So dear was this young hero and champion of the people's rights in the memory of those who associated in forming this county out of Cooper and Saline counties, on January 26th, 1833, that the name of Pettis was bestowed upon it. Messrs. Joseph S. Anderson, of Cooper county, John Stapp, of Lafayette county, and John S. Rucher, of Howard county, were commissioners in 1834, to locate the county seat of Pettis. Accordingly they met at St. Helena, commonly known by the *soubriquet* of Pin Hook, or Wasson's Mill, in the following March, and in 1837, Gen. David Thompson, father of Mr. Mentor Thompson, now of Sedalia, assisted in "laying out" Georgetown, naming it for Georgetown, Ky., his old home.

Soon after the duel between Pettis and Biddle was fought, the name Bloody Island was applied to the ground upon which the fatal tragedy took place.

The name of Pettis is supposed to have formerly been spelled Pettus. Sir John Pettus, an English writer, was born in Suffolk, England. He became deputy governor of the royal mines, and published "The History, Laws, and Places of the Chief Mines in England and Wales," in the year 1670. He died about A. D. 1690.

CHAPTER II.—EARLY SETTLEMENT AND PIONEERS.

Introduction—Habits and Characteristics of Pioneers—First Houses—Bedsteads—Manner of Cooking—Hominy Blocks—Early Mills—Farming—Hospitality and Traits of Early Settlers—Pin Hook Settlement—Flat Creek—Georgetown—Early Manner of Farming—Incidents—Names of Settlers.

The early settlers, where are they?
They are falling one by one:
A few more years may pass away,
And leave but few or none.

Since the period when the early settlements were made within the limits of what is now called Pettis county, Time, the great monarch of all things perishable, has made various changes. The ranks of families have been thinned and the surface of the earth materially changed. The slow and unobserved "old man with his sickle" has visited every dwelling, thrusting in his wiry blade regardless of nationality, home, or honor, so now numbers of the old pioneers sleep beneath the soil they once tilled. The writer is touched with the reverting thought of remembering many of the plain and hospitable men of the west, whose unsullied hearts and interminable energy of purpose, gave to this country its birthright, and its wholesome outlook in the dark days of hardships, who now rest from their labors. As long as the sands of time unceasingly roll, may the his-

torian's pen incessantly recount the matchless worth of these pioneers, who cleared the way for the following generations.

After spending considerable time in gathering materials, from records and old settlers, we find it impossible in these pages to give a full detail of the early settlements and pioneers of Pettis county. Every nation does not possess an authentic account of its origin, and many communities of comparatively recent date, from whence their origin may be traced. The old Latins said, "*Forsan et haec olim meminisse javabit*," which means that perhaps it will be pleasant hereafter to remember these things. Nevertheless, to be interested in such things is characteristic of the human race, and it comes particularly within the province of the historian to deal with the first causes. If at times these facts be lost, as is often the case when drawing from traditions, and the chronicler invades the realm of the ideal world and paints the missing picture, it should be accepted as pertinent to the theme. The patriotic Roman was not content till he had famed the "First Settlers," although the story of their lineage was not so tasteful to the cultured patricians.

One of the advantages of a new country, and the one usually least appreciated, is to be able to go to the beginning. Through this avenue the historian can trace results to their causes, and grasp the facts which have contributed to bring about events and mould characters. When we observe that a county has attained a certain position in contrast with other counties, we cast about for the reasons of the present conditions, by going to its early settlements and surroundings. In this way the changes which have produced the great enterprises of to-day may be accurately recorded.

In the history of Pettis county we may trace, in some instances, the early settlers to their old homes in the older States, and in the countries of the Old World, from whence they came. We may follow the course of the Buckeye, Sucker, Hoosier, Knickerbocker, Green-Mountain, and Nutmeg boys in striking contrast with the Corncrackers, Tuckyhoes, Tarheels, Whelps, and Texas Rangers, as we arrange the annals of the pioneers for compilation. For more than a century the provincialisms of the different sections of the Union have been marked by a deep contrast. The sturdy sons of New England "guess it is rearing and education," while the Dixie boys "reckon it is raising and family caste."

In this county and the west generally, the people have been, little by little, losing the tinge of their sectional bias, so that at this period it is difficult to tell the difference. East, west, north, and south have been blended into harmony of feeling and purpose. The prejudices that once prompted different localities to become antagonistic have passed away. The customs, dress, language, diet, and sundry things peculiarly western are now quite different from those of the pioneers of Pettis county.

Often the adventurer came to the west to "grow up" with the country, trusting only to his strong arm and willing heart to work his way on in the world. It was in this way many a penniless, ambitious young man secured a home in this county for his loving wife, and a good maintenance for his children. Here, fifty years ago, the pioneer hunter chased the deer, elk, and bear, where now are broad and well cultivated fields. It was by industry and economy that the pioneers left their children pleasant homes in many instances.

Here we may see the path worn by the Missourian in his experience in a land which, to him, was a country far more preferable than that southern and eastern soil where he made his former home. We may see here the growth which came with knowledge, and the progress which grew upon him with advancement, and how his better nature was developed. The vanishing pride of Kentucky, or the vain-glory of other sections, brought here in an early day, have been modified since the advent of new measures in the crucible of democracy, forever eliminating servitude from the solution, and establishing freedom and education in its stead. Others have been animated with the impulse to move on, after making themselves a part of the community, left for the west where civilization had not gone, some becoming wealthy returned to Pettis county, while many remained in their new homes.

In this county there were but few of the distinctive New England men and women or Yankees, a class of people with abundant nerve and brain force which have poured into western and southern states since the war by thousands, swelling the population and wealth of those regions in excess of any previous flow of emigration. This class brought with them a proclivity, inherent, submissive and courteous, which has tended to smooth the angles of western society and deaden the execrable feeling that had so long drawn the lines of sectional division. The agile New Englander will soon be a perfect Missourian and his offspring will tell the story of the adventure and feel ever thankful that they have a cheerful home in the favored spot of the west. In Pettis county may be found many an industrious, economical German, besides other nationalities—all of whom have contributed to modify types of men already living here.

Those who have noted the career of the brave, strong men in subduing the wilds, overcoming the obstacles and withstanding the hardships of this county in early times, can but admit that the first settlers were worthy sons of illustrious sires.

During the decade which comprehends the period prior to 1820, the history of this section was made up of the earliest stage of pioneer life. About all that we can gather from this time is drawn from tradition. In those days the people took but little care to preserve history; they were too busily engaged in making it. Historically speaking, those were the

most important years in the growth of this section. It was then the corner-stone of all the county's history and prosperity was laid. However, this period was not remarkable for its stirring events, if we leave out the admission of the State into the Union. It was, morover, a time of self-reliance, brave persevering toil, mingled with privations patiently endured through faith in the good time coming. Invariably, the first settlers were quite poor, mutually facing the same dangers and standing upon the same footing.

All the experience of the early pioneers of this county goes far to confirm the theory that, after all, happiness is pretty evenly balanced in the world. They had their privations and hardships, but they had, also, their own peculiar joys. If they were poor, they were free from the burden of pride and vanity, unless inherent in their nature, being exempt from the anxiety and care that always attend the possession of wealth. Other people's eyes cost them nothing. If they had few neighbors they were generally on good terms. Envy and jealousy had never crept in. A common interest and mutual sympathy bound them together with the closest ties. They were a little world to themselves, and the good feeling that prevailed was all the stronger, because they were so far removed from the dense populated cities of the east.

A fine hospitable feeling existed among the pioneers, arising partially from their social state of welfare. There were no castes, no aristocracy, except an aristocracy of kind hearts and benevolence. They were bound together with a bond of sympathy begotten by the consciousness of common hardships.

In the early times, neighbors did not wait for an invitation or request to help one another. Whenever a settler's cabin was burned or blown down, no sooner was the fact known than the neighbors turned out to assist the unfortunate man in rebuilding his house. In this work they came with as little hesitation and as much alacrity as if they were all members of the same family, bound together by the ties of consanguinity. What was one man's interest was the interest of the whole community. It must be remembered that this feeling among the pioneers was, by no means, peculiar to Pettis county, although it was strongly illustrated here. It prevailed among all the old settlements of Missouri. The very nature of circumstances taught the settlers the necessity of dwelling together in this spirit. It was their only protection. They had come, many of them, far away from the well established reign of law, and settled in a new country, where the civil authority was yet feeble, and unable to afford protection and redress grievances. Here in Pettis county, some of the old settlers lived quite a while before there was a single officer of the law in the county. Each man's protection was in the good will and friendship of those about him, and the one thing that any person might

well dread, was the ill-will of the community; for it was more terrible than the law. The law has its squabbles and delays, but there is no squabbling or delaying at the court of public sentiment. It was no common thing in early times for hardened men, who had no fear of jails, to stand greatly in awe of the indignant community. Such were some of the characteristics of the first settlers of Pettis county; nevertheless, they were generally peaceable, quiet law-abiding citizens, and for several years these pioneers had but few law-suits, and cared very little for anything except domestic affairs. They had no time to waste in neighborhood quarrels. Their charitable hand was ever open to welcome the stranger who had cast his lot with them, to share mutually what was in reserve.

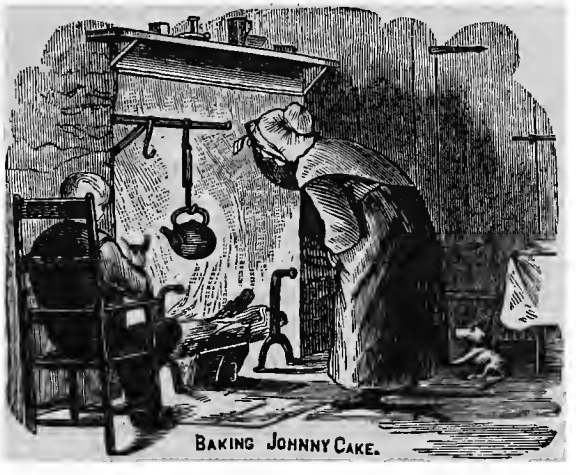
The first buildings of the county were not just like the log cabins that were afterwards erected. The latter was regarded as buildings of notability, requiring some help and considerable labor and expense for those times. The first dwellings were a cross between pole cabins and Indian bark huts. Many of the pioneers thus began life in the west, but soon after this house-raising called numbers of the settlers together to assist each other in erecting substantial log houses. A few pioneers yet live, who remember the happiest time of life as that when they lived in one of those plain but comfortable log houses.

In the pioneer's house a window with sash and glass was a rarity, and an evidence of wealth and aristocracy which but few could afford. The windows were more often made by cutting out a log or taking out a few chinks. The doors were fastened with old-fashioned wooden latches, and swung on wooden hinges. These houses were tenements suited to the times. For friend, for neighbor or traveler the latch-string always hung on the outside of the door. The pioneers were hospitable, entertaining visitors, even strangers without any charge.

It is quite noticeable with what affection and attachment the old settlers speak of their log cabins. It may be doubted whether palaces ever sheltered happier hearts than those who lived in rudely constructed log houses. The following is a brief descriptiou of the pioneer's dwelling:

These cabins were of round logs and poles, notched together at the corners, ribbed with poles, and covered with boards split from a tree. A puncheon floor was laid down, a hole cut in the end of the building where a stick and mud chimney was built. In some houses a window was made by cutting out a hole in the side or end, which had no glass or transparency save the light of heaven. The cracks were stopped or chinked with blocks of wood and mud. The one-legged bedstead—now a piece of furniture of the past—was made by cutting a stick the proper length, boring holes in the logs of the cabin one and one-half inches in diameter, at right angles, and the same-sized hole corresponding for the triangular part which was fastened in the floor or ground, poles made the bed rails,

and from pole to pole hickory bark was often interwoven or clapboard were laid across, and upon this structure a straw or shuck mattress was laid, and sometime a feather tick was placed still over this. The household and kitchen furniture were all in the same little room. The convenience of the cooking stove was not thought of then, but instead, the food was prepared by the faithful housewife in pots, kettles, ovens, and skillets, on and about the big open fire place and frequently around the pedal extremities of the husband, one of the so called "lords of creation," and legal sovereigns of the household while he was indulging in his nicotine and poisonous luxuries of a cob pipe, and now and then chewing and squirting the juice of the "natural leaf," discoursing the issues of an election, or contemplating the probable results of a proposed hunting excursion. Often the very earliest settlers baked their bread on a board before the fire and called it "Johnnie cake."



BAKING JOHNNY CAKE.

Those log cabins were not so bad after all. The people of to-day, familiar with cooking stoves and culinary utensils, would not be at home were they compelled to prepare a meal with no other conveniences than such as were found in the pioneer's log cabin. In very many instances rude fire places were constructed of mud and sticks, sometimes rough stones were laid for a hearth, jambs and back, the mud and stones to keep the sticks from catching fire, and the sticks to keep the mud from falling down.

These fire places served for heating and cooking purposes, and also, ventilation. Around the cheerful blaze of these early fires the meals were prepared, and before the fireside the board was spread and the edibles relished with a piquancy that the envoy of Spain might envy. These viands, it must be remember were not such as would tempt the epicure, but such as afforded the most wholesome nourishment for a class of people

who were driven to exposure and hardships by their lot. Among them there were but few dyspeptics.

Before there were mills of easy access, and even in some instances afterwards, hominy blocks were used. These now exist only in the memory of the oldest settlers. But few of the present generation know any thing of hominy blocks. We give a brief discription: A tree of suitable size from eighteen to twenty inches was selected in the forest and felled to the ground. If a cross cut saw was convenient the tree was butted, *i. e.*, the kerf or rough part taken off, so that it would stand steady when ready for use. If there were no saws in the neighborhood strong arms and sharp axes were ready to do the work. When the block was smooth at both ends the work of cutting out a hole commenced. This was done with an ax. When the cavity was sufficiently large a fire was kindled in and carefully guarded till the rough edges were burned out. When completed the block resembled a druggist's mortar. A pestle was made of a suitable piece of wood for the purpose of beating the corn. Sometimes one hominy block accommodated an entire neighborhood and was the means of staying the hunger for many months.

Sometimes in cases of rare necessity when the snow was too deep to travel or swollen streams intervened between the settler's home and the mill, a grist mill was extemporized from a coffee mill, whereby sufficient corn was ground to furnish meal for the family. At other times a grater was made by pricking holes in an old piece of tin, and after the corn was softened somewhat by boiling in the ear, meal was grated. Numerous instances of this kind might be given to show how families and even whole neighborhoods subsisted in this way for days and even weeks. A long period of this kind occurred during the great snow of 1829.

But few streams of the county had suitable mill sites. In a very early day a grist mill, water power, was erected on Muddy by James Wasson and called Pin Hook. A few horse mills were run in the older settlements.

The early settlements were confined to the wooded skirts of the little streams. Flat Creek and Muddy are the principal streams on which they first settled. In those days these streams furnished plenty of water to turn the mills in order to supply the demand for corn cake. Considerable fish were found in these streams then.

It is supposed by the old settlers that since civilization came westward and utilized the soils and drained the bottom lands, that there is not so much rain as formerly. It is said by reliable old settlers, that for days and weeks, many of the creeks could not be forded. At that time there were no roads, bridges, ferry boats, and but few canoes, making travel very difficult in bad weather. Then even the smallest streams were often dangerous, making it no small undertaking to travel where so many

treacherous streams had to be crossed. Then scarcely a week passed without some rain, and the streams were often swollen beyond the capacity of their banks, and would swim a horse where now we see luxuriant and fertile corn fields.

Many of the first settlers went to Boonville for their milling, which was the only place where merchandise was carried on for several years. At that time all the present State of Missouri west and north of the Osage river, and the old settled counties north of the Missouri river, was for many years, known as the "Boone's Lick country." The old settlers knew it by no other name. It received its name from a place called Boone's Lick, in what is now Howard county, situated about eight miles northwest of New Franklin, near the Missouri river. This place was visited by Daniel Boone at a very early date, finding several large salt springs where deer and other game resorted; he made this a favorite hunting ground. Here in 1807, Nathan and Daniel M. Boone, sons of the frontiersman, Daniel Boone, manufactured salt at Boone's Lick, and shipped it down the river to St. Louis. Several adventurers came to this section as hunters, but no one attempted to settle here until 1808, when Col. Benj. Cooper determined to make his home in this favored spot, but the territorial governor, Merriwether Lewis issued an order directing all frontier settlers to return since he could not afford them protection in case of an Indian war. In spite of all obstacles this section was not destined to be left forever under the reign of wild beasts and savage Indians. In those days all the territory including Saline, Cooper, and Pettis counties presented advantages for those seeking homes in rich land and healthful climate. Here the soil promised, with little labor, the most abundant harvests. The forests were filled with every variety of game, and streams with all kinds of fish.

During the war of 1812, the Indians took sides with the British against the United States, committing many depredations. After this war the Sac Indians were driven off, but often made hunting visits and were friendly towards the settlers.

When the first settlers came to this county wild game of all kinds was abundant, and so tame as not to be frightened by the approach of the white man. This game furnished the sturdy pioneers all their meat, and in fact, with all the provisions that they used, except their bread. At the advent of the white man, large numbers of deer, turkey, bear, elk, and other wild animals were very plentiful, and to use the expression of an old settler, "they were as plentiful as domestic stock in our pastures, and could be killed just as easy." The settlers spent most of their time in hunting and fishing, as it was of little use to plant crops to be destroyed by the wild animals.

The wild animals killed for food were not the only ones which filled

the forests. Such terrible and blood-thirsty wild beast as the bear and the panther could be seen very often lying in wait for an unwary traveler who ventured near their lairs. Capt. W. K. Ramey, when a mere stripling, out with his gun and dog, discovered three bears snugly covered with grass and weeds, early in the month of March, ere bruin had arose from his hibernation to take in the spring days. At first the Captain could not perceive what the pile of old grass meant, but by thrusting in his hand he found the bears which allowed him to put his hands on them to see if they were alive. After finding life in them he fired at the largest one, which fell to the ground after a few brief struggles. This brought the others, a yearling and a cub, out in the contest, the dog kept them at bay till a second shot brought the yearling to the ground, and then the cub tried to make his escape by taking to the wood, but he was pursued and treed, and a third shot from the Captain's gun brought him down. This was the Captain's initiation in bear fighting. Billy O'Brien killed an elk near the present village of Dresden, said to have been the largest ever killed in the county. When the head was severed from the body and stood upon the points of the horns, Mr. O'Brien rode under with his gun on his shoulder without stooping. This head and set of horns remained on the prairie for several years and more than one horseman has rode under the prongs. This is vouched for by Capt. W. K. Ramey, who was present when this enormous elk was slain, and killed four elk that day himself. Mr. O'Brien died in this county, and in 1850 his family moved to California.

In 1818 Nimrod Jenkins and a few others settled near the Lamine river, in the northeastern part of the county, which then formed a part of Cooper county. Solomon Reed came from Crab Orchard, Ky., and settled in 1821 in what is now known as Pettis county. He was a genuine pioneer, all of his life having been spent on the outskirts of civilization. He was liberal in his dealings with the Indians, and always on familiar and friendly terms with them, and among them he bore the *soubriquet* of "Pumpkin," owing to the fact that they could always get from him a supply of that vegetable, of which they seemed to be very fond. One year later Jesse Swope, Silas Jenkins, and Sylvester Hall located on Blackwater. Mr. Hall is now living a few miles north of Knobnoster, Johnson county, Mo. Soon after this settlement came Reuben E. Gentry, Thomas Osborne, Wm. O'Bannon, James Wasson, James Ramey and others, and settled on Muddy creek. A German settlement was made on Lake creek in 1831.

A settlement was made on a spot near old Georgetown. Settlements were made on Muddy, and Flat creek. George Heard, Esq., built the first house in Georgetown, during the fall of 1835. He was the first teacher of the county.

Some of the first settlers were Thomas Wasson, John Dickerson, Judge Jas. Ramey, Capt. W. K. Ramey, Nathan A. Newbill, Jesse Swope, Hiram Swope, Abijah Hughes, Leonard Bouldin, Edward Speddin, Wm. C. Harrison, Henry C. Hall, Richard O'Bannon, Absalom McVey, Reuben E. Gentry, M. Emery, C. and W. Woods, Reece Hughes, J. M. Wooldridge, Andrew Forbes, Samuel Forbes, Maj. Wm. Gentry, Aaron Jenkins, Amos Fristo, Gen. Geo. R. Smith, John Montgomery, Mentor and Milton Thomson, Norah S. Rigg, Jesse Douglass, Aldea A. Glasscock, Albion Robinson and many others some of which will appear elsewhere.

History is but the unrolled scroll of prophecy, setting forth and recounting not only what is, but giving us gleams of that which is soon to follow.

The early settlers who bore the brunt through all the dark and trying times of the development of this county shall never lose claims to valor and noble deeds of charity. Whenever we read of the heroic and daring conduct of the hardy pioneer in procuring bread for loved ones, we can but reflect that his heart was more valiant than the soldiers who followed either a Napoleon or a Hannibal.

An interesting comparison might be drawn between the conveniences which now tend to make the life of the farmer comparatively an easy one, compared with the farming of those days. A brief description of the accommodations possessed by the first tillers of the soil will not be amiss. The children of such illustrious sires should draw their own comparisons, which should forever silence the voice of complaint, often heard among grumbling farmers.

The farming utensils of the early settlers were the bull-tongue colter, single shovel, and wooden mold-board plows. Then if a man owned a wooden board plow he was quite an aristocrat. With these simple implements the plowman opened up his patches. These rude plows did good service and are awarded the honor of first stirring the soil of Pettis county.

A few old settlers have lived to see the rough and crooked paths of pioneer life change to that of ease and comfort, with grand-children around, enjoying a thousand fold of the luxuries which have resulted from former arduous toils. The iron-nerved pioneers stood bravely by their condition, through storm and calm, ever thinking of the good time coming,—

"When the forest should like a vision,
And over the hillside and plain
The orchard would spring in beauty,
And the fields of golden grain."

The simple fare of the inhabitants was alike conducive to health and economy. When boarding houses were first established, ten cents was the bill for a meal. If the table was supplied with corn bread the boarders

were satisfied. Flour was very scarce, and an unknown commodity to many families. But few of the young people of to-day know any thing about making the delicious and digestible corn cake, the pride of our grandmother's days.

One of the peculiarities of pioneer life was a strange loneliness, which at first was a solitude of oppression to the young wife who had her happy home in the States. Months would pass often without seeing a face, outside of the family circle. The isolation of those days has wrought such reticence upon some families, that generations cannot efface. The children of some families grew up quite rude. The girls of a few families were bashful and timid and in their homes perfect prudes. The hoiden was unknown. However, the better classes brought up their chidren with great vigilance, training them in home etiquette, domestic economy, and love for religion.

When the rights of the pioneers were threatened or invaded their timidity, or bashful nature vanished like a mist in a summer's sun, and their "muscles of iron and hearts of flint" were ready for any emergency. The hospitality of this people was unbounded. During the campmeeting seasons neighbors, for miles around, would gladly entertain those from a distance.

Rough and rude though the surroundings may have been, these people were none the less honest, sincere, hospitable and kind in their relations. It is true, as a rule, and of universal application, that there is a greater degree of real humanity among the pioneers of any country than when the country becomes older and richer. Here exists a high regard for the sexes, and moral courage was one of the noble qualities of the women, whose chastity was never questioned. If there was an absence of refinement, that absence was more than compensated by generous hearts and truthful lives. In fine the early settlers were themselves,—men and women,—bold, courageous, industrious, enterprising and energetic, abounding with an eternal hate for cowards and shame of every kind, and above all, falsehood and deception, cultivating a straightfoward line of policy and integrity, which seldom permits them to be imposed upon, or lead a life of treachery themselves.