

Early History of Jackson County

Hardships and Privations Endured and
Encountered With the Indians
by Pioneer Settlers.

Reminiscences of David Sturgeon, an old Pioneer, Compiled
by H. W. Chadwick as taken from The Banner Files
of 1877 and Republished 1928.

Letters of John H. Benton of Washington, D. C., Giving the
Early History of Jackson County, as taken from
The Banner Files of 1893.

sorrow's eye and silently go their way. He accumulated considerable property, and left no heirs.

The First Church

The first church erected in the county was built on the ground now used as a cemetery near the Driftwood Church. It was on the southwest corner of the Graham farm, and was built in the year 1815. It was a comfortable log building of moderate dimensions with large wooden chimney and puncheon floor. Its benches were not of modern make, but were hewn from the forest. A straight poplar or ash sapling of ten or twelve inches in diameter was cut and split and hewn, and four legs inserted, and the bench was complete. The house was free to all denominations, and here, for miles and miles came the pioneer and family on the Sabbath day to worship God. They came on foot and horseback from the sparse and remote settlements of Vallonia, Highton Hill, Brownstown, and from a little settlement surrounding a trading post kept by John McCormick and two of the Buskirks on the farm now owned and occupied by my life-long friend, John J. Cummins. In this settlement were James and Josiah Lindsey, Robert Burgh, some of whose descendants are in the county yet and Cyrus Douglass, the head of the old Douglass family, so well known to early settlers, but now almost extinct among us. These, with the Sturgeon and Burgh settlement in Grassy Fork, made up the congregation which assembled at Driftwood. No organ, with high-toned keys, and plied with skillful hands, gave music to the audience, nor minister with lengthened gown graced the pulpit. But that bold and fearless people, strong in the impulse of religious worship, with voices clear and strong, made music of sweetest order. Here the devout man of God in reverence would time the hymn, and man and youth, matron and maid, would join with skillful voice to bear their several parts. Then came the prayer, where all devoutly knelt and joined their hearts in thankfulness to the Great Giver of Good. The revered man of God, tall and thin, with whitened locks reaching down to his shoulders, broke the bread of life to listening souls, and many a stalwart man, who feared no danger, would brush the falling tear while listening to truths divine. After service before separating, they took each other kindly by the hand and

This unfortunate man, who lived on or near Mr. Findley's late homestead place, had spent the night with a Mr. Lindsey,—the family name of Mr. Findley's wife, who lived on or near the McCormick place. As there were indications of Indians in the morning, Lindsey dissuaded him from leaving for his home; but as the day advanced, and the fall of rain subsided, his fear vanished and he determined to venture, and so mounting his beast and shouldering his gun, he set out. He had gone but a short distance, when, descending the steep bank of a little stream, or ravine now crossed by the Brownstown and Seymour road, a few hundred yards west of the Findley farm house, an Indian concealed in a hollow tree standing on the opposite bank, fired upon him through an opening in the tree and shot him dead,—the ball, if I remember right, striking him square in the forehead. He pitched head long from his horse into the water, and his gun, which was probably carried on his shoulder, was also pitched forward, muzzle-end downward and imbedded in the soft mud, at the bottom of the ravine, then well filled with water; and there it was found standing soon afterward, when his scalped remains were found and taken away for burial.

The same day, I think it was, of this occurrence, William Ruddick and his brother were hunting in the hills, a few miles, from where Doan was killed, and were fired upon by Indians. One of the bullets struck the breach-pin screw of William's gun, dismounted the barrell from the stock, and glancing, lodged in his arm. They were all grit, however, and the brother returning the fire, wounded one of the Indians, who, with difficulty by the help of his comrades, made good his escape, though pursued for some distance.

The fact of the fight between the Ruddicks and the Indians and the wounding of the Indian, and probably, of Ruddick, I had from Mr. Ketcham and Mr. Findely; and the circumstances of the wounding of William Ruddick and the dismounting of his gun from its stock, I have from a recent letter from Mr. Josiah Shewmaker. The killing of Mr. Hays I reserve for my next.

Oh! then, the happy meeting of friends and relatives.

George Doom Killed And John Ketcham Wounded

"About the middle of March, 1813, John Ketcham and Geo. Doom, a militiaman from Harrison county, then on duty, went on an errand to John-son Lindsey's.—Lindsey having during the winter of 1812 removed from Ketcham's fort to his farm some miles above. On their return home they were waylaid and fired on by the Indians. Doom was killed, and Ketcham badly wounded with two balls. When he reached the fort a messenger was sent to Vallonia for a reinforcement. About twenty men under command of Lieutenant, proceeded to where Doom's corpse lay; after carrying it to Lindsey's, William Ruddick, John Samuel and Frederick Tunk were detailed to bury the dead, and remained at Lindsey's till next morning. The scout proceeded up the country for miles without making any discovery of Indian signs, and returned home. The fatigue party having completed the burial, the sun yet an hour high, concluded that the Indians were all gone, and that they would return to the fort. They had proceeded about three hundred yards when the Indians, lying in ambush near their path, fired on them and wounded Ruddick and Samuel, then retreated.

The Fight At Tipton's Island

"Shortly after this General Tipton, Richard Beem, William Dyer and a number of militia-men from Harrison county, went on a scout up White river, some distance above Ketcham's fort, and struck a free Indian trail. They eagerly and cautiously pursued the same until they discovered that the Indians had crossed over on drift timber into an island. Tipton stood ready with his gun presented while Beem and others were crossing on the drifted logs. An Indian who was secreted, raised his gun to shoot Beem but Tipton touched trigger first. The Indian threw down his gun, it cocked, and retreated, badly wounded. He was supposed to be their leader. Tipton and his men all crossed over into the island, except Dyer, who had charge of Tipton's horse. Several shots were