

Lost Creek Township

Lost Creek township, as the name implies, derived its title from the creek of that name which flows through it. The creek obtained its name on account of its spreading over the sand prairies on leaving this township and having no outlet to the river; it formed an extensive swamp which evaporated in the summer and rendered that neighborhood very unhealthy. Now, however, it is conducted to the river by a large ditch; and the land over which it formerly spread, and was on that account considered worthless, is the best in the county. The southern portion of the township is watered by Little Honey creek, which flows across the southeast corner. The township is located on the eastern side of the county, and is bounded on the north by Nevins township, on the east by Clay county, on the south by Riley, and by Harrison township on the west. It consists of thirty-six sections of fine farming land, the soil being a rich clay loam and yielding unfailing crops of wheat, corn and grass, and is peculiarly well adapted to fruit, large quantities of which are raised and shipped to the city markets. The surface is rolling, and has a splendid natural system of drainage which has been taken advantage of by the enterprising farmers, so that now most of the land is thoroughly underdrained with tile. Originally the most of the township was covered with a heavy growth of timber, but now this is mostly gone, having disappeared before the axe of the pioneer.

The first settlers arrived in this township about 1820, settling near the west center of town, among the first being John Colton, Daniel and John Jenks, Antony Connor, and William Phillips, while further south were Moore and George Hussey. In 1825 Zadoc Reeves located in the Jenks settlement, having come from Carlisle, where he had settled in 1819, to build a distillery for Jenks, he being a carpenter and millwright. Another old settler, and probably the first one, was Matthew Gray, who devoted his time entirely to hunting, following that as his sole means of livelihood. His wife used to wear shoes made of untanned hog skin, and his own garments were nearly all trophies of his success in the chase. Shortly after the arrival of Reeves came Sylvester Ripley, Isaac Kruzan, Thomas Patterson, James Watson, Joseph Hoskins, Ralph Wilson, the Montgomerys, Moody Chamberlain and Hulse, and a little later, 1835, arrived the Dickerson family and Peter Collins, who settled toward the east side of the township. These were shortly followed by Silas Pierce, John Harper, Isaac Hall and Alfred B Pegg. The last named was the builder and owner of the Round House, or, rather, Octagon House, from which the trading point known as Round House Corners takes its name.

The advent of new-comers was the never failing topic of conversation, and constant demands were made upon the time and labor of the pioneers to assist at log rollings and raisings, they thinking nothing of traveling six or eight miles to help raise a cabin or barn, or traveling ten to thirty miles to mill and then have to wait a day or two before they could get their grist. The mills which they patronized were Creel's mill, Markle's mill, in Nevins township, and on some occasions the mills at Roseville and those on Big Raccoon. In the way of social amusements they had their religious meetings, singing schools, sugar boilings and weddings, the latter being occasions of great fun and jollity, where, if the youngsters had not had the advantages of tuition under an expert dancing-master, they had many a good hoe-down on puncheon floors, and were not annoyed with bad whisky. The great drawback to this settlement was the lack of good roads. The first step toward remedying this matter was taken in 1836, when the National Road was laid out through this township, and was the means of greatly improving the condition of the people here,

opening up a means of communication to the market towns, and enabling them to realize upon their surplus produce.

We find that here, as in the history of all other townships, the first public building erected was a school-house. The first one put up in this township was in 1826, the builders being Zadoc Reeves and a man named Hollovey. This was erected in the western side of the town, about half a mile south of the site of the present brick school-house. The first teacher in this house was Mr. Willard, who came from Carlisle to fill the position. It must not, however, be supposed that the pioneers had neglected educational matters for six years. Such was not the case, as previous to building the school-house a small school had been in operation in one of the settler's houses, the name of the teacher of which has not been preserved. Another of the early log school-houses was situated west of where the brick one now stands, having been built about 1830, and in which J. I. Dickerson taught in 1847. Another school-house was built on Sec. 15 about 1831 or 1832, north of John Wilson's residence, the name of the teacher of which we have not been able to discover. The first school-house in the eastern settlement was erected on Sec. 10 about 1836, in which Daniel Dickerson was the first teacher. The township was organized in 1827 or 1828, Mr. Z. Reeves being instrumental in having this done, so that they might have school districts set off. He got up the papers and took the necessary steps to accomplish both objects, and at the meeting was elected the school trustee, being the first, and has lived to see the work which he began in so small a manner increase to its present large dimensions. He is now in his eighty-fourth year, and is the oldest original settler in the township.

The first justice of the peace elected was Dr. Jenks, and the first in the eastern settlement was old Mr. Dickerson, who had Doc. Waddle cover corn for him one day, receiving for his pay his wedding fee, the ceremony being celebrated shortly afterward. Weddings were occasions, in those days, of great festivities and frolics, the youths of both sexes traveling long distances to attend them.

There are quite a number of aged people in this township. The oldest lady, of the early settlers, is Mrs. Rosa (Holland) Dickerson.

The meeting-house for religious purposes we find did not appear as early as the school-house, though the pioneer preacher always put in an appearance as soon as a few families had located in one neighborhood. The first meetings were held in the houses of the settlers, and as the congregation increased in number it was removed to the school-house, and on the country becoming thicker settled a meeting-house became a necessity and had to be built. The first one erected by the Methodist society was in 1837. This was a log structure, and was located half a mile west of where Seeleyville now stands. This church served the society until 1855, when a large frame church was erected, through the united efforts of the citizens generally. This building did not stand very long until it was burned down, supposed to have been the work of an incendiary, as a split had taken place in the congregation through the rivalry of two class leaders. It was never rebuilt, and has had no successor. The early preachers and organizers of this congregation were Brothers Kemp and Long.

The United Brethren held services in the township at various points, Father Hedges being the pioneer preacher of that denomination. They did not erect any church-house, but held their meetings from house to house, and later occupied the school-houses.

The Christian congregation (Disciples) built their meeting-house about 1858, on the southeast corner of Sec. 29, the land having been donated by L. N. Trueblood. The congregation is known as the Union Christian Church of Lost Creek, and was organized August 26, 1855. W. D. Ladd and Alexander Cooper were the first officers, the former being elder and the latter deacon. The first preacher was Anderson Ward, of Illinois. Previous to the building of the meeting-house the church met at Mr. Ladd's house and at the school-houses. The congregation now numbers eighty members, with Abi Landermilk as the present preacher. A Sunday-school is connected with the church, at which there is a large attendance, the average being sixty. John Taylor is superintendent.

Old Salem Baptist church, situated on Sec. 36, was organized about thirty-five years ago, through the preaching and labors of Samuel Sparks and other pioneer preachers of that denomination, among whom were Asa Frakes, William Eldridge, and others. The first meeting-house of this society was a log building, 20x26, which is still standing. It served the congregation until 1874, when the present meeting-house was erected, 86x40 feet and cost about \$2,000. This congregation was formerly a very large one, but is now reduced in number.

In the northern part of the township is a large settlement of the colored people, numbering 110 families, who nearly all came from North Carolina. The first to make a settlement in this neighborhood were Moses Archer and Richard Roberts, about 1830, who were followed the next year, 1881, by Jordan and Abel Anderson. A year later Jerry Anderson, K. Roberts, and Dixon Stewart arrived and proceeded to make farms out of the wilderness. Shortly after their arrival, in 1835, the first school-house was built, being situated one mile west of Jerry Anderson's residence. The first teachers were Abel Anderson and Aaron Smith. This old log school-house still stands, and at present writing is occupied as a dwelling-house, having been superseded as a school-house by the present handsome frame building. The well known desire of the colored folks for religious instruction was early understood, the first preacher to arrive being Bishop William Paul Quinn, who instituted the first colored Methodist congregation here, about 1840. In 1845 the society built a meeting-house 20x30 feet, which they occupied for some years, then took it down and erected their present handsome church-house on the same site. The dimensions of this building are 24x36 feet, and cost in cash about \$600, the members having furnished the lumber and donated considerable labor. The congregation now numbers about forty members, with the Rev. Whitten S. Langford in charge. There is a Sabbath-school in connection with this meeting, with an average attendance of forty-five scholars. John Alexander is superintendent.

The first meeting-house of the Missionary Baptist church (colored) was built in 1862. It was a frame building, 30x40 feet, and cost about \$1,000. In 1867 it caught fire and was burnt down, but was rebuilt in the following year. The society was organized some years before the building of the church-house by Lewis Artis, through whose efforts it was formed and constituted, and he remained as preacher at this point for eight years. He was succeeded by W. H. Anderson, who conducted the meetings for two years, and was followed by George Anderson, who was pastor some four or five years. The society is now under the care of M. C. Anderson, and numbers about one hundred and twenty-five members. The Sunday-school, under Jesse Artis, superintendent, has seventy-two scholars, and a library of 250 volumes adds greatly to the interest of the school.

The eastern part of the township was formerly known as the flats, and considered of no value, and as illustrating how far this country has outstripped the expectations of the early

settlers we would mention that a year or two after his arrival here old Mr. Dickerson, on building a granary capable of holding 300 bushels, was laughed at for building such a large one and ever expecting to raise enough to fill it. The same farm last year produced 1,300 bushels of wheat. Formerly twelve to fifteen bushels per acre was considered a large crop; now it takes thirty or forty bushels to satisfy the farmers. Last year this township produced 102,000 bushels of what and 147,000 of corn, and this year will have as good a yield of wheat, but the corn crop will fall short, owing to the protracted drought. The advance made in farming implements has probably tended greatly toward increasing the yield in all kinds of grain, the advent of the chilled plow, grain drill, corn planter and threshing machine enabling them to prepare the soil more thoroughly and to save what they have raised. The former slow and laborious method of threshing the grain with a flail gave way to the system of tramping it out with horses, and after a few years the first threshing machines made their appearance. The first in this neighborhood was owned by a man named Jones, and was a simple affair, which delivered grain, chaff and all together, and had afterward to be separated by a fan or sheet in the hands of two persons. The motion was applied by a one-horse tread power, and by this machine they would thresh from 50 to 100 bushels per day.

In 1858, when W. D. Wood, Samuel Dickerson, and Alexander Cooper were elected trustees, there were forty-five votes cast in the township. At the last election 400 were polled. Among those who have served as township trustees are the following: Judge Chamberlain, who was first after the change of the law, Horace Chamberlain, Ralph Wilson, Alexander Rowan, L. W. Dickerson, S. S. Ripley, and H. O. Dickerson, the latter having been reelected April 1880.

There are eleven school districts in the township with eleven school-houses and eleven teachers: nine white and two colored. The number of children of school age is 700, and the attendance is sixty-five per cent.

On Sec. 22 stands the town house, which was erected in 1873. It is a one-story building, 30x44 feet, with an ante-room for election purposes, and cost \$800. No. 5 school-house is a two story building, the upper story having been built by the Grangers. Here Marian Grange No. 1442 holds its meetings. This society now has about fifty members and is in a flourishing state, and alive to the interests of the order. The first master was Alexander Rounds, and the present officers are: master, O. Myers; secretary, W. S. Harper.

Seeleyville, a small station on the St. Louis, Vandalia, Terre Haute & Indianapolis railroad (which runs through the township in a north-easterly direction), is the only village in the township, and originated through the opening of Mr. McKeen's coal shaft here. After running the mine some time it was sold to the Indiana Rolling Mill Company at Indianapolis, who operated it a few years then disposed of it to Mr. George Arbuckle two years ago. Since passing into his hands the mine has not been in operation. Two other mines in the neighborhood, owned by Jerome Hulse and Alexander McPherson, supply the home demand and ship considerable to Terre Haute during the winter. The first postmaster here was J. Seeley, who owned the land upon which the village is laid out, and after whom it is named. The present postmaster is Mrs. Annie Dickerson. The first store was opened by H. O. Dickerson in August 1872, and is now the only one in the village. A corn-mill is the only other business here carried on. Dr. McLaughlin is the resident physician.

West of Seeleyville is a steam grist and saw mill, the property of Moody Chamberlain. A

blacksmith shop is also situated at this point.

In 1878 J. L. Dickerson opened a store at Round House Corners, near Mr. Pegg's residence, and at the same time a post-office was located here, with Mr. Dickerson as postmaster. This was, however, given up in May 1880. Dr. J. H. Payne has his residence here, and Elza Jones' saw-mill in this neighborhood completes the list of business concerns.

Where the railroad crosses the National Road is a flag station known as Glendale.

Source:

History of Parke and Vigo Counties

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by H.W.Beckwith

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