

Indexed G. S.
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EARLY HISTORY OF MORGAN COUNTY, MISSOURI
AND THE CITY OF VERSAILLES

Compiled by Mrs. Royce Moser

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
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The Leader-Statesman, Versailles, Mo.

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The Leader-Statesman

Versailles, Morgan County, Mo. FRIDAY, SEPT. 13, 1957

from
Ilene (Sims) Yarnell
Versailles, Mo.

Mrs. Royce Moser Writes of *Morgan County, Mo.* County's Early History

Over a long period of time Mrs. Royce Moser, this city, sought out facts and figures concerning the early history of Versailles and Morgan County, and when the work was completed she presented the facts she had gathered before a meeting of the Hawthorne Club.

Since that time we have been asked to reprint these historical facts. With the assistance of Mrs. Gene Bartram, the following article has been prepared for publication. We are hopeful our readers will find it interesting and informative.
—The Editor.

Morgan county was at one time in the possession and occupancy of the Osage Indians. It is thought that they were assisted by Spaniards in prospecting for lead and ore. When the first settlers came to this county they found shafts and mining holes in the ground all over the southern part of the county and even in the 1820's and 1830's the ladders and shafts and equipment were crumbling back to dust.

The Osage Indians were occupying this land at the time Missouri became a state and, when they ceded this part of their territory to the government, they retained hunting privilege over the land for a number of years, with permission to hunt each spring and fall. Indian scares were quite common among the white settlers although there are no records of white settlers ever being attacked by the Indians. They surrendered their rights in 1835, and were then seen in this part of the country only

when they passed through on their way to St. Louis for supplies or on their way as delegates to Washington.

The trappers, hunters and Indian traders followed the Indians in this territory, preceding the white settlers.

After the Louisiana Purchase and the War of 1812, the settlers heard of many acres of land available in this part of the country now called Missouri. Some of them, born in Virginia and the Carolinas, migrated to Kentucky and Tennessee following the Revolutionary war. They came here in wagon trains, drawn by horses and teams of oxen, horseback or on foot, bringing as many of their earthly possessions as they could possibly haul or carry. They drove their cattle and other stock, assisted by their faithful stock dogs, along the unblazed trails.

Some brought cuttings and starts of old Pink Maiden Blush and Moss roses, lilacs and other flowers and shrubs with which to landscape the yards of their new homes. Some also brought fruit trees and garden seeds. Most of them brought choice pieces of china, glassware, pewter and coin silver, as well as the much needed pots, pans and kettles. Family spinning wheels were a much needed item on the load. "Bread-starter" was a guarded treasure brought along as yeast was not to be obtained. It was not uncommon in the early days for women to borrow "bread starter" from each other, if freezing or molding ruined their "starter."

Some of these early settlers first settled in Cooper and Boone counties around 1814 to 1820, later coming to Morgan county to make their homes.

The first land purchased from the government in this county was made by George McFarland, Sr., who came to Missouri from Tennessee in 1823. This purchase, described as the East half of the Northeast quarter, Section 8, Township 44, Range 18, was made on February 13, 1824. James

McFarland and sons settled here in 1831.

Morgan county was organized by act of the Legislature in 1833 and was divided into six townships. Next year Morgan County will be one hundred twenty-five years old.

The temporary county seat was located on Josiah Walton's farm, about five miles southeast of Versailles, near the YMCA camp. The present John Stringer farm is a part of this area, which was first called Millville and later Mill Town. A part of the John Stringer barn was used as a meeting place of the first session of the Morgan county court. The first term of the circuit court, with Hon. David Todd presiding, convened here on June 13, 1833. Alfred McCutcheon was sheriff at that time. The county seat was located here for about two years.

Josiah Walton operated a saw and grist mill here in 1835, using the water power of the Gravois creek. Mr. Walton was the great grandfather of Dr. A. J. Gunn and Walta Franse.

Among other settlers coming to Morgan county were Hugh Kelsay and his brothers, Alexander, James, Samuel and William, who settled on Moreau creek about six miles east of Versailles in 1825. Wm. Mobley and family came from Kentucky to Morgan county in 1833, coming by ox-team. Soon after came

Wm. Donegan, Thomas Kennedy, John Thompson, Furniss Adair and Mr. Pushong. In 1829 came Willis Brown and family, among them was Cyrus C. Brown. Other early settler names included Barger, Enlow, Smith, Hallford, Kirkpatrick Wood, Gist, Porter, Monroe, Howard, Birdsong, Stinson, Vivion, Beatty, Donaldson, Estes, Hogue, Hix, Larimore, Parks, Porter, Richardson, Rucker, Scott, Briscoe, Burns, Damph, Earnest, Frisch, Gibbs, Goddard, Goodman, Hawks Kidwell and many others.

J. M. McDow settled in Morgan county in 1852. James McNair, who married a daughter of Dr. J. B. Thruston, came here in 1862. James A. Spurlock, one of the early lawyers of Versailles, came in 1866 and built the Spurlock hotel on the south side of the square. Alexander Walker, born in Pennsylvania, came to Morgan county in 1838. Samuel M. Willson, a native of Tennessee, came in 1837. Dr. P. G. Woods came here in 1855. A. L. Ross was born in Morgan county in 1857, his father Frank Ross, coming here in 1838. Rev. Isaiah Barber, born in Pennsylvania, came to Morgan county in 1865. Peter Harms came here in 1857. John A. Wilson was born here in 1846. John Adair was born here in 1826. T. R. Townley was born in this county in 1839. Ezekiel J. Salmon came here in

1840. Thomas Phillips came in 1851 and Jacob Chism came around 1835.

Street Thruston and his son, Dr. J. B. Thruston, came to Morgan county in 1833, the latter the grandfather of Dr. A. J. Gunn and Mrs. Walta Franse. He began the practice of medicine here in Versailles in 1836. Dr. John B. McClellan came here in 1838.

Wm. Kidwell, grandfather of W. F. Kidwell funeral director, operated a cabinet and coffin factory on the Gravois creek southeast of Versailles, starting this industry in 1844.

James Sims and family came here from Tennessee in 1819, settling in the old Sims homestead north of Versailles in 1836. Lee T. Sims, a great grandson, owns the acreage on which the old home is located and D. O. Young, also a great grandson, also owns some of the original Sims land.

Tom and John Moore came here in 1837, John becoming one of the leading farmers in the county. John Bohling, father-in-law of Mrs. Etta Bohling, came here in 1845.

Street Thruston was appointed by the county court to locate a permanent county seat and he selected the present site of Versailles. The land was donated by Mr. Wyan and Mr. Galbraith. The court sold lots at public vendue.

In December 1836 the county bought of Phillip Barger, the house standing on the northeast corner of the public square for a courthouse. This was used until 1844 when a modest brick building was erected in the center of the square. This building was destroyed by fire on March 12, 1887.

The present courthouse was built around 1890 at the cost of approximately \$20,000.

Wassung's Hall, which was used as a meeting place of the county court, as well as many organizations, was built by John Wassung, father of Mrs. Ben F. Goodman, in the early days. This hall, which was used as a community building, was used for entertainments such as stock companies with plays and entertainments that would run for a week or two. Among the plays presented were, "Ten Nights in a Bar Room," "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Two Orphans." Large crowds of Morgan county people attended these entertainments. At one time, the late Mrs. Annie Sumner attended "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in this building and, at the point when Little Eva was being abused, she arose to her feet and demanded that the actor "stop beating that poor child." Mrs. Goodman often played the part of a child for these stock companies passing through here.

One show, presented in the Wassung hall, was composed of sixteen trained horses. At 4 o'clock in the afternoons, the band, which was a

Fact in Sims of June 5

part of each stock company, would give a free concert on the street to advertise the performance, playing again outside the door of the hall at 7:30. Admission was 25c for children, 35c for adults and 50c for reserved seats.

Revival meeting, public dinners, school commencements and home talent plays were also held in this hall and later the moving picture shows were held here.

A brick jail was built on the southeast corner of the square in 1865 but was condemned in 1877 and torn down because the prisoners had cut and dug out the walls in trying to escape so it became unsafe.

In February 1877 the county bought a farm southeast of Versailles from G. J. Harvey for \$1500,00, which was used as a county home or "poor farm" as it was called in those days. Around 1914-1916 the county built the present brick structure which was purchased by Mrs. Tommy Mara a few years ago.

In the early days of Versailles, there were more residence buildings than business places around the square.

A house, standing where the Spurlock Hotel is now located, was the home of an early settler, Col. John H. Stover. To the west of this building, where the Kansas City Bifocal factory now stands, stood the home of Maj. G. H. Stover. On the site of the present Russell P. Hall real estate office, stood the old building, later known as the Bush hotel, which was first a bakery and boarding house, operated by Col. Stover's daughter, who married George Decker. She also sold yeast to the people of the community.

Zebulon Moore built a log house on the northeast corner of the square in 1826 and Joseph Steel built on the south side of the square. On the east side of the square stood Capt. Nielson's home, where the Shryack-Givens Wholesale Grocery Co. now stands. Next was the jewelry shop of George Bohling, a small frame building which was later moved to the south side of the square. This building was occupied much later by the millinery shop of Alpha Stephens and Maurine Daniels (Earp). This shop was later sold to Goldie Tucker and Myrtle Carter, who continued to operate the hat shop. Later A. Tucker put in a music store in the building and, after a few years, sold it to George Clodfelter, who operated a jewelry store there for ten years. A small frame building standing to the east of this building was occupied by F. D. Harrison, a real estate dealer, who sold the building to the city for the fire department. Much later these buildings were purchased for the Kansas City Bifocal factory.

On the present site of the Curtis

building, now owned by Gene Bartram and Earle Beckner, stood a small building with a large lawn. This building was occupied by Mr. Hanney, editor of the county newspaper. In later years this site was used for the Curtis building and the Curtis store was a landmark here for years.

The residence, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Norman Boeschen, was built by a Mr. Lumpee.

The old Jobe home where the Versailles Leader-Statesman office is and a house also stood where the Morgan county library now stands.

Among the first business places of Versailles was the blacksmith shop of Dan Williams, great grandfather of Alpha Thixton and R. V. Williams, and a Mr. Lindley, who were in business in 1836.

A man named Freeman opened the first saloon here in 1836. Millon O'Bryan was one of the first carpenters. John T. Harmon operated a boarding house in 1836. The second merchant in Versailles was Len Blakewell.

T. and P. Miller opened a store in 1836-37. Hugh Miller, a drygoods and grocery merchant, was located on the west side of the public square, where the Versailles Hardware and Dr. Otten's dentist office are now located.

Maj. W. W. Cook and W. P. Tooley had a store where the Slagle Sundries store is now located. This store, opened April 19, 1840, was stocked with goods brought by Mr. Tooley from a general store in Fayette. Maj. Cook had been in business here for several years before he formed the partnership with Mr. Tooley.

Capt. John McClanahan, grandfather of Mrs. P. J. McDonough, operated a tavern and stage coach stand where Scrivner's Funeral home is now located. This was the stopping point of the stage line from Jefferson City to Springfield. Later this property was bought by Judge Bev. Richardson, who had a rail fence around the grounds in which he kept a few deer. Around the edge of the property were several small cabins, used to house the slaves.

Wm. Kidwell, grandfather of Wm. F. Kidwell, established a coffin and furniture business in Versailles in 1844. The funeral business has been carried on by the Kidwell family for more than one hundred years.

Mr. Nelson opened a general store in Versailles in 1839.

The Martin hotel was started in the Inn building, in 1853. This was located at the southwest corner of the courthouse square, where Jack Clark's service station now stands. The Martins operated the hotel in this location for a year and then bought property where the present Martin hotel now stands.

Petty and Dromgold had one of

the early lumber yards.

Judge Richardson built a small building on the courthouse grounds for his law office. The courthouse square was surrounded by a white corral type fence with many shade trees scattered over it. A well stood on the north side of the courthouse with a windmill over it. The concrete slab on the north side of the courthouse bearing the date it was built, marks the site of the old well. The courthouse was used as a community meeting place for church groups and other organizations. The Methodist church was organized in the courthouse in 1836 and held services there until 1842 when they built the present structure. This courthouse burned in the second major fire in March, 1887.

From 1887 until 1890 the county was without a courthouse or jail. Court was held in Wassung's hall, which stood on the present site of Gerbes store. The county offices were in the buildings in the Lumpee block, which extended from the Bank of Versailles to Gunn's clinic, and in the Spurlock building, which stood where the Corner Store now is.

Hugh Galbraith opened the first store in Versailles, thought to have stood where the B. K. cleaners are now located. The hand-molded bricks were made by a Mr. Jones, whose brick plant was on the present site of the water tower. After Mr. Galbraith sold this building to J. T. Harmon in 1837 he built a brick one story building on the grounds where the Versailles Appliance store is now located, and moved his store there. This property changed hands several times and in 1868 was sold to John Lumpee, Sr., who opened a store under the name Lumpee & Son. This store was in operation until 1899 and Mr. Lumpee had his home where Barnes jewelry shop now stands. A large lawn extended in front of the house to where the Versailles Appliance store now stands.

Wm. Hicks, a harness maker, opened a 3-room log tavern on the site of Clark's service station in 1836. Teams were kept and exchanged on the old Springfield coach line and in the tavern, or inn, many weary travelers put up for the night.

The history of the business places of Versailles would be incomplete without mention of one of the most outstanding general stores in this area. Joachimi's store, operated by Max L. Joachimi, located where the Kroger store now stands, drew customers for miles around. The Joachimi store handled dry goods, silverware, beautiful Haviland chinaware, groceries and meats of all kinds. In the rear of the store a few tables and chairs accomodated customers and tie-haulers and their families who wished to sit down and eat a lunch of cold meats and bread and crack-

ers from the store. This store, founded by John Freebairn in the late 1850's was operated by the Joachimis until 1940. Max Joachima, Jr., sold the building to Charles Bennett in 1940 and this building was torn down and the present brick structure built.

One of the well remembered buildings around the business district of Versailles for a long number of years was the little one-room cabin which stood where the Frigid Food Locker now stands. Here John Toler operated a shoe repair shop where people could take their shoes and have them repaired while they waited. The bent figure of the elderly Mr. Toler was a familiar sight going daily to and from the little shoe shop.

For years the nearest post office was 6 miles north of Tipton. Postage on a letter was 25c and the arrival of a letter meant not only its being read by the one to whom it was sent but also by all the kith and kin and friends in the community. Letters were kept and read time after time by the same people.

The old Jefferson City and Cole Camp stage ran by the old Hopewell church. A stable on a farm close by kept a supply of horses, as horses were changed there and the stagecoach continued on to Cole Camp. The Butterfield Overland mail service began operations September 16, 1858 on a contract that called for a semi-weekly mail delivery on a 25-day schedule from Tipton to San Francisco. The mail and passengers were brought from St. Louis to Tipton by train. The Butterfield coaches traveled south from Tipton and the first stop was at a relay station at Shackelford's near Syracuse. The next stop was at a relay station at Munbollen's near Florence. These two stops were the only ones in Morgan county. Later mail and passenger service was started, letters were more frequent and people did more traveling. When the Missouri-Pacific railway company extended the line from Tipton to Syracuse in 1857 it opened a way for easier travel and mail service.

The first marriage license in Morgan county was issued to Layton Adair and Edith Summers on March 28, 1833. They were married by Philip Barger, justice of the peace, in the house later sold to the county for a courthouse where Shryack-Givens grocery company is now located. A part of this early courthouse was still standing in 1905 and was the rear of Capt. Neilson's home, which was moved to the north part of town. The Odd Fellows lodge erected a 3-story building on this site at a cost of \$35,000. Capt. Neilson's home, which was moved is now the home of Dr. F. A. Crowson.

More Morgan Co. History

Part II

Compiled by Mrs. Royce Moser Sr., Versailles
Edited by Mrs. Gene Bartram

Versailles, Morgan County, Mo. FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1957

The Odd Fellows hall, on the east side of the square, was a familiar landmark here for a long number of years. It played a large part in the social life of the people of Versailles from the time of its completion until it was destroyed by fire many years later.

The third floor was occupied by lodge rooms and a large banquet room with kitchens where church dinners, bazaars, mum shows and other social gatherings were held. The gardeners of Versailles grew mums each year especially for exhibition at the annual mum show, which was largely attended. Since Versailles had no public water system, it was necessary for those serving dinners in the hall to carry all the water needed in the preparation of the meal and dish-washing up the stairs to the hall. Likewise, all waste water and garbage had to be carried down the stairs. There were no rest rooms in the buildings and people were obliged to use the outdoor facilities of the neighbors. Offices occupied the second floor and a general store was on the first floor.

And, speaking of entertainment, no history of this area would be complete without the mention of the picnics which were held in the old Alum Well park, which is now a part of our cemetery. The name of the park was taken from a 20-foot deep well which produced alum water in this area. This water was said to be beneficial to the health of those who drank it.

In this park a picnic was held each Fourth of July and many old timers can remember the barrels of ice water with tin cups tied with rope to the barrels from which the thirsty drank, unmindful of contamination, the stands with cold pink lemonade, ice cream, candy, watermelon, etc. The nickels and dimes of the children also went for the "greatest treat of all"—Uncle Jack Naylor's horse-driven-merry-go-round. The popular tunes of the day were ground out of a small hand operated organ which the children delighted in playing. The merry-go-round was called the "swing buggy" with swinging seats for the riders.

People came early and stayed late at these picnics where band music by our city band furnished entertainment, some young lady recited the Declaration of Independence, the crowd joined in singing "America"

and it was a day long to be remembered.

Churches held protracted meetings in tents in this park also and circuses set up and presented their shows there.

For a long number of years Versailles and Morgan county had no library. In 1921 the Progressive club, started a library in the east wing of the courthouse. Later the womens' Community Club had a library in the courthouse basement, with the members taking turns acting as librarian. A part of these club rooms were used as an assembly room where teas and programs were held and there was a kitchen with tables and a kerosene range where refreshments were prepared for parties given by church groups in these rooms. In those days, when the local churches had no recreation rooms, many Sunday school and church social gatherings were held in the courthouse basement.

On January 1, 1937, the library committee appointed Mrs. B. L. Medicus as librarian and the library was located in the northeast corner of the city hall. In April of 1939 the city voted to make this a city library and in July of 1947 it became the Morgan county library. Mrs. Medicus has given tirelessly of her time and efforts to the library, which has steadily grown and improved over the years to the present fine library, located in the library building at the northeast corner of the square.

The year 1848 in Morgan county was known as the year of the "big sleet," which began to fall on December 8th of that year and by December 31st the sleet was so heavy people could not get through the timber. The forests here showed the effect of this sleet for seventy-five years afterward.

In 1907 six caves were listed as being located in Morgan county. Jacob's cave was the most outstanding and was a place for exploration parties and gatherings for a long number of years before it was purchased by Russell P. Hall and made a commercial cave.

Coal, lead, jack, tiff and clay were mined in Morgan county. There were immense deposits of coal. In 1889 the Globe Mining and Smelting Works on Mill Creek, having a capacity of 6,000 pounds a day, employed a number of workers and operated daily. At one time eight smelters were in operation in the county, one of which was lo-

ca'ed near the present site of the Versailles Feed and Farm Supply store. Tom Thurston, father of Ann Thurston, was fireman for this smelter.

Morgan county still has a good supply of high quality tiff and tiff mines have been in operation from time to time and some people believe the county may still gain renown from the tiff deposits.

A fine quality of clay was found here and Murphy and Barnett Company built a large brick manufacturing plant on the grounds now owned by T. N. Ayres on Clay street. This was later operated by W. S. Dickey Company and many local men were employed here. The cost of the clay plant was around \$100,000 and turned out more than 40,000 bricks per day. The loud whistle at the clay plant, which could easily be heard all over town, and many people set their clocks and watches by the whistle. This whistle was also used as a distress signal and was always sounded as the fire alarm before the city had a water system with a regular fire whistle. In those days the bucket brigades were used to extinguish fires.

Among the articles of manufacture in the county in the old days were brooms, made from broom corn grown here. Ax handles were also manufactured as well as many other wood products. In the south part of the county a woolen mill, giving employment to twenty or more people, was operated. The old mill stood for many years, used as a barn. Many saw mills were in operation in the early days and some continue to operate to this day.

In the olden days when wood was the pincipal fuel for heating homes and business places, a number of men were employed in wood-chopping and wood-hauling, as well as operating wood-saws. Many people can recall the familiar, nostalgic sound of the wood-saws in the fall sawing the winter's supply of wood. Tie makers were numerous in the south, wooded section of the county, also.

As early as 1832 there was a good sized settlement around the Hopewell community. These settlers realized the importance of schools for their children and churches for the families. Farmers in that area donated enough money to purchase a tract of land, which was purchased by Lorenzo Ameick. The first building to be used for a church and school was built of logs and the first school in Morgan county was opened there in 1832. This building burned and the people of this community again raised funds and built another school and church building. The next school was near Joshua McPherson property, north of Hopewell and was taught by a man named Thomas G. Davis. In 1836 another school building was

erected in the Mill Town settlement southeast of town, taught by a Mr. Thomas. All the early buildings were of log construction.

Soon after the county was organized in 1833, it was divided into twenty-four districts and schools were opened in these districts as soon as there was enough tax money to support them. Children often walked three or four miles to school daily to attend the three months school. When the weather became too bad, the school was closed.

The first school house in Versailles was erected in 1836 about where Mrs. Lillian Arnold now lives. This was a one-room log structure. After the courthouse of 1844 was built, the log building formerly used as a court house was used for several years as a school house.

On February 15, 1868 Professor Rhodes sold a log school house in Versailles, in which he had conducted a private subscription school for several years. This building was purchased by Miss Carrie P. Coleman (later Mrs. Geo. P. Clark), who, together with her sister, conducted school and permitted the First Baptist church of Versailles to use the building on Saturday nights and Sundays for church and Sunday school, when the congregation was not meeting in the courthouse or the Methodist church. Miss Coleman and her sister were charter members of the Baptist church. Dr. J. W. Comp taught school in Morgan county in 1867.

A two-story frame school house, consisting of two large rooms, was erected in Versailles around 1867 on the site of the Agee residence property, and served the school purposes here for several years. In 1885 a brick building with four large rooms was built on the site of the present elementary school.

Around 1918, the exact date is not known, W. L. Nelson, then assistant secretary of the Missouri State Board of Agriculture, edited and compiled a book called "A Rural Survey of Morgan County Missouri" in which the late M. Wray Witten, superintendent of Morgan county schools supplied a lot of information regarding the schools in the county. Mr. Witten, who served almost thirty years as superintendent of the schools of the county was born December 28, 1877.

At the time the book was written, Mr. Witten stated there were only two modern brick school building in the county, one in Versailles and the other in Stover. Eight school houses had been built since 1910 and, according to Mr. Witten, one that was built in 1860 was "old, weather-beaten and patched and pierced by bullets of the Civil War." With one exception all the rural school houses were heated by large stoves located in the cen-

ter of the rooms. Morgan county schools at that time depended on drilled wells, of which there were eighteen, cisterns and springs for drinking water for the children. At that time it was thought that the clear, cold water from springs was as good a source of water as any other. Some teachers and pupils were obliged to carry water from neighboring farm houses for the school. At this time the average monthly salary of the teachers in the county was \$45.98. Men teachers numbered 27 and there were 61 women teachers. Most of the teachers were natives of Morgan county.

Prof. S. A. Weltmer, an early Morgan county teacher, built the Akinsville Institute, a private school at Akinsville, in 1884 and conducted it until 1887, when he sold it to a joint stock company, retaining the largest

stock himself. The name was changed to the Akinsville Normal and Commercial Institute and operated up to 1889.

In 1899 two more rooms were added to the Versailles school, for, by this time, the population had increased so the primary pupils were taught in the second story room of the old frame school house, the first floor being then used as a dwelling. In 1907 Morgan county had seventy-five public district free school houses.

During the period of about ten to fifteen years, beginning around 1884, two institutes of higher learning existed in Versailles. J. K. and Frank Gwynn were the first owners of this institute. This was known as the Male and Female Institute with Prof. J. K. Gwynn as instructor and Supt. Gwynn later bought up the stock from the other member of the joint stock company which opened the school. Later his brother, Frank Gwynn, who had taught school two years at Barnett, took charge of the school and conducted it until it was sold to Prof. Innes, who came here from Pennsylvania in the early nineties and started an academy. He was assisted by a Mr. Taylor from Kentucky. Prof. Innes was about seventy-five years old and was considered a fine instructor. This academy was located at the present site of the George and Tom Brown property in the east part of town.

A high school was organized in Versailles in 1893. The board of education was composed of W. H. Kavanaugh, John E. Price (father of Mrs. Jennie Bailey,) Henry Moser (father of Royce Moser) and C. H. Mason, (father of Mrs. S. P. Williams). J. S. Carlisle was the superintendent selected to organize the high school. Ten pupils enrolled and four graduated. The entire high school was in one room with one teacher in charge. The course of study was composed of algebra, geometry, trigonometry,

chemistry, physics, astronomy, botany, physical geography, ancient history, two years Latin and book keeping. There were no school social activities except debates, which were held on Friday afternoon. The first graduating class had no senior week activities but each graduate gave an oration for commencement.

In 1903 when J. A. Livesay was superintendent, a literary society was organized and senior week was inaugurated.

In June 1921 the voters of district 48 voted bonds in the amount of \$31,000.00 to build a new high school here. On the day when the first concrete was poured for the construction of the new building, the grade school building was razed by fire of undetermined origin. Prof. S. J. Holloway was superintendent at that time.

Early in 1922 the taxpayers voted bonds amounting to \$27,000 for the construction of a new grade school. Both the new high school and new grade school were ready for the classes of 1922. During the construction of these buildings, the students were obliged to attend classes in the churches, lodge halls and the courtroom in the courthouse. The original indebtedness on the two buildings was \$58,000.00.

The first church we have record of was the combination log church and school house built in the Hopewell community around 1833. The first church in Versailles was the Methodist church organized in 1836. Services of this congregation were held in the old courthouse which stood on the east side of the square until the present church building was erected in 1842. Rev. Abram Millice was the first pastor of the Methodist church.

The first Baptist church in Versailles was organized January 13, 1868, in the Methodist church building with sixteen charter members, among whom were Catherine Hubbard, grandmother of Douglas Hubbard, Lucey E. Jobe (Todd) mother of Warren Todd, Alice Loller, grandmother of Barry Holloway of New York City and Miss Lois Holloway of St. Joseph, Col. A. W. Anthony, relative of Mrs. P. J. McDonough and Miss Fae Long of St. Louis, Elizabeth Tipton, mother of the late Mrs. Abell, Mary Neff, sister of Mrs. Abell, and Tom Bradbury, her uncle. Dr. Joseph R. Yates, a local physician, was the first Sunday school superintendent and the Rev. J. B. Box was the first pastor of the Baptist church. The Baptists started construction of their building in 1877 and completed it in 1879.

The Christian church here was organized in 1886 with ten members, among whom were John Witten and wife, S. K. Woods, Mary L. Woods, Tabitha French, Susan Anthony, Bettie Robinson, Isaac and Mary Dodson. The first pastor of this church was Rev. O. A. Feltner.

Part III Concluding Historical Facts Concerning Morgan County

Versailles, Morgan County, Mo. FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1897

Compiled by *Versailles*
MRS. ROYCE MOSER *Se.*

Edited by
MRS. GENE N. BARTRAM

On July 9, 1891 a group of Presbyterians met in the Baptist church and organized the First Presbyterian church of Versailles. Their church building was completed and dedicated in 1892. Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Crewson, Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Hubbard, Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Wells, Mr. and Mrs. D. A. Fairley, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Davidson, Mr. and Mrs. Maynard, Mr. and Mrs. Woodbury, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Price, Mr. Quilliam Davidson, Miss Harriett Davidson, Miss Carrie Smith, Mrs. Sarah A. Smith, Mrs. Grace T. Mills, Mrs. Laura Wray, Mrs. B. F. Dunn, Mrs. J. D. Hubbard, Mrs. Ida May Ducy, Mrs. T. J. Pullium.

The church was reorganized in 1902 under the name of Westminster Presbyterian church. The first building was razed in the summer of 1954 and a new building completed in March 1955.

The Episcopal church was organized here in 1888 and meetings were held in the Baptist church. Judge Beverly R. Richardson was a member of this church. Their first pastor was a Rev. Wilkins.

The negro Baptist church was built in Versailles in 1881 and the negro Methodist church was built in 1880.

A Catholic church stood on North Monroe street for a number of years approximately where the Ledgerwood property now stands.

At present we have nine churches in Versailles.

Bethel Mennonite church was organized on April 21, 1867 when a Holy Communion was conducted by John Schmidt and Jacob Pletscher of the Mennonite church in Summerfield, Ill., in a private home with the following charter members: Deacon P. P. Lehman, Sr., and wife. Katharina, son, Peter P. and daughter, Elizabeth, Christian and Anna Loganbill, John and Sarah Loganbill, Miss Elizabeth Gerber, Ulrich and Barbara Aeschbacher, Peter C. A. and Rebecca Lehman, Adam and Anna Basinger, John and Elizabeth Lehman, Christian and Barbara Gerber. The church has one hundred thirty members at present.

Versailles and Morgan county has

many clubs today but in the early days there were a good number of lodges. Among these was the A.O.U.W. Lodge No. 150, organized August 16, 1879 by Dr. P. G. Woods, Dr. J. T. Beale, Elwyn Price, P. T. Walker, John Wassung and F.H.A. Fuegner.

Versailles Lodge No. 231 I.O.O.F. was organized in 1883. Some of the charter members were Louis Lumpee, W. M. Duff, H. Spurlock, W. L. Stephens and John Wassung.

Versailles Lodge No. 117 A. F. and A.M. was organized May 10, 1850 and some of the charter members were W. B. Tooley, Thomas Monroe, S. P. Hunter, J. B. Thruston and Andrew Livingston.

The Royal Arch Chapter No. 72 was organized in 1871 and the Versailles G.A.R. Post was organized in 1881 with the following as first officers: Maj. W. A. Mills, Maj. George Stover, Samuel Tillett and M. Joachimi. The Y.M.C.A. was formed in 1877 with thirteen members. The Versailles Building and Loan Association was organized in 1887. The Improved Order of Red Men was organized in 1907 and in 1900 the M.W.A. lodge was organized. The Woodmen of the World was organized in 1903 and the Knights of Pythias Lodge was organized in 1892 with seventy-five members. This was a very active lodge for years. The Royal Neighbors and Eastern Star were organized later.

The Womens' Civic Club was organized in 1920.

Morgan county now has a number of rural clubs, 4-H clubs, Lion's club, Kiwanis club, Versailles Chamber of Commerce, Womens' Civic Club, Evening Sorosis, Junior Sorosis, Hawthorne Literary Club, Business and Professional Womens Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and others. A Historical Society of Morgan County should be organized in order to gather and preserve historical data for posterity. Records of early settlers of this county should be preserved by such an organization.

John Estes and other members of the Estes family came to Morgan county before 1838 and helped to organize Freedom Baptist church. John Estes was an ensign in the War of 1812. He lived where Joe Sims farm is now located and was the great grandfather of D. O. Young, Thruston and Cora Hawks, the late Mrs. Annie Sumner and Tom Martin, and the great-great grandfather of Royce

Moser, Mrs. L. L. Barber of Kansas City, Barry Holloway of New York, Lois Holloway of St. Joseph, Herbert Cooper of Warsaw and Warren Cooper of Stover.

In the Civil War, the people of the county were divided, with a preference for the Union cause. Between 200 and 300 men are reported as having volunteered with the government volunteer service with around 600 in the enrolled militia service.

The number has been estimated at from 40 to 100 men in the Confederate army. There was never a rebel recruiting officer in the county. Many Union soldiers went to Sedalia and Kansas and Illinois and Missouri didn't get credit on their records for these men.

Among the soldiers of the great wars, buried in Morgan county, are John Kelsay, born 1745, died Oct. 29, 1830, buried in Kelsay cemetery near Hopewell church. Grave is marked with a D.A.R. marker. He was a veteran of the Revolutionary war as was Benjamin Letchworth, great grandfather of Dorsey Letchworth, formerly buried in Shawnee Bend, but moved to Roach cemetery in Camden county when the lake was formed.

Soldiers of the War of 1812, buried in this county are Dr. Hiram R. Fish, Lewis Anthony, James Sims of the South Carolina Militia; buried in Freedom cemetery and Ensign John Estes of the Tennessee Group, who served under Capt. Cowan. F.H.A. Fuegnar, brother-in-law of Max Joachimi, Sr., who served in 1869 in the Franco-Prussian War. Serving with the state militia in the Mormon War were Wm. Sims, buried at Freedom cemetery and Wm. Mobley. There are more monuments in Hopewell cemetery bearing birth dates before 1800 than any other cemetery in the county.

In the old days there were many destructive fires in the town and county. None of the buildings were fireproof and the fire-fighters equipment amounted to bucket brigades who got their water from wells and cisterns scattered over town.

The first major fire in Versailles occurred on October 23, 1886, starting in Fairley and Freeburn's livery stable, located at the present site of the Reed Moore Skelly Service Station. The fire traveled eastward, burning an implement store, a 2-story building in which the postoffice was located, a butcher shop, located in the same building, and a 3-story frame building located where the Corner Store now stands. This building on the corner was used as office rooms and the I.O.O.F. and G.A.R. halls. The City Hotel, a 2-story frame building, located between the present Heineman and Thorpe building, oper-

ated by "Grandma" Long was also destroyed.

A second major fire occurred just five months later on March 13th, 1887. Headlines on the local fire read as follows: "The Second Visitation of the Fiery Fiend Drops Down Upon Our City at the Dead Hour of Midnight and in a Few Short Minutes Strews Wreck and Ruin On Every Hand. The Courthouse Burned and Half the Heart of the City at one Fiery Stroke."

This fire occurred at midnight on Sunday night, originating in the frame building on the northwest corner of the courthouse square, occupied by Banks Bros. drygoods and grocery store and Wm. Czarlinsky's drygoods and clothing store. A high wind fanned the flames across the street to the courthouse, which was destroyed by the fire. Most of the records in the courthouse, however, were saved.

The new brick building of John Lumpee, Fred Bauer's restaurant and confectionery and the Morgan County Leader were damaged greatly but not destroyed.

The fires swept across the street south of the courthouse to the frame building of James A. Spurlock, destroying it and the brick building of G. W. Petty, occupied by J. F. Stephens drugstore and the office and press room of the Messenger-Gazette. The M. F. Jones hardware store and tin shop were saved. John W. Livingston, grocer, estimated his loss at only about \$200.00.

The origination of the fire was unknown. According to the account of the fire in the paper, there was a can of coal oil and a keg of powder in the rear of the Banks store but this was thought not to be near the place where the fire originated.

In summing up the fire, the editor said: "Noble work saved the Leader office. The walls of the courthouse represent "Old Honesty." Water buckets and good working men were in demand at the fire. Sam Livingston did noble work, notwithstanding he had his pants on hind part before. J. F. Stephens, will leave for St. Louis in a few days and buy an entire new stock of drugs. A great deal of honor is due Flem Harrison and W. S. Bray that the Leader outfit is not in ashes. H. H. Violet takes things easy. He lives within two blocks of the square and knew nothing of the fire till the next morning. George W. Petty called for water but no water came, so his substantial brick building and the Messenger-Gazette office were doomed to destruction. Young Emerson also distinguished himself as a fire fighter, as did J. D. Bohling and A. W. Villmoare."

It was said that the home of J. H. Stover was consumed by the fire,

Judge Spurlock's office was only badly scorched and the home of Maj. G. H. Stover was saved by a plentiful application of salt on the roof. The office of B. R. Richardson on the courthouse square was saved but greatly damaged.

It is interesting to learn how some of the towns in Morgan county got their names. Versailles, of course, was named after Versailles in France. Akinsville was named for Rev. Shannon Akins, the owner of the original town site. Barnett was named in honor of a Mr. Barnett. Boylers Mill was named in honor of James Byler. Glensted was named by the founder of the town, Joe Milburn, who named it after the town of Glensted in Germany. Gravois Mills was named because of the great amount of gravel in its streams, the name Gravois in French meaning rubbish, rubble or gravel. Pike, on his exploration trip up the Osage river, marked it Gravel River on his maps.

Marvin was named by Maj. H. L. Marvin, at one time the chief engineer of the railroad built through the place. Proctor was named for a man named Ben Proctor, who made gun powder in a crude way. Stover was named for Col. J. H. Stover, at one time a member of the Congress from this district. Syracuse was located in 1858 and was first called the Pacific City but later changed to Syracuse from Syracuse, New York.