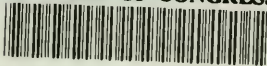


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00012217663















LOUIS HOUCK



**Memorial Sketches**  
of  
**Pioneers**  
**and Early Residents**  
of  
**Southeast Missouri**

**By Louis Houck**

**Cape Girardeau**  
**NAETER BROS., PRINTERS**  
**1915**

F465  
-H83

Gin  
Author  
(Person)  
APR 13 1916



Memory is the treasury and guardian of all things. — *Cicero*.

The aid of a good citizen is never without a beneficial effect, for he assists by everything he does, by listening, by looking on, by his presence, by his nod of approbation, even by his obstinate silence, and by his very gait. — *Seneca*.



## Contents

---

|                                | PAGE |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Louis Lorimier - - - - -       | 1    |
| Alexander Buckner - - - - -    | 19   |
| William Caton Ranney - - - - - | 34   |
| Matilda Rodney Block - - - - - | 45   |
| William Ballentine - - - - -   | 55   |
| Robert Sturdivant - - - - -    | 61   |
| Zerilda Byrne - - - - -        | 73   |
| Timothy O'Keeffe - - - - -     | 77   |
| Jane Day Glasscock - - - - -   | 81   |
| Leo Doyle - - - - -            | 87   |
| Martin Linn Clardy - - - - -   | 93   |
| Thomas Beckwith - - - - -      | 109  |



*For private distribution only, these addresses and memorial sketches, scattered leaves from the tree of my literary life, have been gathered into this little volume. With the exception of Louis Lorimier and Alexander Buckner, I attempt to record the life story of dear and loved personal friends, unknown to the wide and tumultuous world, and who quietly after a life of usefulness went to the realms beyond. Their memory is dear to me and fondly I hope, for a little time at least, to preserve their honored names and virtues in these pages.*

*"Elmwood,"  
January, 1915*





# Louis Lorimier

## Founder of Cape Girardeau\*

**A**FTER all, how short a span of time is a century! It is an invisible atom in the eternity of time. Yes, less than an atom, a passing thought. For this reason, a memorial meeting to honor Louis Lorimier, the founder of our city, after he has gone to his long rest this day one hundred years ago, is not altogether out of place.

As we look backward, the time since he was buried in the old graveyard overlooking the river seems like a day.

It is only when we contemplate the changes that have taken place here and in our country, that we fully realize how long it is since he died.

When Lorimier died we had no daily newspaper to record every detail of his adventurous life, no camera to instantaneously preserve for us a correct picture of his form, his figure, his features, or a

---

\*Address delivered at court house of Cape Girardeau on June 26, 1912.

phonograph capable of transmitting to future time the very sound of his voice.

Although he was an important personage, not only here, but in the great Indian country along Lake Erie, we are compelled to rely for details of his life on such scanty facts as have escaped oblivion by accident. No one, when he died, took the trouble to preserve for us in writing any incident of his varied, enterprising and stirring life. Everybody knew all about it then, and that was deemed enough. Why preserve a chronicle of events that everybody knew, white settlers as well as the Indians? We may be certain that all the prominent settlers of that early time attended his funeral, as well as his Indian relatives: A son of a brother of Lorimier named Ini-Oi-Pi-Ai-Chi-Ca, and Leno-Wa-Ka-Mi-Chi-Ca, the wife of his brother, we may be sure came down from the Big Shawnee village on Apple Creek to attend his funeral, and so also Kau-Ai-Pi-Chi-Ca, a sister of his wife. It is also certain that many of the Indians were assembled around his grave at that time. They all knew of the events of his eventful career. And no doubt a modern reporter, if he could interview those who

attended his funeral at that time, would find much to interest the readers of today. But no one was then present who took an interest to record his interesting career, and so the great salient incidents of his life were allowed to be forgotten. We know just enough to feel that his life was a restless romance, for, in a way, every life is a romance, sometimes dull, sometimes laughable, sometimes adventurous, sometimes heroic and more often tragic.

Lorimier's life from the day of his birth until the day of his death at Cape Girardeau (also called by him Lorimont) was not a dull life, but a life of adventure, of exploits, of hardships, of self-denial, of enterprise and achievements.

His life naturally divides itself into two parts, that is to say, his life east and his life west of the Mississippi.

Born at Lachine, on the Island of Montreal, and on the banks of the St. Lawrence, he naturally from earliest infancy, became interested in the Indian trade, and in his maturer age engaged in that trade. The Indian trade was the great business of that time. The Lorimier family seems to have been

identified with this trade from a very early period. His ancestor was Guillaume Lorimier, a native of Paris, who arrived in Quebec, Canada, in 1695 and died in Montreal in 1705. He was a captain in the French service. He commanded some of the French forts on the St. Lawrence, and following that river finally reached the Island of Montreal, and where, as stated, he died. It is certain, one of his descendants, the father of Louis Lorimier, settled at Lachine, and during the French occupancy of Canada traded with the Miami Indians then living in Ohio. During the French and Indian war a Lorimier, undoubtedly his father, under the command of St. Luc de la Corne, was in command of the Miami Indians at the capture of Fort William Henry. Montcalm was in command of the French forces on that occasion. The fort was surrendered to the French in 1756, and Lorimier, at that time thirteen years of age, very probably accompanied his father and the Indians on their march from Ohio to the seat of war in New York. He there saw the regiments from France under Montcalm engaged in actual war as he had never seen it before among the Indians. No doubt like other boys he noted many things that

were new and curious to him. Although he never enjoyed the benefit of what we now consider an education, for he never attended school, could not read, and write only his name, he received the education of the woods and prairies, of the rivers and lakes. Indians were the companions of his youth, and with them he roamed through the land when not at his trading post in the wilderness. His education was essentially a military education, an education for war, and General Collot, who visited him at his post in Cape Girardeau in 1796 says that he had a military education.

After the surrender of Canada to the English in 1769, Lorimier's father was engaged in the Indian trade at the portage of the two Miamis, at a place called Pickawillany. This trading post was also known as Lorimier's station, or "The Frenchman's Store." A creek or branch of a river in that locality in Ohio, to this day bears his name. He and his father traded here with the Miamis, Shawnees, Delawares and other Indians. We have no record of when his father died. But during the Revolutionary war, Lorimier himself sided with the English—he was a violent Tory. From his station

went out many of the Indian forays against the American settlements of Western Pennsylvania and Kentucky. At that time Lorimier station was well known both in Europe and America, and we have reason to believe that Lorimier himself was not an idle looker-on in that eventful and exciting period. He was a natural leader among the Indians—a master of their language. His wife was the daughter of a Shawnee chief. He was no doubt adopted by them, and a chief among them. It would be interesting to know his Indian name. His influence among the Shawnees and Delawares was unbounded. In 1778, during the Revolutionary war, at the head of a band of forty Shawnees and Miamis he made a raid on Boonsborough, in Kentucky, captured Daniel Boone, and carried him and his family to Chillicothe, then the principal Shawnee and Miami village north of the Ohio. In this expedition he was accompanied by another Frenchman named St. Aubin.

After the Independence of the United Colonies was recognized, his activity did not cease. The Indians were not satisfied. The British loyalists were all disappointed, the Indians would not recog-

nize the authority of the new Federal government, nor concede the right to this government to interfere with their lands, nor acknowledge its territorial jurisdiction. The British traders remained at their posts in northwestern Ohio, Lorimier among them. The British refused to vacate Detroit on one pretense or another, and thus the Indians were encouraged to resist. English officers surreptitiously fomented trouble. An Indian war resulted. The English supplied arms and ammunition. During all this time Lorimier's Station, or the "Frenchman's Store," was a centre of activity. The overwhelming defeat of St. Clair by the Indians followed. The Shawnees, Delawares and other Indians invaded the white settlements and killed white settlers along the banks of the Ohio and in Kentucky. Finally the Kentuckians organized an expedition, invaded the Indian country and destroyed the "Frenchman's Store," and Lorimier had to flee for his life. He established another trading post farther west known as Lorimier's encampment, but afterwards was driven out by the army of Anthony Wayne and his encampment destroyed. During all this time, Lorimier we can well imagine,

played no inconsiderable part in the counsels of the Indians. But the Indians were finally subdued and Lorimier retired with a part of them to the Wabash, secured new goods from an American fur trading concern known as the Miami company, and after a year or so of unprofitable trade on the Wabash, ruined financially, with a band of Shawnees and Delawares in about 1786, moved across the Mississippi into Upper Louisiana. This, in short, is an outline of his life on the east side of the Mississippi so far as it can be traced.

He settled on the west side of the Mississippi by permission of the Spanish government. He at first established himself on the Saline, six or seven miles west of the present town of St. Mary's, at a place still called the Big Shawnee spring. Here he had a trading post in partnership with Henry Peyroux, who at that time was commandant of Ste. Genevieve. He also acted as interpreter for the Spanish government. At the instance of the Spanish officials he solicited Delawares and Shawnees and other Indians to settle in the Spanish Dominion, and many of these Indians, overwhelmed and cowed as they had been by the American forces, were



anxious to leave the country. On the other hand, the Spaniards were just as anxious for these Indians to settle on the west side of the river in order to protect the Spanish settlements against the Osage Indians. The Osages were less civilized and were more barbarous than the Indians on the east side of the river. Up to that time they had but little intercourse with white people. The Shawnees, Delawares, Miamis and Loups on the other hand, had traded and trafficed with white men and settlers for over one hundred years. In order to secure a settlement of these Shawnees and Delawares, the Spanish government made them a grant of land extending from Apple Creek to the St. Francois and further west, embracing several hundred thousand acres of land. Lorimier thus became a trusted Spanish agent in Indian affairs. As such he was frequently called to St. Louis to act as advisor and interpreter. He remained at Big Shawnee Springs until these Indians were well settled and established in a large village on Apple Creek, and then finally moved to the present site of Cape Girardeau in about 1792. His influence among the Indians was found so very useful to the Spanish

government that the Spanish officials realized the importance of securing him an independent trading post. All the Spanish post commandants were engaged in trade more or less, and of course Lorimier could not successfully manage the Indians in a district the trade of which was claimed by another district commandant. At that time the boundaries of the Ste. Genevieve district extended as far south as Apple Creek, and the New Madrid district extended north to Apple Creek or Cinque Homme (more properly St. Come), and the Indian trade of territory was claimed by these commandants, and when Lorimier first established himself at Cape Girardeau, in the New Madrid district, he interfered with the trade claimed by the commandant of New Madrid, and this caused some friction. Lorimier, however, traded on the St. Francois, White and Arkansas Rivers under some kind of license, and finally in 1793 secured a concession from Carondelet to establish himself where Cape Girardeau is now located, and was made commandant of a new district. This location was also claimed by Gabriel Cerre one of the great Indian traders of that time, and after Carondelet had

granted the land here to Lorimier, Cerre made a claim for it, and his cause was laid before Gayoso, then the Governor General of Louisiana, and decided in favor of Lorimier because of the great service Lorimier had rendered the Spanish government, and Cerre was promised compensation elsewhere. But Thomas Portelle, commandant of New Madrid at the time when Lorimier first established himself at Cape Girardeau, came in conflict with him as to his jurisdiction in what is now Scott and Mississippi counties. Peyroux, who succeeded Portelle in New Madrid, also objected to land grants made by Lorimier, but the boundary line between the Cape Girardeau and New Madrid districts was established by Caso Calvo about five miles below the present town of Commerce, and Soulard, the surveyor of upper Louisiana under the Spanish government, was ordered to survey the line west to the St. Francois River. Lorimier was conceded by Carondelet a grant of a league square, about 6,000 acres, where the city of Cape Girardeau is now located, and this grant was afterwards confirmed by the United States. All the Indian trade from Cape Girardeau southwest to White River and the Arkansas, was also granted to him.

These great favors were shown Lorimier principally on account of his invaluable services in 1793 and 1794 when Upper Louisiana was threatened by an invasion of American filibusters. The Spanish officials of Upper Louisiana then greatly relied on Lorimier and his Indian allies to secure proper information as to possible attacks upon the colony. This was a period of incessant activity for Lorimier, as fully appears from his journal of that eventful period that has been preserved in the Spanish archives.<sup>1</sup> He travelled up and down the river at all seasons seeking to ascertain what movements possibly might be made by filibustering expeditions, rumors of which filled the whole country. The Indians from the east and west side of the river assembled here then, and were fed by Lorimier, received presents, held big counsels and were sent out as spies to ascertain what movements of hostile character were being made on the Ohio. But this threatened invasion came to naught.

From 1792 until the purchase of the country by the United States, Lorimier devoted himself to the development and upbuilding of the Cape Girardeau

---

(1) This journal published in Houck's *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, Vol. II, p. 59, was written by his secretary, Louis Francois Largau.

district. He became a Spanish subject in 1794 and the oath of loyalty was administered to him by the Lieutenant-Governor Trudeau. During this period he carried on a large fur trading business, and in one of his letters, Carondelet complains that he bought too many of his goods from the Americans, and cautioned him not to do so. In 1796 the first Americans came to the Cape Girardeau district and settled near his grant, encouraged by Lorimier and his able and talented secretary Bartholomew Cousins. In 1804 when the country was purchased by the United States, Stoddard remarked that the Cape Girardeau district was inhabited by the most intelligent and progressive farmers on the west side of the river.

In 1803, Lorimier participated with the Cape Girardeau company in an expedition to New Madrid. This was the last military demonstration of the Spaniards in Upper Louisiana.

During the Spanish dominion, Lorimier laid out no town here. A few trading houses were located along the river bank, a gunsmith and a blacksmith shop existed, and that is about all. Bartholomew Cousins' house stood where now is the St. Charles

Hotel. Lorimier's house stood where now is located the Parochial school, not very far from the Big Spring on Fountain Street, so named on account of this spring. His house must have been painted red, for it was known as "The Red House," and was a stopping place for all the Spanish officials that came up and down the river, as well as of the American officials who came up the river to go to Kaskaskia. When the United States took possession of Upper Louisiana, no town was established in the Cape Girardeau district, and in order to secure the seat of justice for the Cape Girardeau district, Lorimier donated the four acres of ground where this Court House now stands and \$200 in labor, to erect a court building out of logs. After the purchase, he was appointed one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas and Quarter sessions, but held this position for only a short time. He held no other official position afterwards. In 1808 he laid out the old original town and sold some lots. But when his Spanish title was rejected by the first Board of Commissioners in 1807, no sale of lots could be made, and owing to the uncertainty of his title and doubt as to the final outcome, in 1815

the county seat was moved from Cape Girardeau to Jackson, and Jackson became the principal town of the district and Cape Girardeau a mere landing. It was not until 1820, eight years after Lorimier's death, that it became a settled belief that Lorimier's title and the title to other lands similarly situated, would in the end be confirmed by the United States. But then the moment for the rapid growth of a town here and the first wave of emigration into the Louisiana territory had passed. It was not until 1840 that Cape Girardeau emerged from under the cloud cast over the town by the rejection of the Lorimier claims in 1807.

A few other facts concerning Lorimier, we find in the old records. He evidently had an old fashioned idea that he ought to pay his debts. When he left the United States, he owed some money, and his creditors did not hesitate to follow him across the river to make collections. He did not avail himself of the plea that they could not bring suit in a foreign country and all that, but settled in deer skins, the currency then equivalent to cash, that is by delivering deer skins, or giving his notes payable in deer skins at some future time. And we

have the testimony of the Miami company that he paid. Also the records in Cahokia show that he arbitrated contested claims. Evidently he did not hunt law suits.

Another case we have. He was visited by General Ben Logan from Kentucky, to reclaim a colored woman which had been taken by the Indians and sold by them to Lorimier. He refused to give up the woman, claiming that she was the only help he had, but he settled with Logan for the woman by giving him a lot of ponies.

He lost \$1,000 on a bet with Andrew Ramsay on a horse race. He gave his note to pay the debt and paid \$800 during his life, the balance was allowed against his estate. Evidently he believed in paying his losses when he gambled on a horse race.

Before the Louisiana purchase, a Delaware Indian, who had murdered a white man in Illinois, escaped across the river into his district, expecting to escape justice, but he was mistaken. When Lorimier was advised of the facts he traced out the Indian, captured him and sent him back to Illinois where afterwards he was hanged in Cahokia for



his crime. The thanks of the United States were conveyed to him by direction of President Jefferson through Marquis de Casa Yurjo, the Spanish Ambassador.

On another occasion a horse thief was apprehended in his district. He was summarily dealt with, receiving thirty lashes on his bare back and then told to leave the district, and never to return. All without lawyers, without a trial by jury and without expense.

His goods as merchant and trader he purchased principally from William Morrison of Kaskaskia, but it is not to be supposed that he had a store like we now have. The Indian traders at that time had all their goods packed in chests and boxes, and as customers would call, settlers or Indians, these goods were displayed when called for, and not otherwise. He was a warm personal friend of Pierre Menard of Kaskaskia, afterwards Lieutenant Governor of Illinois, and of Francois Valle, commandant of Ste. Genevieve.

We know little of his personal appearance. I have heard it said, forty years ago, by those that knew him personally, that he was a person of

medium height, that he had black eyes and black hair, that he was not corpulent, and that he wore a very long queue, which he sometimes used as a riding whip. That he usually rode a pony. That he was taciturn, perhaps a habit acquired by long association with the Indians. That he was quick and very energetic in his movements, and very active.

And this is about all I can tell you about Louis Lorimier, except that he enjoyed the unlimited confidence of De Lassus, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Louisiana, and that General Salcedo the Governor General of Louisiana highly recommended him as a person to be trusted in every way to the government of the United States. And all of which would tend to show that he was a man of high character and integrity.

# Alexander Buckner

Third United States Senator of Missouri \*

WE meet today to pay posthumous honor to one of the pioneers of our country, to pay him those funeral honors he did not receive, although occupying an exalted public position, at the time when he fell a victim to a dreadful epidemic. In the anxiety and struggle, excitement and enjoyment of the present we too often forget the men of the past. Soon all memory of their labor vanishes from the common recollection of men. Soon their very names become an unfamiliar sound. Soon neglected and forgotten are their graves. Thus one whose exploits have been forever embalmed in the brilliant and classic pages of Washington Irving lies buried in this graveyard, but no stone marks the last resting place, and no one living can

---

\*Address delivered at his re-interment in the old cemetery of Cape Girardeau before the Grand Master of Masons of the State of Indiana, Hon. Mason I. Niblack and Grand Secretary Hon. William H. Smythe, and members of St. Marks lodge of Cape Girardeau and others—September 28th, 1897.

now point to the spot where was buried the heroic and chivalric Robert McClelland. Yet it is the work of the men of the past bequeathed to us that is our priceless heritage. It is because they labored and suffered, dared and did, thought and executed, because they laid deep the foundation of our civic institutions that we today are enjoying a material prosperity, the marvel of the world. And how little we think of the past. How little we cherish the recollection of our great commonwealth builders. How indifferent to us the story of the small beginnings from which have grown these great states, imperial in resources and power.

And only one hundred years ago this great valley was a primeval wilderness. True, the advance guard of our civilization had crossed the Alleghenies. Slowly and laboriously with ox teams these adventurous spirits pushed into this Valley of Jehosaphat, from the frontiers of Pennsylvania, Virginia and the Carolinas, beset by dangers and suffering every privation. Through the vast wilderness they opened roads, in the vast wilderness they reared their log cabins, in the vast and unbroken forest they cleared their farms, planted the

seeds of the great commonwealths that in an unbroken cordon extend through this great valley, and laid the foundation of many of the cities that now sparkle like jewels in the land. They were a breed of marvelous men, those early pioneers. They were bold and brave, self-reliant and independent, adventurous and prudent, far-seeing and sagacious, and, with all our boasted intelligence and education, far superior to us in all those elements necessary to perform well the great work of laying deep the foundation of a free government. We give their work rarely a passing thought. What indifference! What ingratitude! Among the ancients, divine honors were paid the founders of cities and states. The adventurers who planted a new city or state on the shores of far distant seas or in foreign and barbarous lands were celebrated in poetry and song, annual festivals and games commemorated the auspicious event, marble columns recorded their honored names, and the glowing canvas told the eye the wondrous story.

As one of the most distinguished pioneers, not only of Missouri, but of Indiana and the west, we must consider Alexander Buckner, to whose mem-

ory today we pay honor. He was a native of Kentucky, born in 1785, the son of Nicholas Buckner.

Nicholas Buckner doubtless was a descendant of the Buckners that settled in Gloucester county, Virginia, as far back as 1635. Like so many Virginians of that period, he came to Kentucky, then a county of Virginia, to take possession of a land-claim received for military services, and settled in what is now Jefferson county, or, as then said, near the falls of the Ohio.

And in Kentucky Alexander Buckner was born.

When he first saw the light of day the Revolutionary war had just ended. Some of the soldiers of the Revolution must have been his earliest friends, for Kentucky was principally settled by Revolutionary soldiers. To Kentucky many of these soldiers, who had been bankrupted by the great struggle, or were filled with aspiration and ambition, moved to better their fortunes, as to a new Eldorado. For it must be remembered that these soldiers of the Revolution received no pension. Around and near the falls of the Ohio especially did these soldiers settle. There the great hero, General George Rogers Clark, lived, who,

with a small band of Virginians, had conquered the vast territory between the Ohio and the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. In the neighborhood of the falls many of his officers and soldiers had acquired land, and on the opposite shore in Indiana the state of Virginia had located a military grant to reward Clark and his men.

Alexander Buckner grew up among these Revolutionary patriots. His earliest recollections must have related to the transcendent struggle. The heroes of this struggle he always loved and cherished. He was always ready to show them every honor.

After he came to our county, at the funeral of Colonel Ranney—a revolutionary soldier, who fought under Washington at Monmouth, and also participated in the war of 1812, a pioneer, too, of Indiana—Mr. Buckner delivered the funeral oration.

Where Senator Buckner was educated cannot now be ascertained, but that he received a liberal education is manifest from the papers and letters still in existence written by him. That he was a

man of literary tastes is shown by the library inventoried by his executor after his death.

He was a lawyer by profession. In 1812, at the age of twenty-seven years, we find him a resident of Charlestown, Clark county, Indiana, engaged in the active practice of law. In Clark county was located the Virginia grant to Clark's soldiers, and there he lived until 1818, when he removed to the territory of Missouri. Why he removed from Indiana is not now definitely known, but in a sketch of his life published in the *Jackson Eagle* after his death it is said that he removed to Missouri because he became involved in a duel at Charlestown. At that time a duel was the ordinary method by which questions of honor were settled among gentlemen. Nor is it to be supposed that a man reared among Revolutionary soldiers and breathing from infancy the atmosphere of exalted manhood and independence would fail to challenge or decline a challenge when his personal honor was involved. It was the practice of the times, the accepted method of settling personal controversy. It was a time when he who made a charge in any way reflecting upon the character of another could be



asked to stand before the party aggrieved to vindicate his assertions with his blood, or stand branded forever as a coward and slanderer. Then it was no small matter to assail the character of any man by false or dishonorable assertions.

When Senator Buckner settled in what is now Indiana, in 1812, the state had not been admitted to the Union. That great commonwealth, with a population now of over two millions, at that time only had a population of a little more than twenty-four thousand, and that population was dispersed along the Ohio and Wabash rivers. The central and northern section of the state was a wilderness, with here and there a log cabin scattered in the vast forests. Among these Indiana pioneers Alexander Buckner acted certainly no inconsiderable part. But all those matters which may have seemed to him most important when living, and by which, perhaps, he hoped to be remembered, seem utterly to have faded from the recollection of men. The fact that he was once a resident of Indiana, a pioneer of that great state, even would have vanished in oblivion but for the circumstances that he took a prominent and leading part in organizing

the Grand Lodge of Masons of Indiana. Where he was made a Mason is not now known. But he became a member of the Blazing Star Lodge of Charlestown. And how well that Lodge was named! Those pioneer craftsmen of the Blazing Star Lodge of Charlestown, I think, in the dim future fancied they could foresee the great destiny of Masonry in the new land, and, raising aloft their standard, it seemed to them they saw a "blazing star" in the wilderness. Nor were they deceived. Like a "blazing star" the imperial commonwealth of Indiana sparkles in the glorious national galaxy.

As the representative of this lodge at Corydon, Alexander Buckner, in 1817, wrote the report and suggested the first steps to be taken to organize the Grand Lodge of the State of Indiana. In January, 1818, he was elected first Grand Master of Indiana, but in that year he also removed to Missouri Territory, and in September, 1818, his successor was elected. That he was active in high Masonic affairs this record shows. And the Grand Lodge of Indiana has not allowed his name to perish, nor his grave to lie forgotten in obscurity and

neglect. All honor to them for their loyalty to the early fathers of the craft, for their filial devotion, their homage to the men of the past who labored so well and builded so wisely. But not only have the loyal and devoted Masons of Indiana preserved well the work of this pioneer of the craft in that state; they have also preserved for us in Missouri a thread showing an early and intimate connection between the earliest Missouri Masons and the craft in Indiana. After Past Grand Master Buckner left Indiana, his interests in Masonry did not cease. Mainly through his efforts, it is to be supposed by special dispensation from the Grand Lodge of Indiana, privileges were granted to establish Unity Lodge at Jackson. And Buckner was its first master. This Unity Lodge was no doubt one of the first, if not the first, lodge of Masons organized in Missouri, but all its records have been lost. The Grand Lodge of Indiana has made diligent search for these important documents, but in vain. How interesting it would be to have now a list of those pioneer hierarchs of Masonry in Missouri. But their names have been swallowed by oblivion.

When Alexander Buckner moved to Missouri

territory he was accompanied by his father and five sisters. The family was wealthy for those days, and owned a number of servants. One of his sisters married James Evans, then a leading attorney of Southern Missouri, residing at Jackson. The public and political career of Buckner in Missouri was conspicuous from the beginning. Scarcely had he settled in this state when he was appointed to the office of circuit attorney. Within fourteen months after his arrival he was elected one of the five representatives of Cape Girardeau county to the Constitutional convention to frame the first organic law of the state. His brother-in-law, Evans, was also elected a member, and Colonel Abraham Byrd, Judge Thomas and Joseph McFerron being the other members from our county. These were all old and prominent citizens. Colonel Byrd had settled in the county during the Spanish dominion. Judge Thomas had been judge of the Territorial courts for a number of years, and McFerron was long clerk of the court. So the fact that he was elected as a member of the Constitutional convention, although just settled in the territory, must be taken as evidence that he was a man of solid if

not pre-eminent ability, popular in manners, and convincing, if not eloquent, as a public speaker. In those early days a great deal depended upon ability to ably present public questions in a public speech. Public matters were publicly discussed. The era of the newspaper press, partisan or independent, subsidized or corrupt, had not dawned in this country. It is certain that Senator Buckner must in no common degree have possessed the power to influence the popular mind in order to be elected, under the circumstances, to represent the county in the Constitutional convention. For the early settlers in this county were equal in intelligence to any that ever settled in a new country. They were liberty-loving men and men of sturdy independence. Many had participated in the Revolutionary war or were descendants of the soldiers of that war. They were a homogeneous people, Americans by birth, and had braved the terrors of the wilderness in order to settle in this trans-Mississippi territory.

In the struggles of the Constitutional convention Buckner must have acceptably represented the people of this county, for, after the organization of

the state government, he was elected a member of the state Senate. In 1830 he was elected a member of Congress, and while a member of Congress was elected to the Senate of the United States as the successor of Barton, and thus became the third Senator of Missouri.

Senator Buckner, after he came to this county, married Mrs. Weems, a member of the Horrell family, originally from Maryland, and this marriage allied him with one of the oldest and most respected families of our county.

But just arrived at the threshold of a great career, and ready to take part in the great political struggles of the times, he fell a victim of epidemic cholera, prevailing extensively in 1833 in this country. He died on the 6th day of June, 1833, on his farm about five miles south of Jackson. His wife died within a few hours after him, and both were buried on the farm in the same grave, leaving no descendants. There, over sixty-four years, he has rested undisturbed by the great changes that have taken place, all unconscious of the sad neglect of his grave, and all unconcerned that the

very recollection of his name has faded away in the scenes of his former activity.

Senator Buckner, it is said by those who remember him personally, was of medium height and well proportioned. His bearing was dignified, some even say proud. He was genial in his manners, affable and courteous, and as a public speaker persuasive, if not eloquent. He was a man of unblemished character and reputation. He was industrious, and it is evident from the papers of his estate that he was methodical in his habits and careful in his contracts, and punctual in all his engagements. He was affectionate in his disposition, liberal and charitable, as is evidenced by the bequest of \$1,000 he makes in his will for the education of a little nephew by marriage to whom he seems to have been much attached. He was a man of literary tastes, a lawyer of ability. His law library, for those times considerable, he willed to his friend, Greer W. Davis, who a few years ago left us for his long home.

At the time of his death Senator Buckner was rapidly growing in popular esteem in this State. His public career was unbroken by defeat. This

fact in itself is remarkable, evidencing, as it does, his wisdom, sagacity, moderation and profound knowledge of popular wants. It is easy for those who suffer defeat to attribute it to popular ignorance or prejudice, and to attribute the success of rivals to blind fortune. But success usually is the result of profound study, indefatigable work and merit, while failure and defeat is the result of superficial study, ill-directed work and real defects of character. No rule is without exceptions, and no doubt many have failed who deserved success; but the rule applies generally to a public career as well as business enterprise.

Take, then, all the little we know and that has come down to us of the active life of Alexander Buckner, and we must say that he was a pioneer of whom we have just reason to be proud, and that it is fit that we should pay him honor today; that in honoring him the Grand Lodge of Indiana has honored itself and put to shame us,—in whose midst his bones have rested so long unnoticed, unmarked and unhonored.

The culture, refinement, and, in fact, the civilization of a people can be measured by the respect

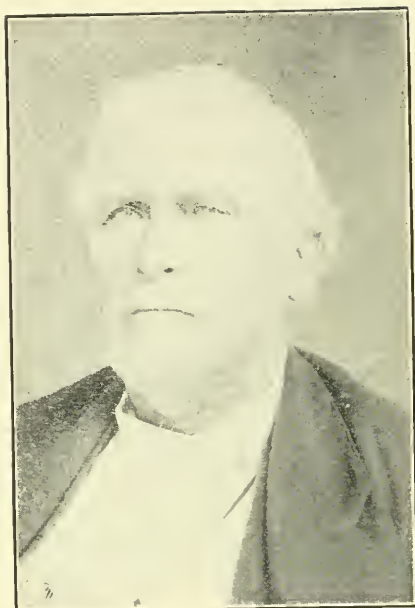


paid its honored and distinguished dead. From a people taking no interest in the history of its past, taking no interest in the struggles that led to the establishment of its existence, drawing no inspiration from the lives and examples of its eminent men of an earlier time, little can be expected. Such a people and such men, sunk in a gross materialism, and living only to make gains, oblivion has already marked for its own.

And now, here in this old graveyard, where sleep so many of the pioneers of this section of our great state, the Grand Lodge of Indiana rears this monument over the ashes of its earliest Grand Master. May this memorial stone stand as an enduring testimonial of filial affection as long as this river at your feet flows to the all-embracing and boundless rolling sea.







WILLIAM CATON RANNEY

## William Caton Ranney

First Judge of the Cape Girardeau Court  
of Common Pleas\*

ON Monday, February 28th, 1898, Hon. William Caton Ranney, aged 83 years and 8 days, died at his residence, "Spring Farm," in this county.

At the time of his death Judge Ranney was one of our oldest citizens. Born in New York in 1815, he came to our county with his parents in 1825, so that at the time of his death he had been a resident here for fully seventy-three years.

Judge Ranney was of New England ancestry—a descendant of the Pilgrim fathers, not generally, but by direct descent. He was a son of Col. Stephen Ranney, a soldier of the Revolutionary war of the Connecticut line, who served under Washington in the New Jersey campaign. In the war of 1812 his father was Lieutenant Colonel of the First U. S. Infantry. His mother was from

---

\*This memorial of Judge Ranney was first published shortly after his death in the daily Cape Girardeau Democrat.

Massachusetts, her name, Elizabeth Hathorne, a relative of Nathaniel Hathorne.

Judge Ranney was educated in the pioneer schools of our county and at St. Marys' Seminary, also known as the "Barrens," near Perryville. When a youth he was employed in the office of Circuit Clerk Henry Sanford, at Jackson, and after he returned from school acted as deputy clerk. In 1838 he was admitted to the bar. For a short time he was engaged in mercantile pursuits at Bloomfield. After Stoddard county was organized he was one of the commissioners to lay out the county seat, Bloomfield. When the Cape Girardeau Court of Common Pleas was established in 1852 he was appointed first judge of the court, and to this position he was re-elected from time to time until the year 1861. In 1871 he was elected a member of the State Senate and afterwards a member of the House of Representatives.

In everything tending to improve and promote the welfare of this county, Judge Ranney took a deep interest and prominent part. He was an original advocate of the system of gravel roads, that so favorably distinguishes our county, and

which have done so much for its development. He was one of the first stockholders and promoters of the Jackson gravel road, the Bloomfield gravel road and the Scott county gravel road. For many years he took an active interest in the management of the last two roads especially. In 1858 he favored the construction of a railroad from St. Louis via Pilot Knob to Cape Girardeau and thence to Belmont and aided in securing the incorporation of such a company and for a time also acted as president of the company. He was one of the original incorporators of the Southeast District Agricultural Society, and after the war actively assisted in its re-organization and for several years was president of the society.

Politically, Judge Ranney originally belonged to the Whig party. When the Union was threatened in 1861 he was a Union man; he voted against and opposed secession. But when the storm of war burst over the land, and northern armies came into Missouri, all slaveholders, irrespective of their political opinions, were indiscriminately, directly and indirectly, deprived of their slaves and property by patriots who had nothing to lose by emancipation.

In 1865 Judge Ranney, together with many others who had never engaged in the war or active hostilities against the United States was disfranchised by the Drake constitution.

For nearly fifty years Judge Ranney lived on his farm, five miles south of Cape Girardeau, and on the farm where he died. It can be truly said that he died a farmer.

In 1844 Judge Ranney married Elizabeth Giboney, second daughter of Mr. Robert Giboney, one of the earliest settlers of this country and when it was a part of the Dominion of Spain.

These in short are the leading events in the life-history of Judge William C. Ranney. Such events are not difficult to narrate.

In his personality Judge Ranney was distinguished. He was over six feet high and quite corpulent for many years before his death. He was dignified and erect in bearing. His head was large and well shaped, his eyes were steel gray and penetrating, his complexion fair, his voice, when among friends, cheerful, clear and musical, but when unjustly assailed, and he was hardly ever justly assailed, harsh and defiant.

But to sketch those subtle characteristics that



so long made the name of Judge Ranney in this county a synonym for courage, honesty, integrity, fair dealing and public spirit is no easy task.

In his manner he was plain and unassuming, and without ostentation. He was self-respecting without being proud. He was open and candid in his intercourse with others, always frankly and sometimes bluntly, expressed his opinion. He was incapable of double dealing, saying one thing and meaning another, promising one thing and doing another. Honor and integrity were his natural inheritance, and as inseparable from him as the air he breathed. Unconsciously and naturally he repelled the attempts of those that aimed, even unwittingly, to tarnish the bright escutcheon of his integrity. Thus when a member of the State senate, before the enactment of the constitutional and legislative provision against the acceptance of railroad passes by a public officer, he returned the passes transmitted to him with the remark, that the state paid his traveling expenses, as a senator, from and to the state capitol. He hated wrong and oppression, and was always ready to stand in the breach for the rights of the people. Thus he re-

sisted the iniquitous railroad debt and tax that had been fastened upon the people of this township when most of the principal taxpayers were disfranchised and spent his time and money in an endeavor to relieve the property of the township from this heavy burden, although villified by many for his course in the matter. But threats, abuse and vilification could not swerve him from what he considered right and just. He was a man of undoubted courage. During the war, when predatory soldiers too often made the lives and homes of the citizens in a border state unsafe, while not seeking trouble and always prudent, he never on all proper occasions, failed to protect home and fireside. Thus on one occasion, when some of these irresponsible scouts proposed to search his home for suspected Confederates, he told them that no Confederates were on his premises, that his niece was upstairs sick, and that they might look around the place below, but could not go upstairs, and he planted himself at the head of the stairs, and so firm and undaunted was his appearance and conduct that the lawless band desisted and went away. One of his most marked characteristics was his firm and un-

yielding determination. When he had once made up his mind he rarely ever deviated from a course marked out. Thus when, in 1838, on business for Stoddard county, just then organized, he was on his way to Jefferson City on horseback, he found on his route a river swollen by a freshet and no ferry. He did not stop, but plunged in with his horse to swim the river. In crossing a river in this manner on horseback it is dangerous to pull the bridle, so he threw it over the neck of the horse and let him go. About half way across the stream, the horse turned and swam back. But he started him in again, and when the horse was about the middle of the stream he turned again and swam back. So the third time. Undaunted he went into the river a fourth time and when near the center of the stream pushed the horse's head in the water, and this so confused the animal as to the direction he was moving, that he carried him across. It was on this trip, he often related, that he rode into St. Louis up to the old Planters' House and tying his horse to the posts in front of the hotel, entered, and that the landlord afterwards came out and took charge of the horse, taking it to the stable which was then

run in connection with the house. How the world has changed since then! In his intercourse with his neighbors Judge Ranney was ever ready to extend them a helping hand. He always exercised those neighborly offices and amenities, distinguishing the highest class of American farmers and planters. When the first German settlers came to this county they found in Judge Ranney a warm and disinterested friend. That they appreciated his friendship and knew his worth is shown by the fact that when his slaves had been set free and enticed away from his farm, although he was willing to pay them for their work, and his corn stood ungathered in the field, his old German neighbors, George Siemers and George Keller, deceased, unasked and unrequested, came with their teams and gathered his crop for him. He never forgot this act of kindness. Nor was Judge Ranney unwilling to work or too proud to follow the plow. After he lost his servants he personally went into the field and did manual labor, although unaccustomed to such work and although his corpulency made it hard for him. He was industrious and frugal, no spendthrift, but liberal. No stranger went away

from his door denied shelter or hospitality. He was kind, genial and amiable in disposition and soft as summer to those that he loved. With pride shortly before his death he referred to the fact that during a married life of over fifty years, he had never exchanged a harsh or unkind word with the cherished and loved companion of his youth and old age. He could not tolerate shams and frauds or dishonesty, and never failed, at the proper times, to express his opinion as to any dishonesty or dishonest action that came under his observation. He was not a fluent talker, or loquacious, or voluble, or of nimble speech, but rather sententious and brief, however, when occasion required it, pointed, sarcastic and fearless in telling the truth. He was free from jealousy, free from envy, free from that grasping disposition that appropriates the world in anticipation. He was not free from prejudice, deep-seated and firm, when once prejudice found lodgment in his mind. But he was slow to take offense, and ready to forgive when he saw that no offense was intended. He was a firm and loyal friend. He always took a deep interest in public and political affairs, and although ready to serve,

never asked for or schemed to secure office and position. His leisure was ever occupied in reading, and he was a deep student of politics. He loved agriculture. He was active on the farm and in his garden and around his home as long as fragile nature allowed him to be active. During his last and long illness he was cheerful and resigned. In all the relations of life, as a husband, father, friend, citizen and public servant, he was an exemplar.

But, says Thomas a Kempis, "death cometh to all, and the life of man swiftly passeth away like a shadow."





MRS. MATILDA RODNEY BLOCK



# Mrs. Matilda Rodney Block

## A Sketch of Her Time and Family\*

THE death of Mrs. Matilda Rodney Block, which occurred January 22, 1902, at the advanced age of 86 years and 6 months, severs another link which connects the present generation with the early pioneers of our county and Southeast Missouri, and all remembrance of which, with ever increasing rapidity, is now fading into tradition, because little attention has been given—to our shame be it said—to the authentic preservation of their work, their labors, their hardships, their trials and even their mere names.

From the 22d day of July, 1815, the day when Mrs. Block was born in Cape Girardeau county, in the then Territory of Missouri, to the date of her death, when measured by the ordinary length of human life alone, seems a long span of time, but when we also take into account all the events that

---

\*This memorial sketch was printed in the Cape Girardeau Democrat in February, 1902.

have happened during that period—all the changes that have transpired, that the face of the country in which we now dwell has been transformed and the very globe has, in a measure, been shorn and despoiled of the immensity it seemed to possess at her birth, it is hard to realize that in the course of a single life all this has come to pass. Certain it is that locally the whole social fabric has been refashioned. Other people now occupy the land. The wood-crowned hills of the county, where the axe of the early American settlers first echoed through the lordly forest, and where they reared their log houses, established civilized and ordered society, have generally passed out of the hands of the original occupants and their descendants, and wide extending fields are now held by new Americans hailing from the banks of the Rhine or Danube, and their children. But when one, who in her youth saw the smoke curl up over the woods from the chimney-tops of the homes of these early pioneers, who was of them, belonged to them, of heroic lineage, and was so well and long known among us for her noble virtues, goes to her long rest, it does not seem inappropriate at least cur-

sorily to refer to her descent and to the days long ago when she was young and her people first came to the "shores of Latium."

Mrs. Block was a great grand-daughter of Col. Anthony Bledsoe of Greenfield or Bledsoe's Lick, in what was afterwards known as Sumner county, Middle Tennessee. Her great grand-uncle was Col. Isaac Bledsoe, named "Tullituskee" (waving corn blade) by the Indians. Both were killed by Indians in 1786-7. Both were distinguished leaders of the people, and many of their descendants have since achieved renown in peace and war. Her grandfather was William Archibald Penney, a native of Wales, a gunsmith by trade, a profession of unusual importance to the early pioneers. He came from South Carolina to Middle Tennessee in about 1774, where he married Susan Bledsoe, daughter of Col. Anthony Bledsoe, and grandmother of Mrs. Block. In 1808 Penney moved from Tennessee to the Territory of Missouri. His family then consisted of his wife and six children—three sons and three daughters, and a number of slaves. The journey was performed on a keel boat with a number of other families, down the Cumberland and up

the Mississippi rivers. After an uneventful voyage the boat landed at the "Red House" at Cape Girardeau. The "Red House" was the residence of Don Louis Lorimier, Commandant of the Post of Cape Girardeau during the Spanish dominion, and who died shortly after the arrival of Penney. This "Red House" stood on the lot now occupied by the Catholic Parochial school.

The Penney family first resided on what was long known as the Rodney place on Cape LaCruz, but after a short time removed to a farm about three miles south of where the city of Jackson is now located, and near the farm at present occupied by Judge Joseph Medley. Here Mrs. Block's grandfather and grandmother resided until 1832, when her grandmother died. Her grandfather then took up his residence with his oldest son, Anthony Bledsoe, where he died in 1842. The other sons of the family, who came with him from Tennessee, were respectively named Isaac Bledsoe and Thomas Bledsoe Penney, and a son born in Cape Girardeau county in 1810 was named William Archibald, and well known not only in our county, but also to many people of Southeast Missouri. Of the three

daughters Mary (Polly) was the oldest, and her two sisters were named Matilda and Peggy. Matilda married Michael Rodney, and Peggy married Louis Lorimier, Jr., son of Don Louis Lorimier. He was graduated at West Point in 1806, commissioned in the army, but after serving for some time resigned to devote himself to farming. He was appointed by President Madison Indian Agent for the Shawnee and Delaware Indians, then residing in what is now known as Stoddard and Dunklin counties, and acted as such agent until their removal. While there his wife's youngest brother, William Archibald Penney, spent much time with the Indians, and according to his statement the principal chief of the Shawnee and Delaware Indians, then living where the town of Bloomfield is now located, was named Wappapillatee. It should be remarked that Mr. Penney seriously objected to the attentions his daughter Peggy received from young Lorimier, and on one occasion when he saw him coming to the house, he became furious and snatched down his rifle, saying: "G——d d——n his Indian soul, I'll shoot him," from which it would appear that he was not only prejudiced

against the Indians and the mother of Lorimier, who was a half Delaware, but also inclined to profanity. His wife, however, frustrated his hostile design, and shortly afterwards young Lorimier eloped with Peggy. He died on his farm just west of town now in part occupied by the Lorimier cemetery. His widow after his death married Edward Walker and died many years after him.

The oldest daughter, Mary or Polly, married Thomas S. Rodney, a widower, whose first wife was Marie Louise Lorimier, and sister of the husband of her sister Peggy. Mrs. Block was their daughter. Thomas Rodney was a prominent early citizen. In 1805 he was sheriff and collector of the Cape Girardeau District, then embracing all the country south of Apple Creek, extending to the Arkansas and White Rivers and indefinitely west. I have before me now a tax receipt dated September 14, 1805, for \$1.95 given to Mrs. Rebecca Giboney, written on a small piece of paper (about three inches long and one and one-half inch wide), yellow with age, signed by him as sheriff, from which it is apparent that he was a man of scholarly attainments. The Rodneys, too, were among the

early pioneers of the country, and settled here during the Spanish government. Thomas S. Rodney afterwards removed to Pitman's Ferry and there died. Pitman's Ferry in those early days was the gateway into the Arkansas Territory. The route of travel from the Southeast did not then go straight across the country from Memphis and other points due west. A road had not even been cut across the St. Francis bottoms, but was afterwards cut out and bridged under contract with the United States, or Territorial Government of Arkansas, by Col. William Neely, who also had married a daughter of Col. Anthony Bledsoe and a sister of the grandmother of Mrs. Block. Col. Neely for a time resided in Cape Girardeau county, representing the Cape Girardeau District in the early Territorial Assemblies, but afterwards removed to the Arkansas Territory. The early route of travel from the Southeast, from Tennessee, North Carolina and Kentucky was across the Ohio river at Golconda, across the Mississippi at Green's Ferry, thence to Jackson, (hence the name of Old Jackson by which our county town is known as far as Texas) thence across the St. Francois at Greenville

and across the Black, and thence to Pitman's Ferry across the Current to Batesville. After her father's death, which occurred at Pitman's Ferry, the family returned to Cape Girardeau county.

In 1831 Mrs. Block was married to John Renfro, but within six months after her marriage her husband was mysteriously killed, and thus tragically ended her early dreams. In 1832 she married Zalma Block, and after fifty years of married life, in 1882, they celebrated their golden wedding. Four years thereafter, in 1886, Mr. Block died, and now she has followed him.

Perhaps no woman was better known to the older generation in Southeast Missouri and on Crowley's Ridge and in Northeast Arkansas than Mrs. Block. For many years she and her husband were engaged in what is now called the hotel business in Cape Girardeau. This was before the era of railroads. Cape Girardeau in those days was the natural starting point for all travelers intending to visit the interior of Southeast Missouri and the northern section of Crowley's Ridge, and to Cape Girardeau the stream of travel from the interior districts came in order to go north and south on the



river, and the old St. Charles hotel was for many years the principal hotel in Cape Girardeau, and here in the course of years innumerable people experienced a hospitable welcome. Mrs. Block, by her genial disposition, kindness of heart and those attentions to the wants of her guests, which never fail to win the respect of the sensible traveler, secured a large circle of admiring friends. All who came within the sphere of her influence were charmed by her many womanly virtues and graces. Her charity was extended to the unfortunate and afflicted, to the poor and the needy, white and black, as unostentatiously as liberal. Nor were the unfortunate of her own family made unwelcome at her table or home. No one went away hungry from her door. Her house and home were the center of social life, and young people were always welcome, and always found in her a ready assistant to aid their pleasure and enjoyment. In her family and among her friends, by her sweetness of temper, her calm speech, her dignity, almost austere bearing, her great common sense, her charity, her kindness of heart, her generosity, she thus reigned as queen by right divine.







WILLIAM BALLENTINE

## William Ballentine

Blacksmith, Argonaut, Lawyer, Judge and  
Farmer

**W**ILLIAM BALLENTINE was a native of Dumfrieshire, Scotland, and born in August, 1826. Dumfrieshire is one of the Scottish border counties. Here the Solway breaks deep into the land and makes the southern border of the shire for almost twenty miles, while on the north it is cinctured by a lofty mountain range. The high table lands from the mountains all slope to the Solway, and through these break the Nith, the Annan and the Esk in their course to the foaming, sparkling and enchanting firth, long famous as a resort of the favorites of fortune and royalty. While still a child of tender years—in fact so young that he did not learn from his mother, and never knew the date of his birth—the boy became an orphan, and hence was reared by his grandfather until he was ten years of age. Then he drifted to the sheep

farms of the broken and barren plateaus of his native shire, where the Whitecomb, the Hart Fell, the Queensberry and Ettrick Pen stand sentinel and cast their shadows far over the land and firth. Here the grandeur of surrounding nature forever impressed the youthful mind with that love for the ideal and poetic, which was a marked characteristic of the man.

At the age of fifteen he was apprenticed to a blacksmith, and it can be truthfully said that he became a master workman in that ancient and honorable craft. But the narrow sphere and possibilities for advancement in his native land did not satisfy him. So in 1847 he sailed for the United States, having by his own unaided exertions during several years saved enough money to pay his passage. After working in several states, in 1850 he crossed the plains—an argonaut to the golden shores of California. Like many others he suffered loss, privation and danger, but finally reached the famed Eldorado of the West. In the following year, however, he returned to the States via Panama, and in the fall of 1851 located in Commerce,

where ever since he has lived and died. At first he followed his trade and long he was known as the best blacksmith in Scott county.

He first made and introduced plows with an iron mold-board in the county. In 1860 he was appointed County Clerk of Scott county by Governor Gamble. While county clerk he read law, and in 1866 was appointed by Governor Fletcher Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Scott county, and held the position until the court was abolished. He was elected Public Administrator, also appointed postmaster at Commerce, and he acceptably discharged the duties of that office. For a time he published a newspaper in Commerce in company with the late Dr. Lynch—the *Commerce Dispatch*. He greatly loved agriculture, and early in 1870 began to clear a farm near Commerce on which was then deemed an almost worthless tract of so-called swamp land, and there he first practically demonstrated the value of drainage and inaugurated that system which has now virtually reclaimed all the lands of Scott county subject to overflow from surface water. He was married twice, but no children survive him, and now his

second wife, Mrs. Emily Brock Sewell, and many friends mourn his loss.

Judge Ballentine was, in the true sense of the word, a self-made man. Born in abject poverty, left an orphan at an age when he was hardly able to realize his loss, drifting around on the sheep farms in the mountains of his native shire, in some unaccountable way he acquired the merest rudiments of learning, then was apprenticed to a blacksmith, became a master workman, saved enough money to leave his native heath and make his way across the sea to find a home and an honored position in a more favored land. Here, too, he soon joined that band of gallant spirits that made a pathway across the continent to the Pacific. He was a man of genial and kindly disposition, of simple tastes, fond of children, devoted to his family, ready to serve his friends, had few enemies, and of these he never said an unkind word. He never mentioned the wrongs done him, nor the kind service—and these were many—that he rendered to others.

In all affairs touching the growth and prosperity of his county and state, he took a deep interest, for



he had great public spirit. He was a man of integrity and unflinching moral and physical courage, but prudent and circumspect in his conduct. He was ever ready to aid and assist the unfortunate to the extent of his ability. Although for many years a free thinker, he practiced all the highest moral precepts of divine religion, and finally united with the Methodist Episcopal church, South. When he came to Missouri he was an ardent Benton Democrat, but in 1860 he cast the only Republican vote in Scott county for Abraham Lincoln as President. As a member of the Chicago Republican convention he voted to renominate President Grant for a third term until his wing of the party went down in defeat. Since 1896 he affiliated with the Democratic party and he voted for William J. Bryan, and also in 1900.

He was not without faults and far from being perfect, but he was a good and honest man and an upright citizen, and will long be missed by those who knew him best. He died at his home in Commerce March 12th, 1902, aged, as near as can be stated, 76 years and 6 months. One of his last acts was to give the people of Commerce four acres of

land for a graveyard on the Commerce and Benton road—a beautiful spot of ground overlooking the wide-expanding fields, ever growing wider, of the Tywappity bottom, and there he now lies buried, “sleeps the sleep that knows no waking.” *Sit tibi terra levis.*





ROBERT STURDIVANT

# Robert Sturdivant

## First Banker of Southeast Missouri\*

**R**OBERT STURDIVANT died at Tallipoosa, Ga., on the 12th of October, 1906. Born March 31, 1817, in Lunenburg county, Virginia, at the time of his death he was a little over 88 years of age. In 1835, as a youth of scarcely 17 years of age, he came from Virginia to Cape Girardeau. It is hard for us now to realize that he came across the country on horseback to this then very little village from his Virginia home. It surprises many now to learn that when he came it was not unusual for those seeking a new home, or visiting friends in the Mississippi valley, to travel a distance of 700 or 800 miles on horseback. But when we reflect a little more, allow the mind to travel back seventy years into the past, we are overwhelmed by the thoughts of the tremendous revolution that has taken place in our social and political affairs, in the ideals and

---

\*This sketch was first published in the Jackson Cash Book shortly after the death of Mr. Sturdivant.

character of the people here then—and here now. Robert Sturdivant was a direct descendant of that heroic race that achieved the independence of our country. He came from that noble commonwealth which it was then not fashionable for small minds to attempt to belittle or ridicule, that gave us Washington, Jefferson, Patrick Henry and a grand galaxy of able men, a commonwealth that with an unselfish patriotism sacrificed much for the common cause. In his youth a vast flood of foreign immigrants had not as yet submerged the ideals of the early Americans—the Americans of the Revolution. It is not far from Lunenburg to the sea, not far to Yorktown where the Revolutionary War was brought to a successful conclusion by the capitulation of the British forces. Although he referred to it rarely, he was proud of the fact, as well he might be, that his father knew, and was a personal friend of Washington, and that he had served under him. The great struggle for Independence when he was a boy was still a living theme. Many of the conspicuous actors of Virginia in that great drama were still among the living. As a boy he no doubt saw many of these in Eastern

Virginia, and many of the aged soldiers of that great war for liberty and not for conquest and dominion. From his earliest boyhood he imbibed the true doctrine of American institutions without the least intermixture of foreign theories. What wonder he never sympathized with the new ideals of our day. Amid such surroundings Robert Sturdivant received his early education; not in a free common school—free common schools were at that time unknown. It was then supposed that an education, like every other good thing of value, ought to be secured by labor, by arduous effort and self-denial. At that time the very idea of their children being educated for nothing was revolting to the pride of the people. Paupers then only received the rudiments of education free or as a charity. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that at that time the country was without schools, and good schools. In such a local school or academy Robert Sturdivant was educated, and by assiduous study acquired the foundation of a classical education and upon that foundation he built during the balance of his life. He was always a student.

But, as stated, he came to Cape Girardeau in 1835,

thus educated and equipped intellectually. His brother-in-law, Edwin White, at that time resided here, and perhaps this was the original cause that induced him to immigrate to this country. With White, soon after his arrival, he embarked in the mercantile business. A few years afterwards the great panic of that time brought the business to an abrupt close, and the firm was forced into bankruptcy. These were dark days for Robert Sturdivant. Without money and without friends, overwhelmed with debts which he was utterly unable to pay, he abandoned the struggle here and went to Mississippi, where he taught school for a time and worked in some capacity on the Vicksburg & Meridian railroad, then in course of construction. His mind, however, dwelt in the place where he had failed. During this gloomy period of his life Andrew Giboney was his friend, assisted him and negotiated with his creditors for his relief. Within a year he returned, taught school here, and also published for a short time a newspaper. Those who attended his school, yet living among us, are James M. Whitelaw, Esq., and Samuel M. Green. In 1843 he entered into partnership with Andrew



Giboney in the mercantile business, the firm being known as R. Sturdivant & Co. While in partnership with Mr. Giboney, on at least one occasion, he personally took a flat-boat to New Orleans loaded with produce. One of the colored men, "Uncle" Edmund Smith, now about 84 years of age, a good and pious man, of whom his race can well be proud, who accompanied him on this trip, attended his funeral, deeply affected by the thoughts and recollections of the past. "Uncle" Edmund has lived here now seventy-five years and well recollects the time when Robert Sturdivant came here a mere youth.

In 1846 his partnership with Giboney was dissolved, and he entered into the milling business with Mr. Ben M. Horrell, operating what was then known as the "White Mill," on the river in the north part of town. This was the first steam mill built in Cape Girardeau and in Southeast Missouri. In this business he continued for a few years, and then established a commission and wholesale grocery house at the corner of Water and Themis streets. In this business he continued until 1857. It was a profitable business, and it is said that his

income annually amounted to more than \$10,000 for several years, and in that time this was a princely income. During this time he visited, in connection with his business, all the lower southeastern counties, and thus gained an intimate knowledge of Southeast Missouri. He knew nearly all the early settlers. In the descendants of these early settlers, their fortunes and misfortunes, he took a deep interest. He remembered the sturdy fathers, clad in homespun when he first came, and the country was almost a wilderness, and he rejoiced with the fortunes of the descendants of some of these, as he lamented the decay and misfortune of some others. What may seem strange to some is that he never forgot his liabilities on account of the bankruptcy of the firm of White & Sturdivant; that he did not consider, because the law freed him from the liabilities, that he was therefore also morally exempt, although he might well have argued that he was a mere boy when he entered into partnership with his brother-in-law, that he did not know anything about the business, that he left the management of the affairs to him, that his brother-in-law was extravagant, devoted his time to politics, that he

had only a nominal interest in the business, etc., etc. Not so. As soon as he was able to pay he hunted up the creditors of the old firm of White & Sturdivant, many of whom had almost forgotten their claims, and paid them in full with interest.

In 1857 he was elected cashier of the Cape Girardeau Branch Bank of the State of Missouri, and during the balance of his actual business life he remained in the banking business, a business for which he was by nature, disposition and temperament well qualified. He was an ideal banker. In 1867, when the affairs of the old State Bank were wound up, and that institution fell into the hands of speculators, he purchased the assets of the Cape Girardeau branch and continued the business in his own name as a private bank until 1882, when he organized the corporation known as the Sturdivant Bank, and of which he remained the honored president until some five years ago. In 1880, in order to close up some financial matters, he was compelled to acquire the Union Mills, and for several years he again looked after the operation of a flouring mill, a business in which he took a lively interest.

This is a brief epitome of the active business life of Robert Sturdivant in Cape Girardeau during sixty-five years. It was an active and industrious life. But this naked sketch of his active life would be incomplete without something more, without an attempt to give at least a glimpse of his inner life, of those subtle characteristics that made him the man that will always be held in fond remembrance by those who had the pleasure and privilege to know him intimately. To say that his honesty in all business transactions was unquestioned but poorly expresses this trait of his character. Robert Sturdivant was honest in the widest and most comprehensive meaning of the word. He was incapable of doing anything that even savored of dishonesty in all the varied phases of human life; and it may be doubted whether he ever had a dishonest thought. Coupled with this innate honesty was a sympathetic heart, a charitable and generous disposition. But this disposition did not lead him to throw away his substance on every unworthy object. No worthy person or worthy charitable cause appealed to him for aid in vain. He was public-spirited, but never sought to gain applause

by what he did for the advancement of the public good; nor did he push himself into public place. He was of a retiring disposition—hated ostentation. It may be said now that to his financial aid it is entirely owing that the city of Cape Girardeau secured railroad facilities twenty-five years ago, that but for the money he advanced without security to promote that great enterprise so important to the people of Cape Girardeau the railroads we now have might have remained unbuilt, perhaps, two decades longer. He had faith in his fellow man. Although for many years the head of a financial institution he never lost faith in men. He, perhaps, loaned more large sums of money according to his means upon mere personal promises, without any collateral security whatever, than any other banker in the state in his time. But this should also be noted, that he only loaned his own money in this way, and not the money entrusted to his care and belonging to others. All such personal loans were strictly the loans of the money of Robert Sturdivant. Nor did old age and experience lessen his faith in men, although we all know that at times his faith was sorely put to the test.

This also must be said that he never complained or expatiated on losses he sustained. He seemed to forget his losses as well as the dishonesty of those he had trusted. Nothing would betray his thoughts except, perhaps, a peculiar twinkle of his eye. He was, however, not an unthinking optimist, nor yet a wild and unreasonable pessimist. He lived a plain and simple life. He made no display in dress or otherwise. Every summer, when in active business, for many years he went away for several months to his old home in Virginia to visit his sister, and on his return visited his brother in Tennessee, who survives him. When his sister died, and her family moved to Tallipoosa, he visited there, and, as age came upon him, remained with them during the last years of his life. But he always considered Cape Girardeau his home; and it was his last wish that he should be buried here by the side of his brother and sister, who have slept in the old cemetery for many years. He was possessed of a rare, superior and discriminating mind. He had high ethical ideals. Although he cultivated the suppression of any quick expression of speech, and always seemed to hesitate when he spoke, those

who observed him closely soon recognized that he was quick to form opinions and conclusions, but slow, as if to weigh well and consider fully, to give utterance to what he thought. He was conservative in all his methods. He had a retentive memory. While he read much and carefully, he did not thus employ all his leisure. At times he would sit still an hour or two apparently lost in serene reflection, seeming to enjoy the company of his thoughts. Every day he gave a part of his time to social intercourse; but never indulged in intoxicating drinks, nor did he visit bar-rooms or saloons. He was very systematic and orderly in his work. He had a quick and observant eye, noticed and took care of little things, indicating the executive and administrative mind. When more steamboats than now plied the river, after business hours he invariably went to the river front to note the arrival and departure of boats. He knew all the river captains and boat officers and they all knew him. He was a loyal and devoted friend to those he honored with his friendship. He was a little below medium size; well formed; had small hands and feet, a fine and well-shaped head, a nose slightly

aquiline, and a dark and piercing eye overhung by heavy eyebrows. He walked erect, carried himself with great dignity on all occasions, was genial and cordial to those he loved and admired, and scrupulously polite to all he met. He never married, but in him his nephews and nieces had a kind and loving father.

Such was Robert Sturdivant, as near as inadequate words can portray him. Now he has paid the debt we all must pay.







MRS. ZERILDA BYRNE

## Mrs. Zerilda Byrne\*

**W**E neglected to chronicle the death of one of the oldest and most respected residents of our county, Mrs. Zerilda Byrne, on her farm, "White Hall," on Tuesday, October 16th, 1888, in our last issue. With Mrs. Byrne indeed one of our oldest, worthiest and most amiable residents has passed from among us to the heavenly realms above.

Mrs. Byrne was born in this county in 1812 on a farm situate a little distance above what is now the town of Jackson. There her grandfather, Col. Christopher Hays, had settled on a grant of a thousand acres under direct permit from the Marquis Caso Calvo, the then Governor-General, in the

---

\*This sketch was originally published in a Cape Girardeau paper and only imperfectly portrays the character of a very intelligent and amiable lady of noble lineage. For nearly fifty years she resided on "White Hall" farm, adjacent to "El Bosque de los Ulmos"—Elmwood, a Spanish grant made to the grandfather of Mrs. Houck in 1797, and her ancestral home. When a little girl Mrs. Houck was a frequent visitor at "White Hall" and enjoyed the counsel and friendship of Mrs. Byrne, who was childless. Before the war, when she had many servants, it was her rule to have religious services with them every evening, and at least one of her former servants still living follows her precepts. From early childhood Mrs. Houck knew and loved Mrs. Byrne, and no one knew her but to love her.

year 1800, and there her father, John Hays, resided at the time of her birth. Her grandfather came with his family from the western part of Pennsylvania. During the Revolutionary war he was the leading man in that section of the colony and Colonel in the regular service. After the Revolution he came to what is now Missouri as one of the "Gentlemen Surveyors" to survey the grant Colonel George Morgan thought he received from the Spanish government, and for his services was to receive forty square miles of territory to settle and colonize. After the Louisiana Purchase he was appointed the first Presiding Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions of the District of Cape Girardeau and at that time the District of Cape Girardeau embraced nearly all of South Missouri and a large part of what is now the state of Arkansas. His son, her father, was the first sheriff of the District of Cape Girardeau and also, during the administration of John Quincy Adams, Receiver of the Land Office, then located at Jackson.

Mrs. Byrne received her earliest education at the Mount Tabor school house, the oldest and first

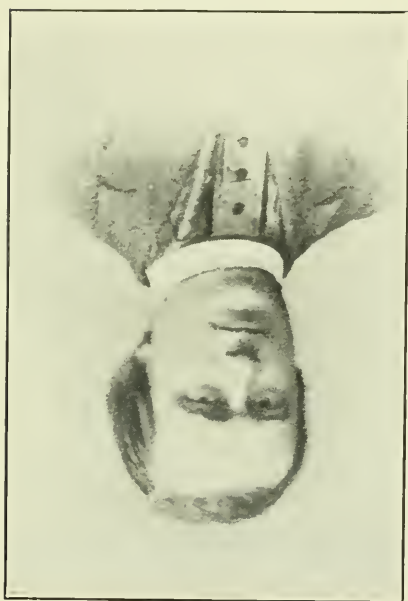
English school on the west side of the Mississippi river, and which was located near the farm on which she died. Subsequently she received private instruction in the family of John Scripps, an itinerant Methodist preacher, and afterwards one of the earliest merchants in Jackson. She also attended school in Cape Girardeau in a little log school house located where now the St. Charles Hotel stands, surrounded by apple trees and known as "Cousins' Orchard."

In 1818 she lived on a farm above what is now known as Lovejoy and she well remembered the first steamboat that plowed the mighty waters of the great river, because the boat landed at her father's plantation to secure some dry rails to make steam to overcome the current of the river near Grand Tower. Then the whole north part of the county was a primeval wilderness. The Shawnee Indians, under the chief then known as "Half-moon," and the Delawares, under the chief known as "Pumpkin," still camped, hunted and cultivated little patches of corn in the valleys of the creeks in that locality. In 1840 Mrs. Byrne intermarried with Judge Peter Byrne, long one of the leading

and most influential citizens of our county and who preceded her in death over twenty years. Since her marriage she resided on the farm where she died.

Over fifty years ago Mrs. Byrne became a convert of the Catholic faith, and her uniform piety, sincere devotion, never-failing charity and ever amiable and lovely disposition evidenced that the tenets of her faith were with her a living reality. As she lived, so she died. Her intimate friends, who knew her and loved her gentle spirit so well, now gone to a better sphere, will long cherish her sweet memory. Her neighbors, some of whom at least have known and respected her for fifty years, in good and evil days, in days of sunshine and the lawlessness of civil war, will miss her departure with the "endless caravan." But it is a long time since the orchard bloomed around the log school house and a merry little maid played under the blossoming apple trees and we all must go to rest.

FATHER TIMOTHY O'KEEFE







## Father Timothy O'Keeffe\*

IT IS now several weeks since the Rev. Father Timothy D. O'Keeffe departed this life, 66 years of age, at the Sisters' Hospital, in St. Louis, and his long residence in Cape Girardeau certainly entitles him to more than a passing notice, even if his many amiable qualities of head and heart were to go hence unrecognized and unrecorded. Father O'Keeffe was born in County Cork, Ireland, and educated for the priesthood in the Catholic Irish College in Paris, France, where he also joined the order of the Lazarists. In about the year 1838 he came to the United States. He first resided at the St. Mary's Seminary, near Perryville, Missouri, known then and now as "the Barrens," where he was a member of the faculty. After St. Vincent's College was erected in Cape Girardeau in 1840 he became a member of the col-

---

\*Father O'Keeffe died February 11, 1885, and for many years was the particular friend of my father-in-law, Mr. Andrew Giboney. At his request he married me to his daughter, Miss Mary Hunter Giboney, December 25, 1872, at Elmwood, although we were not practical members of his church. Of course, we hold him in fond remembrance.

legiate faculty here, and together with Father Tornatori, the first president of the college, Father Timon, afterwards Bishop of Buffalo, eminent as a divine and scholar, and other distinguished men, who have gone to the realms of shade before him, labored to lay well and deep the foundation of this seat and hearth of learning and religion. He was one of the earliest procurators—or business managers—of the institution in this city. Father O'Keeffe, at the time of his death, was, therefore, one of our oldest citizens, and as such was respected by all who knew him, and by all who enjoyed his friendship. In everything that appertained to our interests and progress as a city he took a deep interest—and he was ever ready to aid in the promotion of any matter of public concern. He was a man of profound learning—of a wide range of information and liberal ideas—of progressive instincts. In personal appearance Father O'Keeffe was noble and commanding, being fully six feet high, and finely proportioned. In his manners he was genial and affable—in his disposition generous and patient—in bearing open and manly. As a priest, we are told, he was beloved by all who enjoyed the bene-

fits of his spiritual consolation, and we know that he was indefatigable in the discharge of his spiritual duties and functions, and not infrequently have we met him in the summer's heat and winter's cold, in the day and night on lonely country roads on his spiritual errands coming from and going to the bedside of the humble and poor. As a teacher he was the faithful friend of his pupils and their exemplar. But the finished man—the public spirited citizen—the faithful teacher—the good priest, is no more, and, in the words of Jean Paul, “the thunderbolt of Death has destroyed the diamond, and now the wax statue of the body slowly melts beneath the soil.”







MRS. JANE DAY GLASSCOCK

## Mrs. Jane Day Glasscock\*

**I**N THE death of Mrs. Jane Day Glasscock, which occurred yesterday, Sunday, March 6, 1898, not only our county, but we can truly say our State, loses one of its most venerable residents. Mrs. Glasscock was born June 4, 1804, in Richmond, Va., and consequently on the day of her death was 93 years, 9 months and 2 days old.

When she was about four years old, in 1808, her father moved from Virginia to Kentucky and she never forgot the trip by wagon across the Alleghenys, because as they were traveling along a mountain stream the wagon upset and she fell into the water. Her father first settled in Marseilles, in Kentucky, and there she became acquainted with Nathaniel W. Watkins, half-brother of Henry Clay, then a boy, and who afterwards, in 1820, when a young man, settled in Jackson, in this county, and for many years was one of the leading lawyers and citizens of this State.

Published in March, 1898, in Cape Girardeau Democrat.

In 1812 her father moved to Lexington, and she often said that she saw the Kentucky Volunteers, under General Adair, mustered into service and march through the streets of that town on their way to New Orleans.

Her father died shortly after he settled in Lexington and her mother subsequently married a second time. She removed with the family to Ohio in 1814 and in 1816 to St. Louis, to what was then the Missouri Territory, and ever since that time Mrs. Glasscock has resided in Missouri. The trip to St. Louis was made by river on a keel boat and occupied three weeks. St. Louis was then a small village and when she lived there many Indians always were in and near the town. The family resided on a lot opposite where the Laclède Hotel now stands, then quite on the outskirts of the town.

Mrs. Glasscock attended the school of Dr. Giddings, the first Protestant minister of St. Louis. The whipping post stood opposite this school and she saw two persons publicly whipped, which made a great impression on her mind. While living there she became acquainted with Mr. Charless, the founder of what is now the *St. Louis Republic*, and



Mrs. Glasscock probably was for some time before her death the last person on earth who personally knew him.

In 1818 the family moved to Jackson and since that time Mrs. Glasscock has lived in our county. When the family settled in Jackson Mrs. Glasscock said Dr. Neil, Johnson Ranney, Alexander Buckner, George Scripps, Willis McGuire, Dr. Priest, Judge Thomas, Mr. Evans, Maj. Gantt, Mr. Van Horn, Dr. Franklin Cannon, Henry Sanford, James Russell and Mr. Chambers were the most prominent residents of the town. Rev. Thomas Green, a prominent and distinguished Baptist minister, also resided there. The court house, a small log building, as well as the whipping post, a regular institution of the time, stood on the public square.

Mrs. Glasscock had a good memory to her latest days and vividly recollected many of the incidents that occurred in Jackson early in the century. When she first came to Jackson the Shawnee and Delaware Indians still resided in the northern part of the county and she well recollected the killing of Mrs. Burns by a Shawnee Indian and the great excitement this created. The Indians were given

a certain time within which to apprehend and bring in the murderer. In a few days they brought in the head, and she related it was placed on a pole and planted at the fork of the road leading to the Indian villages and allowed to decay there.

Judge Thomas was the earliest territorial judge in this section and Mrs. Glasscock said that he came to his death by a fall from his horse. The two Sublettes were the desperate characters of the town and one of them, Bolin Sublette, when drunk would ride for sport into the hotel hall and no one on such an occasion dared to stop him.

Mrs. Glasscock as a young lady was a member of the early society of our county and knew well all the leading pioneer families. She was a woman of tact, prudent in expression and generous and hospitable in disposition.

In 1822 she married Mr. Scarlett Glasscock, who died in 1850.

For many years before her death Mrs. Glasscock bravely struggled with adverse and unkind fortune, but she never lost her cheerful and amiable disposition. She was active and industrious to the last and her courage, faith and hope never failed. She

had a fond affection for the descendants of the early settlers, the children, grand-children and great grand-children of the friends and companions of her youth. Greatly and deeply did she appreciate any kind and tender attentions to her from them in her old age. The last of her time and generation she long unobtrusively lingered among us, but now in the early springtime of the year, lamented by four generations of her descendants and many friends, she goes to her peaceful and silent home, to her long rest. Soon gay flowers will bloom above her, the fragrant air will be filled with perfume and soft summer winds will sing her requiem.







LEO DOYLE

## Leo Doyle\*

ON January, 24, 1900, Leo Doyle died. He was the son of Miles Doyle and Sarah Morrison, a sister of Hon. T. J. O. Morrison, so long and so favorably known as the representative of the New Madrid District in the State Senate. Miles Doyle was an Irishman by birth, of the noblest type, a man of sterling virtue and integrity. In his youth he had followed the Austins from Missouri to Texas, but afterwards returned and married Miss Morrison, a member of one of the earliest American families, settling in the Spanish Dominions, west of the Mississippi. In about 1858, with his family, he moved to a farm a little north of Cape Girardeau (a farm his son owned until his death) and there Leo Doyle was born, June 14, 1832. Here he spent his youth, securing such an education as his father's limited means would permit. Between 1850 and 1860 he and his brother Theodore, long since dead,

---

\*First published in the Cape Girardeau Democrat in February, 1900.

maintained a wood yard to supply the boats plying the river and then altogether dependent on wood as fuel.

During the war he removed to Cape Girardeau and with his brother-in-law, Patrick Garathy, entered into the mercantile business, and in this business he was engaged up to the time of his death—surviving his brother-in-law many years. He took a deep interest in everything tending to promote the welfare of our city. For years he acted as secretary of the old Bloomfield Gravel Road, and contributed his stock to make that road the free public road we now have. For over thirty years, and until his death, he was treasurer of the Scott County Macadamized Road. At the time of his death he was a director of Houck's Missouri and Arkansas railroad, now constructing its line to this city. He was also a director and assisted in organizing the Perryville Railroad company. In 1880, when a company was organized to build a railroad from Cape Girardeau to a connection with the Iron Mountain railroad, Leo Doyle was one of the warmest friends of the enterprise, and one of the few citizens of Cape Girardeau who invested actual



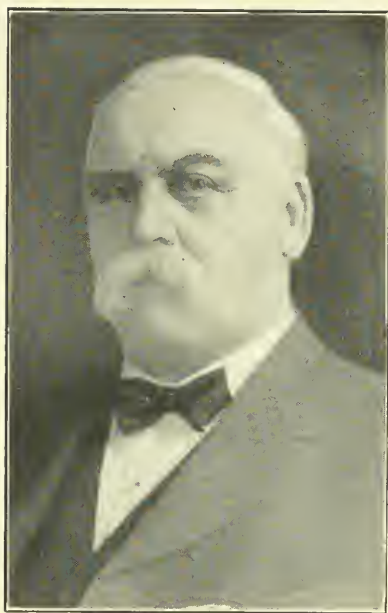
cash in the bonds of the road. He became trustee for the bondholders, and as such trustee, when the attempt was made by the Gould interest to seize the road, manifested his zeal for the interests of the city and devotion to the parties owning the property, by instituting independent legal proceedings, and after a protracted and almost unexampled litigation, finally triumphantly emerged from the contest. At one time in that litigation he was cited to appear before the Supreme Court to show cause why he should not be punished for contempt, and although it seemed that his course would result in a heavy fine and imprisonment, his courage did not fail and he did not abandon the interests he represented.

For a number of years he was a member of the city council, and while in that capacity rendered invaluable service to our people. It should always be remembered that in 1876 he introduced the ordinance for settling and compromising the city railroad debt, and that through his efforts and the efforts of the then mayor, Hon. Leon J. Albert, (to his credit be it said) the city was rescued from the bankruptcy into which it had been plunged by

a wild and reckless administration. The new growth of our town, the restoration of value to city property, the new energy manifested by all of our people and new faith in our future, dates from the successful settlement of that railroad debt, provided for and formulated by that ordinance. But he was a modest and unassuming man. He did not parade his official good work. He did not tell everybody about his great public spirit. Whenever he could he always assisted in promoting the general welfare. He had a kind and generous disposition, a loving and affectionate heart. He was liberal in his dealings with others and prudent in his expenditures, without being parsimonious. He was honest and truthful, without guile and deceit. He was loyal to his friends. He was charitable, the father of the orphan and disinterested adviser of the widow. He was without ostentation, plain and simple in speech, plain and simple in dress, unusually intelligent in all things that came within the sphere of his observation, and loved reading. And he was kind to the brute creation and fond of dogs. He was methodical in all of his business. For years before his death he punctually kept a

daily weather record, as well as a record of the principal events occurring in the community—a veritable chronicle of the town. He was married twice, and his second wife surviving him deeply mourns his death. He left no children.

Now after a life well spent, a life of honor, virtue, integrity and good work, he has fallen beneath the sickle, like the ripened grain at harvest time, and been gathered with his fathers.



MARTIN LINN CLARDY

## Martin Linn Clardy

THE death of a distinguished citizen—not holding a public position or the possessor of millions of dollars—in these days is only noted in a slipshod manner in the news columns of the metropolitan newspapers—perchance accompanied on the same day or day afterwards by brief, meagre and inadequate editorial notice. The papers of the neighborhood where maybe he passed nearly all his life, reprint what the big newspapers so incompletely say without comment, and although familiar with his career, apparently seem to be unable to summarize for future time the salient events of his life and labors, the extent of his influence and the more subtle traits of his character. Thus often is lost forever by indifference the intellectual portrait of an important life. But if a man of vast wealth and possessions dies everybody takes notice and newspapers are full of comments. These observations are prompted by the apparent indifference manifested in the press of Southeast Missouri as to

the death of Martin Linn Clardy, and who for over forty-five years held a high and honorable position in Southeast Missouri and occupied a notable place in the state. More than that, he was the pride of his family and friends, an ornament of the legal profession, a leader in political affairs, prominent in Congress as a statesman, and an honor to his country. It often happens that men are only known by the work with which they were last identified before death. The various vicissitudes of their career, at once an example and inspiration, are thus allowed to escape recollection. No minute inquiries are made when they should be made and many incidents in an important life are swallowed up by oblivion. Thus Mr. Clardy is referred to in some of the notices recording his death merely as a "railroad attorney." As if this fully described him and his life. Undoubtedly Mr. Clardy was eminent as a "railroad attorney," but he was eminent not because he had a railroad for a client, but because he was eminent as a man of vast executive ability, great versatility of mind, and eminent as a profound and philosophical lawyer. It is well to keep this in mind.

Martin Linn Clardy was born on a farm in Ste. Genevieve county, April 26, 1844, and died on July 5, 1914. He was of Kentucky ancestry. His father, Johnson B. Clardy, one of the early American pioneers, came to Ste. Genevieve county in 1825. His first education he received in the country school in the neighborhood where he was born. Undoubtedly the strength of his understanding, the accuracy of his discernment and his ambition for excellence might have been remarked from his infancy by a diligent observer. But such traces of early intellectual vigor are usually allowed to pass unobserved or at most elicit only a passing notice. We have it, however, from one who attended the same country school with him, that when a little boy in his teens he would mount a log or stump and make a speech or deliver a declamation to his fellow-scholars. Thus early did he begin, maybe all unconsciously, to cultivate that suave, persuasive, convincing and logical method of public address for which he was ultimately so well known. After he left the country school, before the war, for a time he enjoyed instruction in the St. Louis University. When in April, 1861, the storm of the

civil war arose, he enlisted in the Confederate army and with that army he remained as an officer in the cavalry in the trans-Mississippi department until the close of the conflict. It must have been after the war that he attended Virginia University and undoubtedly he studied law there. Then he lived in the state of Mississippi, where he married his first wife. In that state, I understand, he began to practice law. From Mississippi with his wife and family he returned to Missouri, and settled in St. Francois county in 1867 or 1868.

After the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern was first opened he had his home at Delassus, a new town just laid out near Farmington. Here he lived when his first wife died.

He began to practice law after the Drake test oath was declared unconstitutional. Then he formed a partnership in the practice of law with Judge William Carter. For many years the firm "Carter & Clardy" was the leading law firm in our section of the state. Judge Carter and Mr. Clardy were familiar figures in all the courts of Southeast Missouri. They were engaged in all important litigation.



As an attorney Mr. Clardy diligently attended to the interests of his clients. When once employed in a case he never gauged his attention to it by the amount involved. This was his characteristic attitude to all business intrusted to him. His devotion to the interests of his humblest client was his introduction to great and important litigation.

As an advocate in cases before a jury Mr. Clardy had few equals. Yet he was not loud, or boisterous, or declamatory. Far from it. His oratorical efforts were always eminently sane. Common sense and the highest propriety distinguished his forensic pleas. It was for this reason that in the great criminal cases in which he was engaged he was so uniformly successful. But if anything, he was more successful as an advocate before the highest appellate courts, the Supreme court of the state and the United States. He had a profound analytical mind, was capable of illuminating and illustrating the deepest and profoundest questions of law and with master strokes apply the law to the facts of the case. In his arguments he was slow, deliberate and methodical. He was never in a hurry, and left nothing to chance, answering every

important proposition, but leaving all immaterial propositions in a case without notice, and on which many advocates waste much time. Few members of the bar of this state victoriously established so many doubtful and contested legal propositions, and made them the settled law of the state. No man had a deeper or profounder knowledge of the swamp-land laws, or a firmer grasp on all the intricate questions involved in the various, and often contradictory statutes, relating to this subject. To him, more than anyone else, the final settlement of all the great questions involved in the swamp-land titles in Southeast Missouri in a great measure may be attributed. By the final and speedy settlement of the questions involved in this litigation the growth and prosperity of this section was greatly promoted,

When in the zenith of his reputation as a lawyer in our section of Missouri and his reputation well established in the state and shortly after he married his present wife, and who survives him to lament his loss, he was elected as a democrat to represent his district in congress. He served for five consecutive terms, was a member of the Forty-

sixth, Forty-seventh, Forty-eighth, Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Congress. His services in Congress were notable. He was indefatigable in promoting the interests of his district, a district with various and conflicting interests, for within his district, for instance, were located the greatest lead-producing mines in the world. Although a democrat he would not allow those interests to be injured and never failed or neglected on all proper occasions to oppose unjust legislation affecting these interests. Nor did his zeal for his party make him blind to the merits at least of some of his opponents, for it is well known that he and the late President McKinley, when they were both members of the House, were warm and devoted friends. Made conservative by experience, he never could belong to that class of politicians who are always ready to destroy what they have neither the capacity to build up or to appreciate what has been built up and established by others. That the value of his services were fully understood is sufficiently shown by the fact that although representing a doubtful democratic district he was successfully re-elected four times and was finally only defeated by a tidal wave

of adverse political sentiment sweeping over the whole country. When defeated he was to some extent a national character and it was almost certain that if re-elected he would become conspicuous in our national legislature. But this was not to be. No one lost more than the people of his district by his early retirement from public life. In Congress he was distinguished by his modest and unassuming conduct and devotion to his duties. He was not a frequent speaker, but when he spoke what he said attracted attention. It is not the frequent and uproarious speaker, always on the floor, that wields influence in a legislative assembly such as the Congress of the United States.

In the political affairs of the state during this period of his life and before he became identified with a railroad system, Mr. Clardy wielded a powerful influence. More than any one else he represented the political ideals of Southeast Missouri. His devoted followers were many. He was a leader of first importance in the political conventions that prevailed before the present grab-bag system of selecting candidates for official positions was adopted—a system which crowds out of the race

for promotion poor and modest and unassuming men, but opens the door wide to men of wealth—and the impudent, self-seeking and loud-mouthed demagogues.

His efforts were also directed in these old conventions to secure for his party the nomination for office of able and honest men. His services to his party were fully appreciated by all interested in the success of popular government.

After his congressional career came to an end Mr. Clardy resumed the practice of law at Farmington. Like others before him, and no doubt like many that came and will come after him, he found that ten years of public life in Congress had not added anything to his fortune. Pleasant though the service may be, it is equally true that no one can honestly accumulate a fortune in such service. So Mr. Clardy again began to practice law. He could rely on an extensive local practice in the country, but naturally he thought of something more remunerative than such a practice. Hence when the position of associate general attorney of the Missouri Pacific was tendered him by Mr. Priest he accepted the employment. He was eminently

qualified for such legal service. Of a liberal and generous disposition his first aim was to establish better and more cordial relations between the people and the railroad. In every possible case it was his aim to avoid litigation. Far different from many attorneys, representing railroads, whose only object seems to be to foster contention and acrimony, Mr. Clardy urged the settlement of every doubtful claim. In this way quickly much Missouri Pacific litigation disappeared from the court docket. A short time after Mr. Clardy became associate general attorney Mr. Priest was appointed judge of the United States district court by President Cleveland and Mr. Clardy was made general attorney of the railroad. It was then that he took ground against the maintainance of an active railroad lobby at the state capital. He strongly insisted that the railroads should not be represented by an agent when the legislature was in session. His views finally prevailed and the method of secretly attempting to influence legislation by sinister methods was brought to an end. If Mr. Clardy's ideas had prevailed eight or ten years earlier much prejudice against railroads in this

state would never have found footing in the popular mind. Be this as it may this struggle in the Missouri Pacific system which finally led to the election of Mr. Clardy as vice-president and general solicitor would be an interesting chapter in his life if it could be fully and truly revealed.

For several years before his death Mr. Clardy was the dominant figure in all matters appertaining to the legal affairs of the Missouri Pacific system. His counsel and advice was sought by all in charge of that great property. This year he spent no inconsiderable time in New York in consultation in regard to the legal status of its financial affairs. He had a conservative mind and was capable of evolving out of apparently incoherent subjects an organized legal entity. More than that, often his advice was sought by great and able attorneys in charge of the legal affairs of other great railway systems in the west. He intuitively understood the tendency of all the present railroad legislation and carefully shaped the course of his corporation to meet the future requirements of the people. I have often heard him say that it would be a mistake to antagonize any reasonable legislation. His idea

always was to co-operate with the popular demand, and by co-operation to build a system up that would conserve the interests of the owners of the railroad properties and at the same time protect the people against extortion. It was along these lines that he directed his labors, but when unjust and confiscatory laws were enacted and resistance became a duty he advised legal proceedings. Only two days before his death, in view of the late decision of the supreme court of our state explaining and defining the power of the Missouri Public Utilities commission, he arranged for a meeting of the representatives of the railroads of the state at his office to consider a full presentation of the actual financial condition of the roads of the state to secure from the commission relief from the existing oppressive laws. He felt confident that with the law of the state construed as it has been construed by our supreme court that the commission would give speedy relief in all proper cases and thus amicable relations at once be established between the railroads and the people.

But he died before this meeting.

It will be a long time before the owners of the



Missouri Pacific system will again secure a representative as wise and far-seeing in counsel, as profound in the observation of the philosophy of events, as astute and compromising in disposition and at the same time so well qualified to make the corporation popular with all reasonable and just men.

And we all have to die.

After having said this of Mr. Clardy as a lawyer, as a party leader, as a member of Congress, and as an employe and officer of a railroad system, I may also say that in all his various employment and offices, he never forgot his love of the farm—that he loved agriculture and was devoted to stock raising. His farm near Farmington was his delight. Here when wearied of work he came for rest and recreation, to harvest his crops, to mow his meadows and to view his herds of cattle and his horses. Even in the midst of his arduous work he found time to attend the county fairs of Southeast Missouri where he exhibited his fast horses and fine cattle. Maybe his dream was to finally retire from the activities of life to his farm. But dreams, with most of us, are only “gay castles in the clouds.”

On the whole, the character of Mr. Clardy was amiable. He had a benevolent disposition, and often assisted those who had maligned him when they applied to him for aid. He never took occasion to provoke those that were his enemies, but in fact he had only such enemies as he raised by his superior merit, the bright lustre of his abilities and the contempt with which he viewed the methods by which they expected to succeed.

He was candid and sincere in expressing his opinion, when he expressed an opinion at all. He was, however, cautious in expressing his thoughts about others, but open and communicative to those that possessed his full confidence.

He was a man of great equanimity and never betrayed an indecent impatience.

When in consultation with others on important matters of a legal character, or involving business propositions, he would listen to all that was said by others without interruption—for he was self-contained—and then expressed his views, and I am told that generally his views were adopted. He did not think so highly of himself as to believe that he could not receive light from others on subjects

they had examined and observations they had made. Yet while he did not neglect the observations of others he did not blindly submit to them.

In disposition he was cheerful and when at leisure anxious to promote mirth by making facetious and humorous remarks, but in a quiet, inoffensive and unobtrusive way.

He was remarkable in this that he could with uncommon readiness and certainty conjecture men's inclinations and capacity by their appearance, expression and even walk. It is thus that in the selection of jurors to try causes in which he was engaged he was considered uncommonly fortunate.

He was retiring in manner, in conduct modest and unassuming. Although overwhelmed with business in the last few years of his life, he was always accessible and ready to give attention to his old friends, for he was greatly devoted to his friends and ever ready to serve them.

He never advertised himself and it is remarkable that in all the various publications of the state, and which from time to time are inflicted on us and from which it is almost impossible to escape, noth-

ing can be found relating to him and his life. In the congressional directory he compressed his biographical sketch to six lines.

In everything relating to the prosperity of Southeast Missouri he took a deep pride and he was a man of great public spirit.

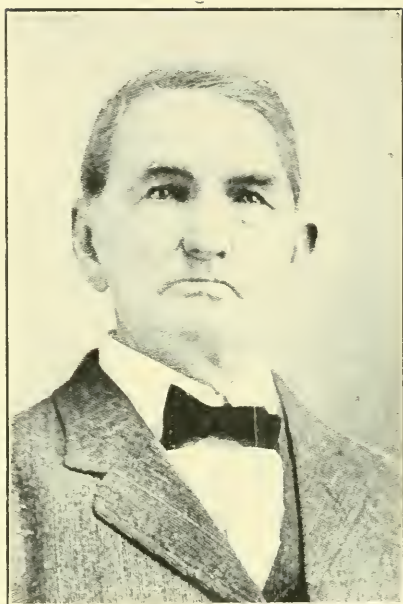
This, too, should be said that he was gentle and refined in his conduct—that he treated all who had any business to transact with him with respect and consideration—that he never was arrogant and overbearing to those that were subordinate to him.

The lady, who as his secretary for a number of years, faithfully and vigilantly assisted him in his work as I well observed, he treated with high courtesy and all ladies that came within the sphere of his social life he distinguished by chivalrous attention.

His devotion to his family was recognized by all his friends and they knew that he was faithful and loyal as a husband.

But we must “All go into one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”





THOMAS BECKWITH

# Thomas Beckwith\*

## Farmer-Archaeologist

MANY works of notable value, such as the Beckwith collection, now installed and in possession of this Normal School, have been built up unconsciously. To make such a collection required much labor, great patience, and infinite attention. More than that, it required much time. But this collection was not made by one who had no other business, but was made during the leisure hours of many years as an agreeable and interesting recreation, diverting the mind from more material affairs. For years it was a business that gave employment to hours that are too often idled away. It has been truly said that the best of us are idle half the time. Anyway, this is certain, and this collection illustrates what I say, that however much we may be engrossed with business matters, we still have time for pursuits that give a higher and nobler tone to

---

\*An address delivered at the Normal School Auditorium on Monday evening, October 26, A. D. 1914.

life. It is also true that the men who are engaged in such work are hardly ever able to correctly appreciate its value. Time and distance are necessary to set off and confirm the work accomplished. This too is true, that whatever is done best is done from a natural bent and disposition of the mind without premeditation. Genius acts invisibly and executes its appointed task with little ostentation. Those often do best who have least ambition to excel. Their knowledge keeps pace with their capacity. The more they do the more they can do. While doing work they prepare and qualify themselves for other and greater work.

These remarks apply particularly to the remarkable work of Mr. Beckwith. For many years he gave most of his leisure hours to making a purely local anthropological collection—a collection that stands alone in this country. In making this collection he followed the natural bent of his mind. Without premeditation and ostentation he executed his work. He did it because he was impelled by an unseen force, because his soul delighted in the work. His intellect expanded with the work, and material affairs generally were subordinated to



those of the mind. A pursuit which was at first a mere interesting pastime gradually led him into higher regions of thought, and although he had the benefit of only a limited education, this pursuit made him a scholar, a thinker and a philosopher. Such is the recompense of those who devote even a small part of daily life to something beyond the mere material things of this world.

Under the agreement with Mr. Beckwith by which he donated to this Normal School his invaluable collection, it is expressly stipulated that annually an address on the subject of archæology shall be made here—this in order to arouse an interest in this important subject and a deeper study of what yet remains or may be discovered hereafter, especially in our section of Missouri, of archæological and anthropological value.

Accordingly, having been somewhat instrumental in securing for this institution this collection from Mr. Beckwith, I have been requested to read the first paper, as required by the agreement. It has seemed to me, however, that the first address to be made here should relate rather to the life history of Thomas Beckwith than to an analysis of

the value of the great collection that has been made public property by his gift to this school, or to archæology in general, or to Missouri archæology in particular, even if I were capable to discuss a subject requiring so much more learning than I possess. Also I am sure that hereafter questions like these will be asked by many visitors looking over this collection. Who was Thomas Beckwith? What manner of man was he? Where was he born? What was his descent? Where did he spend his childhood? What were his early surroundings? What were his educational advantages—and many other questions of like nature—and finally, Why did he make this collection, anyway? We all want to know something about those that have done or accomplished something remarkable. So I make the life history of Thomas Beckwith and how he became interested in archæology the subject of my paper this evening.

Thomas Beckwith was born in Mississippi county in 1840. His grandfather, Newman Beckwith, was a native of Fairfax county, Virginia. In 1811 he moved west across the mountains to Wheeling, there bought or built a flatboat and loaded on it his

family and household goods and floated down the river to Norfolk, in what is now Mississippi county in the then Missouri Territory, where he landed in the spring of 1812. Here he remained for several years. In the spring of 1815 he settled below Belmont on the ridge long known as Hunter's Ridge and now as O'Bryan's Ridge. This ridge is about three miles long and half a mile wide and in the early times was a great resort for game in time of flood. From this ridge afterwards he moved to a point back of Wolf Island on the chute. Here he opened a plantation, which, after his death, was greatly enlarged by his son Quiros, the father of Thomas Beckwith. At that time Smithland, in Kentucky, was the nearest and most important trading point, some eighty miles distant, for the people of that section of Missouri Territory. The ordinary method of going to Smithland was by pirogue, that is to say, in a long dugout, usually thirty or forty feet long, three feet wide and eighteen inches or more deep, made out of a sassafras or cottonwood tree, a light, tough wood. Such boats are easily worked going upstream by paddling, cordeling, or poling. No inconsiderable amount of

freight was carried in that way. When Thomas Beckwith was born, and for some time afterwards, the country had no regular mercantile houses or stores, and hence a trip to Smithland was the usual method of obtaining supplies. However, flatboats, called trading boats, then floated irregularly down the river, loaded with a great variety of supplies such as wagons, plows, bells that could be heard for two miles, dry goods, broadcloths, silks, calicoes, sugar, coffee and molasses—in fact, these trading boats carried everything and more than can be found in an ordinary general store at present. These traveling merchants would semi-occasionally tie up in front of the house of a prominent planter and remain for several days until the people near there and back of the river bank were supplied with such goods as they wanted, then drop down the river a couple of miles to another neighborhood. The trading boats usually started out from Pittsburg, Cincinnati or Louisville, and were loaded with merchandise of no inconsiderable value.

The settlement back of Wolf Island before the war was considered the richest and most important settlement in what is now Mississippi county. The

soil was exceedingly fertile and yielded great crops of corn, and agriculture was very profitable. The planters were all slave owners, and among them Beckwith's father was the wealthiest and Mr. Beckwith was his only child. He owned, so Mr. Beckwith tells us, five thousand acres of land—1,100 of it cleared, a sawmill, a grist mill, fifty head of horses and mules, two hundred head of cattle, three hundred hogs, stock in the Union Bank of Charleston, stock in the Hickman Railroad, and a big woodyard on the river. In addition ninety-seven slaves, and these slaves together with his father, mother and himself, he loved to say, "made one hundred in the family." And he further says that he believes the slaves were all "contented and happy."

Thus he describes his childhood life on the plantation. "The white and negro children grew up in the same yard and played and frolicked together, hunted small game and caught snow birds in their dead-falls and traps, and learned to swim together in the river and bayous. They yoked up the calves and rode the colts. When I was a child we raised a very fine mule, and I have seen him stop and kick

all of his gearing off, and my father always contended that the little negroes and myself had spoiled the mule when a colt. The children, both white and black, grew up with a strong affection for one another. We felt as a large family." And Mr. Beckwith says that the little negroes, when they heard his father coming home riding "Old Bald," a gentle, half-Indian pony, would run and meet him on the road, screaming out "Martinep" (Master), catch "Old Bald" by the tail and pull back, and so he would drag them up to the house. It is such happy scenes and such a life on his father's old plantation back of Wolf Island that he loved to relate.

In those days in the fall of the year all the men and boys would mount their horses and with guns and dogs hunt wild hogs, of which the woods and swamps were then full. Those that were fat would be shot and tied with ropes to the tails of the horses and dragged home to be cleaned and salted down. "Many a wild hog," he says, "tied to the tail of my horse did I drag home when a boy. Wild hogs were also trapped in large pens 20x40 feet, with a door raised on one side set on a trigger.

Corn was spread in and outside of the pen and one ear placed on the trigger, covered with leaves to prevent the hogs from setting off the trigger until the whole gang was in the pen. Then, when the scattered corn was gone, in search of more corn, the hogs would discover the ear of corn on the trigger and set it off; and thus the whole bunch would be captured in the pen." This, Mr. Beckwith tells, was "great sport."

From boyhood he was a great hunter. Elks were found in Southeast Missouri as late as 1860. In 1830 bears were so numerous that in the fall of that year a party of bear hunters from Kentucky camped on James' Bayou to kill bears and render the fat into oil. The woods in his youth and early manhood were alive with game, and the river and bayous back of Wolf Island were full of fish and swarmed with geese and ducks. Mr. Beckwith was a splendid marksman. As a small boy he was sent out in order to save the apple crop, to shoot paraquets, a species of parrot that now has entirely disappeared from our locality.

But the great event of his boyhood was his first bear hunt. When he was fourteen years old, he

says, "I was in company with Mr. James Hush and Mr. Gaty, old bear hunters, and Mr. Samuel Baldwin and Mr. Poplin, young bear hunters. We had twelve dogs—four large curs and eight hounds. Mr. Baldwin owned six of the hounds, including the start dog called 'Old Black,' and another called 'Dan,' a lean, spotted dog with long, pendulous ears, that was a remarkable trailer. For this dog Mr. Baldwin had paid Mr. Gaty forty dollars. We made our camp in Little River Swamp about ten miles southwest of where Sikeston is now located, and starting early in the morning after we had established our camp, rode out, the dogs scattering in the woods trailing deer and coons. Old 'Dan' was trotting along behind our horses, paying no attention whatever to the other dogs. After we had gone about two or three miles 'Dan' dropped his head to the ground and began to smell around and finally smelled a twig and then raised a long, mournful howl. Mr. Baldwin said, 'It's a bear.' Mr. Hush got off his horse, tightened his girth, shortened his stirrups, and tied his hat under his chin, and I did likewise. We went on a little further. 'Dan' stopped and gave his master an



inquisitive look. Mr. Baldwin then dismounted from his horse, found the trail and started 'Dan' on the right end of it—for it seems impossible for dogs to distinguish the right from the wrong end of a trail—and then 'Dan' started off trailing, perfectly satisfied."

On that hunt, Mr. Beckwith tells us, they killed five bear in a day and a half. He says he never saw a bear let go and fall out of a tree, but that he then "saw a bear when fifty feet or more up the tree and near the body of the tree let go and fall about twelve feet and again clasping the body of the tree with his front feet continue to drop in that way until he came to the ground, never stopping, but raising a great fog of dust and barking, and thus descending with great rapidity."

In his various hunting expeditions Mr. Beckwith claims he killed hundreds of deer, coons, mink and other wild animals, and ducks, geese and other feathered game without number. Hunting was with him an absorbing passion and the delight of his life.

Corn was at that time the principal crop raised on the farms along the river. The demand for corn

on the southern plantations below and as far as New Orleans was unlimited. The farmers along the river in Southeast Missouri had an easy and cheap route to the great southern markets. That corn by rail from the interior regions north of the Ohio could ever reach these markets was undreamed of. The corn crop raised on the new and virgin farms of unrivaled fertility along the river in our state yielded great profits. When the Beckwiths first began to farm they shipped their corn on flatboats to the plantations on the lower Mississippi, and at a later period by steamboat. These flatboats were generally built up on the Kanawha, loaded with salt and floated down the river to Smithland, sold there to farmers and merchants farther down the river and loaded by them with corn and in many instances with hogs, cattle, lumber and whatever they had for sale, and floated south. The extent of this flatboat traffic is shown by the fact that Mr. Beckwith, when he was a boy, once saw on a stretch of river fifteen miles long nineteen flatboats floating down. But about 1850 the flatboats disappeared and people began to ship by steamboats. Prior to 1861 nearly all the planters

on the river where there were favorable landings kept woodyards. Beckwith's father kept a wood-yard and sold, so he says, 1,200 cords of wood a year to steamboats. The wood was generally loaded on wood boats sixteen feet wide and about sixty feet long and corded on these boats two cords to a rank. When a steamboat came up the river the bell would be sounded two or three hundred yards from the landing, the men in charge of the woodyard would rush out, untie the wood boat and get aboard. The bow line of the wood boat was then tied to the bow of the steamboat and a big cable with a slip knot in the end of it was carried back to the stern of the wood boat, slipped over the near corner of the wood boat, drawn tight at the bow of the steamboat and made fast. Thus the weight in towing the boat was put upon this big cable. The steamboat would run at half speed for about five or six miles so as to give time to take the wood off the wood boat; then the wood boat was turned loose and the man, with the aid of one or two oars, would take it back and tie up at the wood-yard. In that way much time was saved to boats going up the river. When boats came down the

river they would land at the woodyard and take as much wood as they needed. But during the war wood cutting ceased and the boats began to use coal. This wood business was very important in cleaning up and developing the land near the river and bringing it into cultivation. It greatly promoted the development of the country. The timber along the Mississippi was immense in size, and without this market for the cordwood which the steamboats then afforded the opening of the farms would have been much slower. Mr. Beckwith said that he once saw a cottonwood seven feet in diameter at the butt, which made twenty-seven cords of wood. Another cottonwood measured eleven feet in diameter three feet from the ground. Such was the magnitude of the timber then growing in Mississippi county, and in Southeast Missouri.

Notwithstanding his father's wealth Mr. Beckwith's educational advantages were not good. We had no public schools then in Missouri. He had no instruction such as even the humblest and poorest child now enjoys. Although his father was amply able to provide a private tutor for his only son, he did not do so, likely deeming it more important to

make him a man of affairs, rather than a scholar; and a man of affairs, a business man, he emphatically became, although the force of his latent genius gradually led him to take a profound interest in the anthropological history of the country in which he lived.

He describes the schoolhouse back of Wolf Island, where he enjoyed his first educational advantages, as follows: "The schoolhouse was built of rude logs, notched down at the corners and covered with four-foot boards. There was no other flooring but old Mother earth, no chinking or daubing of the space between the logs, no loft in the house; a doorway was cut, but no door to close it. When the house was not occupied, hogs, cattle and horses could go in. A broad plank ten or twelve feet long with the edge against the wall and sloping out was used to write upon. A log was cut just above this desk to give light. A fire was made on the ground in the middle of this room and the smoke passed through the roof in the gable end of the house." In such a schoolhouse Mr. Beckwith received the first rudiments of an education. After he was old enough to go away he was sent to school

in Clinton, Kentucky. Then he attended Rice Academy, one of the earliest educational institutions of Cape Girardeau, for a year or two, and in 1857 entered a school or college of New Albany, Indiana. From this it is quite apparent that Mr. Beckwith's education was far from methodical. Whatever learning he secured he undoubtedly owed largely to his native ability, rather than to any systematic course of instruction.

In 1858 he came home during the great overflow of that year. When he returned from New Albany he was, he says, eighteen years of age, strong and large for his age, a fine horseman and a good marksman. "Notwithstanding the wealth of my father," he tells us, "I had been brought up to work and to do any kind of work that came to hand." Evidently some of the large planters and slave owners of that time in Missouri raised and educated their sons for labor rather than for idleness. The river was rising rapidly when he came home, and his father, becoming apprehensive for the safety of about one hundred and fifty head of cattle in the swamps and bayous west of Wolf Island, sent him with some negroes to bring the

cattle to a group of mounds some twenty-five feet high, quadrangular in form, with a top 110 to 160 feet long; and to these mounds some of the cattle, after great labor, were brought. This overflow, which came after the corn had been laid by and the wheat was ready to harvest, was very devastating in its effects. After the water went down there was no grass, the fences were washed away, and the levee, which had been constructed by the county out of the proceeds of the swamp lands, was almost destroyed.

In perhaps 1859, Mr. Beckwith for a time took a commercial course at the Bryan & Stratton Business College in St. Louis. The following year found him at home, and here he seems to have remained during the war.

When the war came on, Mississippi county had not yet recovered from the effects of the disastrous overflow of 1858. In 1862 another overflow occurred but not so disastrous, because it came earlier in the season and gave the farmers a chance after the overflow was over to raise at least a partial crop.

But the war financially ruined his father. In 1861 the steamboats began to use coal instead of

wood, and this cut off his woodyard revenue. In 1862 General Jeff Thompson took \$60,000 in cash from the Union Bank of Charleston, thus making the stock of the bank worthless. The Hickman Railroad became insolvent. The emancipation proclamation freed the negroes. The cleared land grew up for want of cultivation. No labor could be secured to rebuild the fences washed away by the floods or to cultivate the land. Predatory bands carried away cattle, hogs and other stock. The value of the land decreased to nothing. "All this shows," Mr. Beckwith afterwards said, "how quickly a fortune can be dissipated, with no fault of the owner, by circumstances beyond his control."

His father died in September, 1862. Disaster after disaster gradually swept away the work of his life. After his death Mr. Beckwith took charge of what was left of the wreck. Some of the negroes still remained on the plantation, and with these Mr. Beckwith farmed as best he could during the turmoil of war.

In 1863 he married and gradually began to repair the losses sustained, not, however, without suffering from the depredations of lawless bands



roving through the country up to 1865. He was full of energy and enterprise, and undaunted by such losses as he under the circumstances sustained, he extended his farming operations, although also often interrupted by overflows of the river, which from 1858 to 1870 seemed more frequent than at any former period. Nevertheless, during this time he successfully organized his farming on a new basis with free labor. The old fields of his father were restored to cultivation and to these he added new, wide extending acres. Although his farming proved profitable, the constant and undivided attention to this work and the annoyance of uncertain labor convinced him that it would be just as profitable to rent his lands and thus secure some leisure and respite from the constant annoyance to which all those are subjected who attempt to cultivate large tracts of land. Accordingly, in 1870, he changed his method of managing his land, renting the cleared farms and arranging to have other lands cleared by leases under contract. He removed to Charleston just after the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad had been completed from St. Louis to Belmont. Near Charleston he also

purchased land, which he began to clear for cultivation. In everything relating to material matters he was, during many years, a busy and active man. But he was not altogether absorbed in making money. Although solicitous for financial success, this was not the only and sole aim of his life. He never belonged to the sordid class of money grabbers. While looking out for the material things of this world, he did not forget what so many do in the mad rush for wealth—that a part of life, at least, ought to be devoted to higher purposes. He was not altogether steeped in selfishness. He did not measure everything by the standard of the dollar. Never was it his sole ambition in some way, straight or crooked, to capture other men's mules or property. He was not money or property mad. Such were the mental characteristics of Mr. Beckwith, and thus it came that he made the unique and wonderful archæological and anthropological collection he donated to this Normal School to remain here as a perpetual memorial, when all those of his time who have made the gathering of riches their sole and only aim in life, shall have

sunk in well-deserved oblivion and all their riches and wealth shall have vanished into thin air.

When Mr. Beckwith first became interested in archæology is not definitely known. This is certain—that the great mound on his father's plantation must have attracted his attention when a small boy. He observed, even then, that the corners of this mound were as square as if the work had been done by an experienced builder. This mound was twenty-five to thirty feet higher than the general level of the land. It was 110 feet wide and 160 feet long, the top covered with burned clay to a depth of about five feet; and fifty feet from this truncated mound there was another truncated mound nearly as high and seventy or eighty feet wide. On about four hundred acres of land around these mounds relics of every description were discovered by the negro plowmen, and this, too, attracted his earliest attention. A few miles away from these mounds, on Pinhook Ridge, he saw other groups of mounds. In fact, in almost every part of Mississippi county, in the deepest recesses of the forest, on his hunting expeditions and other occasions, he observed these silent memorials of the prehistoric inhabitants of

the country. At first he considered these mounds only as offering a harbor of refuge for his stock in times of overflow. Then the peculiar shape of the mounds, the location, and possible purpose began to interest him. Thus he discovered a group of mounds in the neighborhood of his land, which became known as Beckwith's Fort, because plainly erected for defensive purposes. Finally, many years ago, he met Col. Norris, long connected with the Smithsonian Institute, who visited Mississippi county to explore some of the mounds of the county, and with him he made some explorations. Mr. Norris impressed upon him the importance of a study of these mounds. He undoubtedly implanted in Mr. Beckwith's mind the seed of that love for archæological and anthropological study and investigation which for years occupied his mind during his leisure hours. If the mounds had before that time arrested his attention and the relics discovered aroused his curiosity, the thought now took possession of his mind that maybe from what remained a history or picture could be secured of what these prehistoric people really were, how they lived, how far they were advanced in the domestic arts, how

they cultivated the soil, how they hunted, what was the character of their institutions. And from their relics he was convinced that at least some of their thoughts and ideas might be divined.

Once interested in the scientific value of any investigation and impressed with the value of such study, he gave nearly all his leisure time to the study and investigation of the mounds in our section of the state and to the works of the Mound Builders, so called, as revealed by such specimens as have escaped the wreck and tooth of time. He studied the subject from every viewpoint. He familiarized himself with the learning of other investigators. During the course of forty years he accordingly made one of the greatest local archaeological collections in the world, a collection not composed of rare and unique specimens gathered together from the four corners of the earth, but unexampled and remarkable because locally collected from the mounds of the upper St. Francois Basin and principally from mounds in Southeast Missouri counties; and because from this collection can be secured almost a perfect picture of the domestic institutions and civilization of a group of


the race of so-called Mound Builders living in our section of the Mississippi Valley. Every object in the Beckwith collection sheds some light on the character of the particular prehistoric people that lived here. The value of Mr. Beckwith's work lies in this—that it gives to the scientific anthropological student precise information as to the institutions of the so-called Mound Builders in this particular locality. Only a work such as Mr. Beckwith performed could give such facts. Finally, what he collected he embodied in a little work, which, however defective in literary merit, is of great value to all interested in anthropological study.

It is a wide step from a generalization as to the character and institutions of the Mound Builders of the United States, such as is usually given by writers, to a precise statement of the distinctive character of the institutions of that group of Mound Builders dwelling in dim ages past back of Wolf Island and in four counties of Southeast Missouri, the field in which Mr. Beckwith so assiduously labored as evidenced by his collection. To many, such a work may seem of little value, yet it is such work that gives us glimpses of the long-distant

ages, that enables us to trace the first feeble steps made by man on his onward march to a higher and better civilization. Human bones found in caves of vast antiquity, mixed up with the bones of animals, give us an idea of the antiquity of man. The Lake dwellings tell us of the first feeble efforts of man to establish a civilized order. The implements of the stone age are the records of a period when the use of iron was unknown. Everything relating to the history of man ought to be of absorbing interest to us. It is for this reason that the study of archæology is the most interesting of all studies. Almost daily new facts as to the history of man are brought to light from the ruins of ancient seats of power and dominion, if not civilization in our sense of the word, buried beneath the debris of unnumbered ages. It is only by making a local collection such as Mr. Beckwith made for us and for the Mississippi Valley that indubitable facts as to the institutions, culture and domestic arts existing here before our age can be secured.

Mr. Beckwith was a little over seventy-three years old when he died at Charleston. He had a robust and vigorous constitution. During most of

his life he enjoyed good health, although at times he greatly exposed himself. He was a little over medium size, had a light complexion, sandy hair, blue and piercing eyes. He was retiring in disposition, slow in speech, and his walk showed deliberation. He was not addicted to idle or frivolous conversation, which is so prevalent in small towns. He did not lounge around in public places. He was very independent in expressing his opinions on all questions of the day, and intolerent of all dishonest conduct. The habitual expression of his face was somewhat severe, and anyone who saw him realized that he was not a man to be trifled with in anything. Life with him was always real and earnest. He had only a few friends, because his intellectual life and ideals separated him from most of his neighbors. He was studious and read much. A few years before his death he gathered together much material and made many notes relating to the early settlers of Mississippi county, and this material he expected would be revised and arranged and then published. He also collected many of the farming and domestic implements of the early pioneers, as well as household effects, and these also he





gave to the Normal School, expecting these things to become the nucleus of a local Southeast Missouri museum, showing the progress of our people since those early days. He had a fine and valuable miscellaneous library, but his collection of works on archæology and anthropology is of exceptional value. He was a great hunter and spent weeks in hunting camps, and no doubt on these occasions greatly exposed himself. All who came in contact with him he treated with great courtesy. Although as a large land owner he rented much land, no doubt sometimes to persons of uncertain honesty, he had no lawsuits with his tenants, nor did he oppress them on account of crop failures by overflows, or when otherwise without their fault they were unable to meet their obligations. In all the relations of life he was an eminently just and fair man. Such in life was Thomas Beckwith.

---

Thomas Beckwith was born January 24, 1840. Died June 7, 1913.

X39









Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing Agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date:

AUG

1998



**BOOKKEEPER**

PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGIES, L.P.

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066

(724) 779-2111

MS



