

This is the November 2021 edition of the Howard County (Missouri) Genealogical Society Newsletter. It is additional material from the writings of R.S. Walton, the publisher and editor of the Armstrong Herald. Mr Walton wrote this in 1913 for a book: "History of Northeast Missouri", edited by Walter Williams. Expect the next edition in February 2022.

The Boon's Lick Country

The next evidence we have of any white persons being in the Boon's Lick country is in 1807, when Nathan and Daniel M. Boone, sons of Daniel Boone, the great pioneer, who lived with their father in what is now St. Charles County, about twenty-five miles west of the city of St. Charles, on the Femme Osage creek, came up the Missouri River and manufactured salt at Boon's Lick in Howard County. After the Boons had manufactured what salt they wanted, they shipped it down the river to St. Louis, where it was sold. It is thought by many that this was the first instance of salt being manufactured in what was at that time a part of the territory of Louisiana, now the state of Missouri.

Previous to the year 1808, every white American who came to the Boon's Lick country came with the intention of only remaining a short time. Three parties had entered it while on exploring and surveying expeditions, two parties had been to the salt licks to make salt.

In the spring of 1808 Col. Benjamin Cooper, of Kentucky, arrived in the Boon's Lick country with his family, consisting of his wife and five sons, and located two miles southwest of Boon's Lick, built a cabin, cleared a piece of ground and made arrangements for a permanent home. But he was not permitted to remain, for Meriwether Lewis, governor of the territory, issued an order directing him to return to below the mouth of the Gasconade River, as the governor thought he had advanced too far into the Indian territory and too far from any white protection in case Indians should go on the warpath. So he was forced to return to Loutre island, about four miles south of the Gasconade River, where he remained until the year 1810, when he again returned with his family to the Boon's Lick country.

The rich territory, however, was not destined to be left forever to the reign of the wild beasts and savage Indians. Aside from the fact that the character of the men of the early days caused them continually to revolt against living in thickly settled communities,

the Boon's Lick country presented advantages which those seeking a home where they could find the richest lands and the most healthful climate could not and did not fail to perceive. Its fertile soil promised with little labor the most abundant harvests. Its forests were filled with every variety of game and its streams with all kinds of fish.



Arnold's Tavern, Howard County

Two years after the settlement by Benjamin Cooper and his removal to Loutre Island the first permanent settlement was made in the Boon's Lick country and this party was the forerunner for many others who soon followed. Most of the emigrants who came to the Boon's Lick country were former citizens of Madison county, Kentucky, and we will give the names of a few of the most prominent pioneers whose names are indissolubly linked with the early history of Howard county: the Coopers, Hancocks, Berrys, Browns, Thorps, Jones, Woods, Bynums and many others who left good homes in Kentucky and Virginia and came to the far west.

During the years 1811 and 1812 there was a great influx of newcomers from the east. On their arrival the first work was to erect a log cabin and to clear a small patch of ground and plant just enough corn and garden vegetables to feed their families through the winter. They knew that the country was full of Indians and that the Indians might at any time begin depredations on the whites. Therefore, they located in colonies where in case of danger they could render each other assistance in time of need. The country was full of wild game of all kinds which furnished meat in abundance to the settlers. There were large droves of wild turkey, elk, deer, and bear and as soon as a cabin was complete for the family occupancy the men folks turned their attention to hunting and fishing. The range was good and the stock kept fat on the luxuriant grasses, while nuts and berries of all kinds furnished ample food for every species of animal.

It was during the two years of 1811 and 1812 that quite a number of emigrants came into the Boon's Lick country. Many of these new arrivals included families of wealth and culture, who left splendid homes and lifelong friends in the east to take up their abode in a new country infested with savages and wild beasts. They had hardly got comfortably located in their new homes before rumors and mutterings were heard that Great Britain had incited Indians to take the warpath and with British assistance to attempt to drive the whites from the territory. They, therefore, lost no time in building log forts and stockades and making other preparations to defend themselves from the attacks of the Indians and the British.

Three large log forts were built, Fort Cooper was located two miles southwest of Boon's Lick. Fort Kincaid was built about one mile north of the present Boonville railroad bridge. Fort Hempstead was built one mile and a half north of Fort Kincaid. Each fort was a series of log houses built together around an enclosure. In each house lived a family. The stock was corralled and the property of the settlers secured at night in the enclosure. Other small forts were built, but those named were the most important.

As soon as the forts were completed, all the settlers moved into them. They organized themselves into a military company with Marshall Cooper as captain and William Mahon as first lieutenant. In these forts were 112 men able to bear arms. Life in the forts was not one of idleness and ease. It was one of constant vigilance and activity for the space of over two years until the war clouds had blown over.

Schools were maintained in the forts for the children and religious exercises were held every Sunday. The first horse mills in the county were erected at Fort Hempstead and Fort Kincaid. The first dry goods store in the county was kept by Robert Morris within the enclosure of Fort Hempstead.

In accordance with an act of the territorial legislature approved January 13, 1816, the county of Howard was created, being the ninth organized county in the territory. Its limits were taken from the territory of St. Louis and St. Charles counties.

Organization of the County

Howard County at its organization was an empire in area, representing 22,000 square miles. It was one-third as large as the state of Missouri and was larger than Vermont, Massachusetts, Delaware and Rhode Island. It is from the fact that so many counties have been created from original territory that Howard County is called the "Mother of Counties" and the appellation is a just one. By an act of the legislature February 16, 1825, Howard County was reduced to its present limits of 463 square miles in area, instead of 22,000 square miles.

In the fall of 1816 the town of *Old Franklin* was laid off opposite the present site of Boonville. It was located on a tract of land containing 100 acres. Benjamin Estill, David Jones, David Kincaid, William Head and Stephen Cooper were appointed commissioners to locate a county seat which had been first located at Cole's Fort. On June 16, 1817, the commissioners made their report to the court and recommended the site of Old Franklin as the most suitable place for the county seat. So on the 2nd day of November, 1817, the court was opened for official business by the sheriff. The land office was also located at Old Franklin in 1818 and Thomas A. Smith appointed receiver and Charles Carroll register.

The first newspaper published west of St. Louis was on April 23, 1819, by Nathaniel Patten and Benjamin Holliday. The name of the paper was the Missouri Intelligencer.

The first steamboat that ever touched the soil of Howard County was on May 28, 1819. It cast anchor at Old Franklin, then a town of 350 inhabitants, and the arrival of the boat was the occasion of great rejoicing by the citizens of Old Franklin.

The event was celebrated by the firing of cannon and by big toasts and speeches by her most prominent citizens.

The first post office established in the county was in the year 1821. Until that time the news was carried by the scout and traveler passing from one settlement to another.

The first county court was held on February 26, 1821, at Old Franklin. The judges were Henry V. Bingham, David R. Drake, and Thomas Conway. Hampton L. Boone was appointed county clerk pro tem.

First County Officers

Elias Bancroft was appointed county surveyor, Nicholas S. Burckhartt, county assessor, and Joseph Patterson, collector of the revenue in 1821. These were the first county officers. The county from 1816 to 1821 was divided into four townships: Moniteau, Bonne Femme, Chariton and LaMine. In 1821 the county court made a second division of the county into townships and made seven townships: Franklin, Boonslick, Chariton, Richmond, Prairie, Bonne Femme, and Moniteau. Later on the county court created Burton Township from territory taken from Richmond and Prairie townships.

Kit Carson

Among the famous men who lived in Howard County and whose name and fame is world-wide is Kit Carson, the famous scout who piloted the exploring company of men under the lead of Gen. J. C. Fremont to the Pacific coast. He was born in Madison county, Kentucky, in 1809, and was brought by his father, Lindsey Carson, to the Boon's Lick country in 1810 when "Kit" was only one year old. Young "Kit" when barely seventeen years old joined a party and left his home in Howard County to seek his fortune in the far West, where he remained until his death.

County Organization

From 1804 until October 1, 1812, the territory of Missouri was divided into four districts. At that date Governor Clark issued a proclamation, in accordance with an act of Congress, reorganizing the four districts into five counties: St. Charles, St. Louis, Ste. Genevieve, Cape Girardeau and New Madrid.

Under the act of the General Assembly approved January 13, 1816, the county of Howard was created, being the ninth organized county in the territory, and was taken out of the counties of St. Louis and St. Charles. The boundaries of Howard County, as established after its organization, included within its confines the following counties, which have been created and organized since February 16, 1825: Boone, Cole, Miller, Morgan, Benton, St. Clair, Henry, Johnson, LaFayette, Pettis, Cooper, Moniteau, Saline, Clay, Clinton, DeKalb, Gentry, Worth, Harrison, Daviess, Caldwell, Ray, Carroll, Randolph, Livingston, Grundy, Mercer, Putnam, Sullivan, Linn, Chariton, Macon, Adair, parts of Shelby, Monroe and Audrain, and the following counties in Iowa: Taylor, Adams, Union, Ringgold, Clark, Decatur, Wayne, Lucas, Monroe and Appanoose.

In the year 1816 after Howard County was duly organized the first term of court was held at the home of Joseph Jolly in Hannah Cole's fort on the 8th day of July, 1816. Hon. David Barton was the presiding judge, Nicholas Burckhardt, sheriff, and Gray Bynum, clerk of the court. The attorneys in attendance were Edward Bates, Charles Lucas, Joshua Barton and Lucius Caston.

At this term of court Hannah Cole obtained a license to establish a ferry across the Missouri River.

The first licensed tavern was kept by Harper C. Davis, in Kincaid's Fort.

The first road laid out in the county was a road from Cole's Fort on the Missouri River to intersect the road from Potosi in Washington County at the Osage River. Stephen Cole, James Cole and Humphrey Gibson were appointed to lay out and make the road.

The first elections held in the county were held at Head's Fort, McLain's Fort, Fort Cooper and Cole's Fort