of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad through the county from south to north and the Chicago and Alton Railroad from east to west, these great arteries of commercial industry and progress presaged the dawn of a brighter and grander era in the history of the county. Her fertile prairies, rich high lands and prolific valleys have been made tenfold more productive of material profit, these additional facilities afforded by the railroad have opened wide the marts of trade and commerce, transportation to and from all parts of the country have been secured and a fresh impetus given to the growth of our towns and cities and furnishing new hopes and aspirations to all our people.

Early Settlers

The early pioneer settlers of Howard County were deeply imbued with religious convictions, for we find as early as 1816 church services were held in the county by the Baptists, being followed in 1820 by the Presbyterian church, and in 1826 by the Disciples of Christ, and in the year 1836 by the establishment of a small colony of communicants of the Protestant Episcopal church located in Fayette, the county seat.

History we are told "is but a record of the life and career of people and nations." The historian in rescuing from oblivion the life of a nation or a particular people should nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice. Myths, however beautiful, are but fanciful; traditions, however pleasing, are uncertain; and legends, though the very essence of poesy and song, are unauthentic. The novelist will take the most fragile thread of romance and from it weave a fabric of surpassing beauty. But the historian should put his feet upon the solid rock of truth and turning a deaf ear to the allurements of fancy, he should sift with careful scrutiny the evidence brought before him from which he is to give the record of what has been. Standing down the stream of time far removed from its source, he must retrace with patience and "are its meanderings, guided by the relics of the past which lie upon its shores, growing fainter and still more faint and uncertain as he nears its fountain, of times concealed in the "debris of ages and the mists of impenetrable darkness. Written records grow less and less explicit and finally fail altogether as he approaches the beginnings of the community, whose lives he is seeking to rescue from the gloom of a rapidly receding past. Memory, wonderful as are its powers, is yet frequently at fault and only by a comparison of its many aggregations can he be satisfied that he is pursuing the truth in his researches amid the early paths of his subject. It cannot then be unimportant or uninteresting to trace the progress of Howard county from its crude beginnings to her present proud position among her sister counties. To this end, therefore, we have endeavored to gather the scattered and loose threads of the past into a compact web of the present, trusting that the harmony and perfections of the work may speak with no uncertain sound to the future. Records have been traced as far as they have yielded information sought for, the memories of the pioneers have been laid under tribute and into requisition from all of which we could obtain reliable material to construct a truthful and faithful history of Howard County.

The first white men to visit the territory of Howard county were a colony under the direction of Pierre Laclede Liguist, who held a charter from the French government, granting him the right and privilege to trade with the Indians in all the territory west of St. Louis and as far west as the Rocky mountains. Levens and Drake state in their history of Cooper County that Ira P. Nash with his companions visited Howard County territory in the year 1804 and established a trading post two miles northwest of Old Franklin. Col.

Benjamin Cooper, of Kentucky, moved to Howard County in the year 1808 and he states that when he arrived in what is now known as Boon's Lick in Howard County there were no settlements in this part of the state.

It is claimed on good authority that the old hunter, Daniel Boone, visited the Boon's Lick country about the year 1795 and manufactured salt from the many salt springs found in that region of Howard's territory.

The first authentic record of a permanent settlement to be made in Howard County was in the year 1800, when Joseph Marie sold and deeded a tract of land to Asa Morgan. This land was situated one mile southwest of Fort Kincaid, in what is now Franklin Township. Charles Dehault Delassus, lieutenant-governor of Upper Louisiana, granted a large tract of land situated in Franklin Township on the 26th day of January, 1804.

The next American in Howard County was Ira P. Nash, a deputy United States surveyor, in company with Stephen Hancock and Stephen Jackson, in the year 1804. These pioneers located on land opposite the mouth of the LaMine River in Howard County. In July, 1804, Ira P. Nash and his brother Wm. Nash, also James H. Whitesides, William Clark and Daniel Hubbard, again came into what is now Howard County and surveyed a tract of land on the site of Old Franklin. On this second trip of Nash he claimed that he had left a compass in a certain hollow tree several miles from the river and started out with two companions to find the compass which he did the following day, bringing the compass to camp with him which proved beyond doubt that he had visited the country before as he had stated. Lewis and Clark, on their exploring expedition to the Rocky Mountains arrived at the mouth of the Bonne Femme in Howard County on the 7th day of June, 1804, and camped for the night. When Lewis and Clark returned from this journey in 1806, after having accomplished all the objects for which they were sent out, they passed down the Missouri river and camped on the 18th of September, in Howard County, opposite the mouth of the LaMine River.