

Linxwiler
family

OCCGS REFERENCE ONLY

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You can supplement this outline with numerous incidents and references to George Linxwiler scattered through Elliott's history.

I have an old painting of George Linxwiler landing his flatboat at the foot of Coal Mine Hill. The picture is about 22 x 26 inches, and if desired, I could send to Evansville for display purposes at the opportune time – or I could have it photographed for use in the history or otherwise. I have done some research as to character of dress of the times – also of flatboats. I know well the lay of the land at this point, as it was certainly as wild when I was a boy as it was 200 years ago.

(Signed)
Louis (Lynxwiler)

William Linxwiler

Note: The introduction to the following article states that it was taken from the Minute Book of the Vanderburgh Historical and Biographical Society, Page 56. It was read at Evansville on January 20, 1881, to the Historical Society of Vanderburgh County by the author, William Linxwiler.

I am perhaps the oldest native born resident of Vanderburgh County now surviving. My father, George Linxwiler, was one of the first German immigrants into this part of the great West. He landed opposite the mouth of Green River, March 5, 1806, and after looking around the vicinity, settled upon a tract of land just below the present city of Evansville, which was afterwards widely known as the residence of the late John B. Stinson. On this place my father erected a log cabin, in which I was born, February 12, 1809. In the Spring of 1811, my father moved to the Mathias Whetstone farm on the old Princeton road a short distance north of Mechanicsville (Stringtown), the same being a part of section 32 Township 5 Range 10. This place was [a] well known locality in early times and many years the residence there was kept as a public tavern or Inn. While living there my father was drafted in the army during the war of 1812, but my brother George was accepted as a substitute for him. My brother served under General Harrison in the Indian campaigns and was wounded at the battle of Tippecanoe.

At the time of our first residence in this vicinity there were no established roads, settlers were exceedingly few in number and when we went abroad either for business or pleasure we directed our movements by the Indian trails, or by paths marked through the forests by means of blazes or ax marks on the trees.

My father assisted in blazing out a road which became an established thoroughfare from the Whetstone farm east to the Red Bank Trail and north nearly along the line of the old Princeton stage road to the intersection with the Red Bank trail near the house of John Whitrow not far from the village of Warrenton. There were at the time of blazing the trail but four houses on the entire route from the Ohio River to the Brazelton farm adjacent to the town of Princeton, and these were of the type of rude shelter such as the hardy pioneers erected hastily when ever they found a site which their fancy suggested to be a good point for location.

About the time of the commencement of hostilities in the west consequent upon the war of 1812 with England, the Indians in this section of Indiana Territory became very troublesome and the white settlers were obliged to exercise extreme caution for the protection of the lives of their families. The



natural hostility of the savages was inflamed by the conduct of William Wagnon, one of the first settlers, and who was subsequently one of the Associate Judges of Vanderburg County.

This man had a cabin on the bank of Wagnons Creek (which stream was named after him) below Evansville, where he sold whiskey. Always ready to traffic with the Indians, Wagnon supplied them with whiskey in order to make sharp bargains with them. Several quarrels occurred between the settlers and the drunken savages, but no serious results followed, so far as I remember.

The first house built on the present site of Evansville was a log cabin erected on the west bank of Pigeon creek, the ground on which it stood has long since fallen into the Ohio River. Hugh McGary's log house built in 1812, was the next house erected and it stood opposite the point which afterwards became the steam boat landing. The foot of Main St. When McGary laid out his first town in 1814 there were two small cabins on the ground covered by [the] town plot. By 1817, when the new town was planned the number of houses had increased to 8 or 9.

During this time the woods abounded with game of all kinds natural to the latitude. Bears were plenty. One day my father was hunting near where the Parrett farm was cleared, and had discharged his gun without effect at a large bear. [T]hen he attempted to conceal himself behind a huge walnut log or tree trunk until he could reload his piece. While so engaged he heard a scrambling on the other side of the log, quickly followed by the nose of another full grown bear smelling of his ha[n]d across the body of the fallen tree. The old man dropped his gun and ran for dear life. It was several days before he found his gun again. In 1811 a Frenchman opened a trading post at the mouth of Pigeon creek and did a thriving business in the way of trading blankets and trinkets with the Indians for furs and peltries.

When the war began this trader suddenly decamped for safer quarters. John Ingle settled here in 1817 and was followed by Saunders Hornbrook and Edmund Maidlow in 1819. These men all came from England. Charles McJohnston also came in 1819. In 1818 Judge Olmsted migrated from New York and David Negley from Pennsylvania. These men were intelligent citizens and did much towards giving tone and sentiment to society. From the date of their settlement may be said to have commenced a real civilization.

Deacon Negley (as he was called) soon became the proprietor of the well known Mill on Pigeon Cree[k], which he improved, and, subsequently, with Joel Lambert, built the mill which was destroyed by fire a few years ago. This improvement was a great help to the county. The mill was the center of attraction for all the settlers over a region of country not less than forty miles wide. There had been a rude logmill on the premises erected by Mr. Anthony in 1814 and this mill was in running order when the property passed into possession of Negley and Lambert.

Previously the settlers had their grinding done at Red Banks, the name by which Henderson was first called, or resorted to the old fashioned mortar and pestle to pulverize their corn. Many a bushel I have crushed to powder when a boy. In those days I did not need to sing, "Oh, would I were a boy again." I would gladly have been almost anything else.

When David Negley came to Vanderburg County he was accompanied by his brother, Peter Negley, who did not remain here but settled at a later date near Indianapolis. While the brothers were here together they were one day amusing themselves by coasting down the steep hillside opposite the old mill with their eyes shut, when Peter by an unlucky lurch of his sliding board was dumped head first into Pigeon creek. After the brothers separated they did not meet again for about twenty years., when David went to Indianapolis to attend a Whig convention and took occasion to search for his brother. It was a long time before Peter would believe David was his brother, having heard that he was dead. Finally David narrated several incidents of their early life, among others the sliding down hill and the cold bath that followed,

whereupon Peter received him as the brother he had long mourned as dead.

The first brick house built in Evansville was erected on Main Street just below the corner of First, about where the Express office of the Louisville and Nashville Railway Company now stands, by J. V. Robinson for a dwelling house. It was afterwards occupied for several years by the late John Walsh as a place of residence and was finally torn down by Judge Mathew Foster, when he erected the stores now standing on that corner.

The next brick was a pretentious two-story dwelling and was built by Edward Hopkins on First Street between Vine and Sycamore — the same house that was afterwards extended and used for theatrical purposes, and called first the Apollo and subsequently the Mozart Hall. (See John S. Hopkins' correction, 1881, at end of speech. chf)

As an evidence of the value of real estate in the infancy days of Evansville I may mention the fact that Hugh McGary offered my father an acre of ground on the corner of the block where the First National bank now stands for thirty hogs which had been fattened on mast. At the time such dressed por[k] was selling for one dollar and a quarter per hundred weight, payable in trade or labor. This was just before McGary sold the whole of that part of the town site lying above Main street to James W. Jones and General Evans.

The first blacksmith who opened a shop in Evansville was a negro named Worshom, whom General Evans brought from Kentucky for the purpose of operating his trade, the services of a smith being largely in demand. In the course of a year or two Jonathan Fairchild and his sons emigrated from New York and settled in the village of Mechanicsville, where Col. Seth Fairchild opened up a blacksmith shop that became a marked feature in the county. For years all the livery horses in Evansville were taken to the Fairchild's shop to be shod. All kinds of iron work was executed there, the smith running five forges a good deal of the time.

The first improved fruit introduced into this region of [the] country was the Whetstone apple, which became famous for many miles around. This was a fine yellow apple of delicious flavor, which has not been excelled by any of the varieties introduced of late years. It was brought into notice by David Whetstone, who cultivated a farm on the upper Blue Grass Road, near Linxwiler's ferry over Pigeon Creek, the same place where William Vickery now resides. The fruit and cuttings from the Whetstone apple trees were in great demand for many years. There were three brothers of the elder Whetstones, David, Mathias, and Henry, who were valuable pioneer citizens. Peter Whetstone, a son of David, fell in disgrace. He stole a horse, was apprehended, examined and held to bail, his father becoming his surety. When court met, Peter did not appear and the bond was forfeited. The payment of the forfeiture completely ruined David Whetstone.

The introduction of churches and school houses into this part of Indiana began about the year 1818. The first preaching was done at private houses both in Evansville and in the county. The rude log school house answered for the purpose of imparting instruction to the children during the week and for occasional religious service on the Sabbath, and sometimes on week days during the evenings. There was a school house built at Mechanicsville about the same time the first one was put up in Evansville. The Cumberland Presbyterians were rather the leaders in the Religious advancement, as they began their work by holding annual camp meetings which attracted much attention. The first Camp Ground was located on the farm owned by Jesse McCallister in Knight township. Here Hiram A. Hunger preached as early as 1819. McCallister's house was a regular place of preaching for the pioneer ministers, and, in the fall of the year the whole county gathered at the Camp Ground. In later years a new Camp Ground was opened near the mouth of Cypress Creek and another near the residence of Squire Kennerly at the upper end of

Mechanicsville. The Baptists also had one in the course of a few years in Perry Township about one mile west of Wagnon's Creek near the Mt. Vernon road.

Hugh McGary, who made the first attempt to found a village in Vanderburgh County, left the state of Indiana about the year 1832 under a cloud. An affidavit was filed against him before Squire Jacobs of Scott township, charging him with having stolen a horse from Mark Wheeler. Samuel Hooker, the constable, took to his assistance Joshua W. Stephens, Silas Stephens, Wilson Short, John C. Henson and myself, and together we made the arrest. The constable anticipated resistance and hence this martial array. When McGary was found he was riding the stolen horse, but he surrendered without a murmur. His story, which was generally believed, was that he had traded for the horse with a man named Wasson, who, I believe, was in some way related to McGary. Anyhow, McGary was never prosecuted. Wheeler got his horse and the matter was dropped by common consent. But there were evil tongues which kept whispering the story to the prejudice of McGary, who, although he was a hardy old pioneer, and a rough character in many of his ways, had a kind heart and tender sensibilities, which were well nigh crushed by the voice of slander. He bore up for a while, attended to business as usual, but his friends remarked that he was ill at ease. He finally made a trip to the south and never returned.

Now, Gentlemen of the Society, I believe I have said about all that occurs to my mind, in so brief an interview, touching old times in Vanderburgh County. I have been here from the beginning and expect to die and be buried here. During my sojourn I have witnessed many thrilling scenes that would fill a volume. I stood by the gallows when John Harvey was hung June 27th, 1823, by Major Warner, who was then Sheriff of the county. The gallows was erected on the public square which then occupied (in part) one quarter of the block of which Samuel Vickery's store is now the corner. About the middle of this quarter square the gallows had been put up. When Major Warner shook hands with the condemned man, before springing the trap, he cried like a child. John Harvey died easily and was buried in the ground near the foot of the gallows. His bones were dug up when the workmen were excavating the cellars of the stores now occupying the ground, and were gathered up and articulated by the late Dr. Isaac Hutchinson. Harvey was hung for the murder of a man named Casey near the old McDowell farm in Union Township. Though he undoubtedly did the killing, there were many persons who doubted whether it was a case of murder. As is very common in such matters, there was a woman in the case.

There are, perhaps, other incidents that I may call to mind and give you for preservation. I only regret that I have not kept a diary of important events during the past sixty years.

William Linxwiler

Note appended to speech: On the reading of the foregoing paper, the Hon. John S. Hopkins called attention to one or two slight inaccuracies on the part of the author. Mr. Hopkins said the first brick house built in Evansville was the old Court House. The dwelling on First Street was built by Nicholas Thompson and not by Mr. Hopkins' father, the late Judge Edward Hopkins, but Mr. Hopkins resided there. This house preceded the Robinson house on Main Street in point of time, the latter having been erected about 1824. The Secretary was directed to make the corrections by order of the Society.

The Secretary

**Local News from *The Herald-Enterprise*
in Golconda (Pope County), Illinois, 1890**
Submitted by Patricia Sides

Extracted from the June 26, 1890 issue:

- . W. S. Morris & Son attended Hardin county court this week.
- . Miss Della Vinyard is visiting friends in Evansville this week.
- . Mr. D. G. Thompson's family are at Dixon Springs this week.
- . Clarley Kluge made a big shipment of lumber to Evansville, Saturday.
- . Charley Boicourt returned Saturday morning from a two weeks' visit in Evansville.
- . Mrs. John F. Moyers was among the passengers of the packet, on her up trip, Saturday.
- . Mr. J. H. Benham is in Carmi, having gone Tuesday, to take his grand children home.
- . Mrs. F. M. Clanahan returned Saturday from a visit to friends in Paducah and Metropolis.
- . Mrs. Steyer returned yesterday from a visit to her daughter, Mrs. Lieut. T. T. Fountain, in Du Quoin.
- . Capt. John Gilbert and lady, of Evansville, spent several days here last week visiting relatives. They left for their home, Saturday.
- . I want to contract for 12 cords (single rank) of oak stovewood, to be all delivered before Sept. 1st. Apply at this office. Sim V. Clanahan.
- . Mr. J. P. Hodge and family left Monday for Beardstown, Ill., where Mr. H. is now engaged in running the leading paper of Cass county, the Star of the West.
- . Miss May Hanna arrived here Saturday from Oberlin, Kan., on a visit to her parents and friends. Miss May has taught several successful schools in the West.
- . Mr. Frank C. Jahn was down the latter part of last week, returning to Rosi Clare, Monday. He is almost done [with] his job at the mills and expects to be at home again soon.
- . Alex. Robbs, who has been under treatment of Dr. Brooks, at Paducah, some months, came up Tuesday, considerably improved in health.
- . Mrs. Scholtz and daughter, Miss Lydia, of Evansville, visited friends in this place several days the past week, returning home yesterday.
- . Mr. Morrison, who had been visiting the family of his son, here, the past week, left for his home in Philo, Ill., Monday. His wife will remain here a couple of months.
- . The young folks of our town enjoyed two pleasant parties Thursday and Friday evenings. The first was given by Misses Myrtle and Lucy Clanahan and the latter by Miss Jessie Rose.
- . Messrs. J. A. Rose, Ben. L. Ragsdale, J. R. Steagall and H. Clanahan left Monday morning for Springfield to attend the State convention the following day. Hon. Simon S. Barger also attended.
- . James Rondeau, who has been absent in Texas for the past five years, is circulating among "home folks" this week. He will remain a few days, when he will go to Tiptonville, Tenn., where he has a position.
- . Mrs. Emily Mansfield, sister of Mrs. J. C. Hendley and Mrs. M. F. Wuster, of this city, died at her home in this place Saturday, and was buried in the Odd Fellow's cemetery the following day.
- . Mr. J. L. Hase, of Mill Creek, Union county, Ill., formerly of this place, was over the first of the week before our pension board for examination. Mr. Hase is well pleased with his new home, and finds plenty of work at his trade.
- . Sheriff Floyd has posted up a notice in the court yard prohibiting ball playing and running over the grass in the park. This is just the proper thing to do and we are glad to see it done before the grass is ruined.
- . John Bird and son, George, W. H. Sim and George Young were up the creek Tuesday. fishing and brought back one of the finest strings of fish that has ever come out of the creek. Dr. Taylor, W. H. Moore and the