

Honey Creek Township

This township lies directly south of Harrison, and embraces all of congressional T. 11, R. 9, except a part of Secs. 5 and 6, which are cut off by the Wabash river. Honey creek, from which the township takes its name, enters from Riley township on the east, and flows westerly through the township a little north of the center. It is spanned by two fine iron bridges and one or two wooden ones. It is a rich agricultural township, nearly equally divided between prairie and timber. The soil is well adapted to wheat, corn, grass, sweet and Irish potatoes and melons. The township is divided up into small farms, and is mainly occupied by the owners of the land. Some of the finest country residences in the county are found within its limits. An air of thrift and prosperity, everywhere prevalent, indicates the presence of a contented and intelligent people.

The first settler in this township was George Clem, as early perhaps as 1812. He built north of where the state road crosses Honey creek, near where George Kruzan now lives. Mr. Clem died here in 1835. Several of his descendants still live in Honey Creek. Among the other early settlers in the west part of the township may be mentioned Judge Hopkins, Jeremiah Moat, Truman Blackman, the first sheriff of the county, and the Durhams. Lambert and Dixon, who were partners in business, each built substantial brick residences about 1817. George Jordan came here in 1817, and cropped the first year on Lambert's place. Isaac Pointer, John Blacksome, with his sons William and Jerry, came from Ohio in 1877, and settled near the Hull graveyard. In the southeast part of the township were Daniel Solesby, Robert Bratton and John and Robert McCoskey, about 1822. Samuel Young was also an early settler near where the little village of Youngstown now stands.

Nearly all of the first settlers have now passed away. Of those who are still living, Aunt Gaddy Blacksom can give the most interesting account of life in the early times. She thinks there were not more than twenty families in the township in 1817. People were more sociable and neighborly than now. She can remember when almost every farmer raised a small field of cotton, and the farmers' wives and daughters spun and wove it into cloth. Before the invention of the "gin" the children were employed in picking out the seed, which was a slow process. Wild game was very abundant when the first settlements were made. Honey creek, without doubt, took its name from the abundance of wild honey found in the trees along its banks. Wild turkeys in vast numbers were then to be found in the woods. The last wild bear ever seen in the township was killed by William Durham in 1824.

Village of Youngstown

This is a little hamlet of eight or ten houses, and is the only town in Honey creek. J. B. McCoskey & Son do a good business here in a country grocery store. There is also a blacksmith shop. The town was laid out in 1865 by Chauncey Carr. The first business house being built in 1868 by George Planett, who was the first postmaster. Since 1869 Mr. McCoskey has held that office.

The Evansville & Cincinnati railroad runs north and south through the township, and on the eastern edge of Youngstown.

Churches

The Methodists seem to have been first in organizing societies and building churches. There are now three churches of this denomination, one of the Baptist, and one of the United Brethren. John Dickson and Isaac Lambert, with their wives, were prominent among the first Methodists of the township. The first meetings were held at their houses, and the society was organized as early as 1818 or 1820. After the school-house was built opposite Hull's graveyard it was used as a church, and some say it was dedicated for church purposes. The society removed to the Durham school-house, and near here the Grove church was built in 1860. The original expense was about \$1,800. The Grove, Mount Pleasant and Bethel churches all belong to the Prairieton circuit. Mt. Pleasant church was built in 1833 in the northeast part of the township. The Baptists church, known as Mt. Zion, was erected in 1855. This society was organized in 1841 by the Rev. Samuel K. Sparks, who was its pastor for twenty-nine years. This is a large and flourishing society, and has an interesting Sunday-school connected with it. Farmer's chapel, United Brethren church, was built in 1874, and cost about \$800. Washington Hess, now deceased, was mainly instrumental in the building of this church, which is situated on Sec. 33. Several interesting camp meetings were held near the Hull school-house; one of these meetings, held as early as 1820, attracted people from Vincennes and other points quite distant. Conspicuous among the early preachers were Samuel Hamilton, Rev. Hargrave, Aaron Wood, Richard Beggs and Samuel Hull.

Schools

There are now eight well conducted schools in this township, all of the houses are neat frame buildings. One of the first, if not the very first school-house built, was the Hull school-house, built in 1830. William Stevenson taught school in a log school-house in Sec. 2 about 1835. There were then perhaps five schools in the township. At this time Sec. 16 was rented, and the teachers were compelled to collect their rents to get their pay for teaching. It is related that one teacher having to take corn for his portion, which was not marketable except at the still-house, delivered it there and obtained a barrel of whisky, which he sold to obtain pay for his services. Looking back to this, does it not seem that the temperance cause has advanced perceptibly? The school land in this township sold at an average of about \$50 per acre in 1854. Clinton Shattuck and Joseph Thayer were perhaps the first teachers in the township.

Institutions

In February, 1878, a blue-ribbon society was organized at the Mount Zion church. Mr. Nelson St. Clair was president for the first year. The interest of the society is kept up unabated. It now numbers more than 300 members. Many eminent lecturers have appeared before the society, and it seems that it is to become one of the permanent institutions of the township.

To Honey Creek Grange belongs the honor of organizing the first society of Patrons of Husbandry in the State of Indiana. The organization was effected December 27, 1869, with the presence of O. H. Kelly, secretary of the national grange. The charter members were John Weir and his wife Thirza, O. M. Curry and his wife Elvira, David Pugh (Pugh?) and wife Catherine, Charles E. Grover and wife Emma, George C. Clem and his sisters Martha and Mary J., Fred F. Cornell, Alice Crandell, Ulysses Blacksom and his sister Belle, Joshua T. Crandell, Samuel M. Crandell, Benjamin Perkins and daughter Belle,

John Royse, Daniel Crandell, Washington L. Jones, Rachel Dickerson, John L. Weir and sister Sarah, J. E. Ryman, Rachel A. Wood, John B. Park, and Martha Crandell. John Weir was the first master and also first master of the state grange. At one time there were about seventy-five members, but of late years there has been a falling off in numbers. There seems to be an awakening now, however, and new members are being taken in.

The Patrons have a hall over No. 6 school-house, near the residence of O. M. Curry, that they built in 1870. Its size is 20 x 45 feet. This grange has been a great benefit to its members, not only in a pecuniary point of view, but also morally and socially.

There is a small point of woods in the southern part of this township, named Negro Point. When Harrison's army was moving through this township the grandfather of E. A. Roberts, with one of his comrades, saw two Negroes in the edge of the grove skulking along, and as they took them for Indians, fired and killed one of them. The other one was sent back into slavery in Kentucky, from where they had been endeavoring to make their escape. A small stream running through this neck of the woods has been from the same circumstance named Negro Run.

In the first settlement of this township, for a few years, it required several days to go to mill and return. As early as 1818, however, Jeremiah Moat, who lived near the site of Davis Pugh's residence, built a small mill which was turned by a horse, working on a tread wheel. About 1820 or 1822, Dickson and Lambert put up a fine mill on Honey creek, costing them several thousand dollars. The foundations were undermined by the water, and in a few years it was washed down and never rebuilt.

The Poplar Hill, or Hull's, graveyard is finely located near the old Lambert place. The first marked grave, and perhaps the first grave opened here, was that of Martin Braddock. He was drowned October 8, 1820. The tombstones were put up about 1833, and were dressed out of rough slabs of sandstone by John Durham. The deceased had a piece of land adjoining that of John Durham, which Mr. Durham wished to buy. Mr. Braddock's legal representatives lived in Pennsylvania, and thither Mr. Durham rode horseback, returning in six weeks with a deed to the land. The relatives of Braddock desired to have the grave marked, and commissioned Mr. Durham to procure and erect suitable stones. There were then no tombstone cutters in the county or near, and Mr. Durham obtained the sandstone, dressed it off, lettered them, and these moss-grown stones are still standing, being probably the first tombstones erected in the county. There is a small burial-ground near the Grove church, call the Durham graveyard, and in the northeast of the township is situated the Mount Pleasant cemetery.

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by H.W.Beckwith

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