

The Heritage News

Issue 2

January, 1993

The Heritage News is published by the Jefferson Heritage and Landmark Society.

Editor: Lisa K. Thompson

Circulation: Becky Gagnon

There will be a meeting of the Jefferson County Heritage and Landmark Society on January 17, 1993 at 2:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at Jefferson College in the Little Theater, and will feature a program on the history of the Afro-Americans in Jefferson County. The speakers for the program will be Mrs. Willa McCullough, and Mark and Bernice Thompson. There will also be a photo exhibit by the Kimmswick Historical Society. The public is invited to attend.

Indian Burial Sites

by Della Lang

The discovery of at least four separate ancient Indian burial sites in the House Springs area since the early 1940's, indicates that this area was occupied long before the Osage Indians, or our European ancestors, arrived in Jefferson County.

Archaeologists who have studied these sites have determined that the time period in which the burials took place date from the early to middle Mississippi Phase (900-1450 A.D.). The Mississippi Phase is a classification given to a certain culture, rather than only a geographical location. Middle, early and late, refer to the time periods of certain ancient cultures.

According to experts, we are located in the Ozark Highland Region. The early settlers in this region are now traditionally known as "Village Farmers." It is known that maize (corn), beans, and squash were among the crops raised by these early tribes.

The House Springs area held campsites in the Village Farmer tradition. Some archeologists believe these sites were satellite stations, or collecting

stations, which were directly connected with the larger settlements at St. Louis and Cahokia. But the discovery of numerous burials near Big River indicates that these "stations" may have once served as permanent villages.

All of the burials found at House Springs were "cist" or stone-box burials. The human skeletons were found lying on stone slabs, surrounded by similar stone slabs which formed a coffin-like box.

Studying the ancient burial sites, pottery, weapons and tools, enables us to follow cultural development throughout the centuries. But in the past 50 years, at least three burial sites in the area have been destroyed. Only one known site remains intact. That site too is now being threatened by modern development.

There is still so much to be learned about these ancient tribes who preceded the Osages by several hundred years. But many questions will have to remain unanswered if we continue to destroy all evidence of their very existence.

Don't Forget!

March 21, 1993 - Meeting at 2:30
at Jeffco. The speaker will be
Elmer Heiligtag

April 18, 1993 - Meeting at 2:30
at Jeffco. The speaker will be Carol Duncan.

JCH&L Board of Directors

1990-1993

John Anderson Martha Dodson Jean O'Brien
Rebecca Gagnon

1991-1994

Mary Ann Boyer Ray Henry Betty Olson
Timothy Patterson

1992-1995

Della Lang Frank Magre Lisa Thompson
Catherine Crawford Marian Piper (permanent)

Reminiscences and History of Jefferson County

by: Frank N. Stone

The following was included in a series of articles published in The Democrat beginning with the March 18, 1870 issue. The Hillsboro Literary Society printed a list of questions and submitted them to the oldest settlers of the county. The following by Mr. Stone, who was also the publisher of The Democrat, takes place in the year 1800 and is presented here with only a few spelling changes. (Lisa K. Thompson)

The region of country now known as Platin Township, presented a magnificent scene--simply, plainly and truly a magnificent scene. The stretch of land from the Mississippi westward was rolling prairie, spotted here and there with picturesque groves of timber, and the streams found their pathways through belts of large and noble looking timber. Long fine grass carpeted nature's uneven floor and made it smooth, while seas of flowers -- brilliant in their primitive wildness and sparkling with all the varied hues of the rainbow, ornamented, beautified, and enlivened the picture. The game was abundant. Antelopes and deer bounded from copse to grove -- not in fright but sport. Wild pigeons swarmed the groves. Turkeys stalked tamely through the grass. Wolves roamed and howled at night, and skulked during the daylight and sunshine.

But the grandest sight of all was the horses. Troops of beautiful, well formed horses clattered over hill and dale, or stood in the shade of the tall trees. They were not ponies, but horses, large and well formed, fleet as deer and sure-footed. They frequented the prairies and open country, except when frightened, when they would betake themselves to the dense low timber in the upper regions of the Platin, around its head-waters. A safe hiding place was here found from all pursuers, red and white, and until danger was well over they never returned.

What a scene for romance was here! Yet who to enjoy it! There was very little romance left in the whites after the tedious and perilous journey to the new country; and as for the red man, his lot is too hard for romance to play a part of it.

But no one's life is wholly without romance, and romance has played its part in Jefferson County history. And for the edification of those who are of a romantic or sentimental turn, in this assemblage, (and of such there may be not a few) I give a romantic incident of the olden time; a historical one however, and only colored by fancy.

The scene I have described. It was the fair Platin region--the land of flowers and horses. It was longer ago than half a life time--almost a life time. In the fair country described, way off upon a high hill, overlooking miles of country and miles of the Mississippi's turbid waters--up in Selma Hills, the noted Indian chief, Blood Bird (red bird) built his abode of tents, and poles, and skins. Blood Bird was happy--for he was all powerful in the land. His followers were wont to respect and obey him; discord was never had, and where tranquility is, peace always reigns. And he was on friendly terms with the pale-faced settlers. He was a sensible Indian--he was shrewd and observing, and knew that peace with the whites meant safety.

And Blood Bird had a daughter, as many a man before him and since his time. And she was very fair, as many a one before and since her time. Nearly as pale as the white man's face was her's, blacker and finer her hair--softer, more tender her eyes--deeper, tenderer, stronger her love--more abiding, firmer her faith--more bitter, more blasting her hate.

A young pale face saw and loved this daughter of the Indian. He came to Blood Bird's house from the mouth of the Platin frequently, and the chief was too good a judge of human nature to mistake the object of the young man's visits. Indeed they were not denied. But Blood Bird was not very favorably inclined toward his visitor. He did not want to lose his daughter, and a rising young brave of his own people had long aspired to be his son-in-law, and it would weaken his power in his tribe, perhaps, to take in the pale faced encroacher.

In these days there roamed and led a herd of horses, a beautiful cream-colored horse. He was the admiration of all that had ever seen or heard of him. He was large and graceful, and as fleet as the wind. Hundreds, both white and red had tried all the power of ingenuity and strength in their possession to capture him, but dismally failed. Blood Bird killed many animals in chasing the cream-colored horse, but he swept

away like a phantom, his silvery mane and tail floating in the winds, leaving his pursuers alone up on the plains.

Blood Bird chased him one day, and in the evening returned at sunset. The young man was there. He pressed his suit and boldly asked the chief for his daughter.

"Go," said the chief in a wild manner, "go and catch the Silver-Mane, and by the Great Spirit, you shall have my daughter."

"Tomorrow I will determine my destiny," exclaimed the pale face. "I will go after the Silver-Mane, and will never return without him."

The young white man owned the fleetest horse under saddle and reins. He had chased the Silver-Mane and pressed him closely, but abandoned pursuit in consideration of his animal. There was little chance for consideration now in his behalf, unless he caught the wild horse.

Daybreak found the rider and horse in search of Silver-Mane. Determination was settled on the young man's face, and his horse tramped uneasily. Silver-Mane was soon discovered. He espied his old pursuer; the only one he feared. The wild horse knew he must run for it. He pranced off in majestic splendor, hour after hour pursuer and pursued clattered over hill, dale and prairie. The huge form of his fiery blood-bay pursuer was looming up at his heels. The sun was high in the heavens, and the white foam streamed from the fevered flanks. Silver-Mane headed for the Mississippi. He was all excitement and fear now. Pride had vanquished, and he ran not knowing what he did. Likewise had his pursuer become oblivious of every passing event except the chase. Heedless on they dashed. The steep hills were nearer than before, and now they are reached. The wild horse is frenzied, crazed. Recklessly he runs and now is as recklessly pursued. Nearer he comes to the river. The whole country is in sight, but no stops to gaze upon it. A dense copse is before the horse. He plunges heedlessly into it and is followed.

The chase is ended. Two hundred feet below, upon the loose fragments of crumbled rock and decayed wood and riotous vegetation, are three corpses; rider and horse, pursuer and pursued, no more in dread of each other. The ground was crimsoned, and as a tall Indian, uttering a shriek of horror ran up and beheld the scene, his face changed. A ghastly smile of satisfaction spread over his repulsive countenance as he beheld the features of the pale face, now paler still in death. It was his rival.

In the mouth of the little valley below where this melancholy tragedy occurred, stands the little village of Rush Tower, and the historic spot is still designated and pointed out.

And this is some of the romance in Jefferson County history. 'Tis disconnected and disjointed, and necessarily so. Imagination may have furnished parts of the story—those which records fail to give, and fancy may have sought to give it a brighter tinge of color than reality is wont to do. Be this as it may, on my part 'tis the chapter of an hours preparation yet diving back almost a life time.

The Democrat May 17, 1878

Booker Richardson of Kimmswick, while plowing for corn, ran into an old Indian grave, and on investigating, he unearthed a human skeleton, in a good state of preservation. The right arm of the skeleton held a well formed earthen jug, and a pipe was in its mouth. There were several other articles of earthenware, including a pot, all showing that the individual when placed in his grave was well supplied for his journey to the happy hunting grounds. We are informed that several other relics have been found in the vicinity. The graves have been noticed ever since the county was settled, but we believe this is the first time any effort has been made to ascertain their contents.

Articles Wanted

Please send articles and items of interest to Lisa K. Thompson 11210 Harrison Lake Rd. Festus, MO

The Legend of the Indian Pipes

Indian pipes a maiden named them,
When she found them in a glen,
Growing tall in spectral beauty,
Ghostly pipes on slender stems.

Who has seen them in the morning,
When the grass was wet with dew,
Scarcely once within a lifetime,
Only seen by such a few.

An old chief told me the story,
That the pipes would only grow,
Where the council fires were burning,
And left their ashes long ago.

How they sprang up in the darkness,
And with the coming of the day,
When the sun had reached its zenith,
They would vanish all away.

I can almost hear their ponies,
As they came in single file,
See the firelight flicker softly,
As they lingered here awhile.

Leave the pipes where you may find them,
Don't disturb this sacred place,
Walk softly on beneath the trees,
Respect this noble vanquished race.

“These pipes are a cluster of almost transparent flowers closely resembling the clay pipes of long ago. They are so rare that I have only witnessed their strange beauty one time in a life of much walking in the Ozark woods.”

—Theodore H. Howell—

Theodore H. Howell was born in Blairsville, Illinois on January 1, 1912. His family moved to Missouri and lived in various areas of Jefferson County such as Pevely, Herculaneum, Kimmswick, and Imperial. “Ted” married Alice Murdick of Richwoods in 1936 and had two children. He worked at carpentry and in later years, bought and sold antiques in Jefferson County. He wrote about 200 short stories and over 1000 poems, one of which, THE LEGEND OF THE INDIAN PIPES, won first place in the 1991 Jefferson County Writers poetry contest. Mr. Howell died on January 21, 1992.

Missouri Indian Tribes

The Indian tribes native to Missouri in historic times were primarily the Osage and Missouri. Iowa and Kansas also had camps and perhaps villages in the state of Missouri. Prior to 1825 there were Kickapoo, Delaware, and Shawnee reservations in the state.

The Osage gave up all claims to land in the central and eastern part of the state by the treaty of 1808. However, they continued to use much of the area until Missouri became a state. The Missouri tribe left before 1800. The Delaware and Shawnee moved into Missouri from the Northeast and settled between Cape Girardeau and St. Louis. They were the first of the transient Indians to have absolute claims on lands in what is now Missouri. There is evidence that the Shawnee helped supply St. Louis with meat at least until the war of 1812 and continued to live in villages west of St. Louis. Some of the early maps place a village of the Cahokia tribe several miles below St. Louis on the west side of the Mississippi River. The Kaskaskia, an Illinois tribe, were living in what is now south St. Louis when the "Mound City" was still young.

from Indians and Archaeology of Missouri

by Carl H. and Eleanor F. Chapman

"The territory now comprising this county less than one hundred years ago was under the control of tribes of Indians known as the Shawnee and Delawares."

John L. Thomas in The Democrat

April 29, 1870

"Many descendants of the first settlers in Jefferson county are now living, and can relate with clearness and precision, incidents and historic events which were handed down from a preceding generation. Indeed such are the most reliable and in many cases the only sources of information upon very remote history. In the year 1802, Mr. Hardy McCormack, now living in Platin Township, landed at Platin Rock, which lies upon the Mississippi River at the mouth of the transparent stream which shares the same title. During the winter, it was customary for some four or five hundred Indians to come and camp on what is now called the McLane farm, and to which is also given the significant title of "Indian Bottom." This field is located near the head waters of the Platin, and at the time of Mr. McCormack's visit, constituted together with the surrounding country, one of the finest hunting regions in the West. And it was on this account that the savages preferred to occupy it."

Frank N. Stone in The Democrat

July 1, 1870

DELAWARE—The Delaware called themselves *Lenni Lenape* or "true men." There were three major divisions of the Delaware Indians; the Munsee (Wolf), Unami (Turtle), and the Unalactigo (Turkey). The Delaware placed their villages on river meadows. Each village was surrounded by sovereign hunting territory and fields of corn, beans, and squash. Their houses were domed wigwams or Iroquois—like longhouses.

MISSOURI—The Missouris spoke the Siouan language. Their name probably meant "people with the dugout canoes". But it has come to be translated as "Big Muddy" after the river. Missouris farmed as well as hunted. They lived in villages much of the time.

OSAGE—The Osage called themselves *Ni-U-Ko'n-Ska* meaning "Children of the Middle Waters." They spoke the Siouan language. Most of the year the Osage lived in villages along wooded river valleys and famed the rich soil. While at home they stayed in oval or rectangular pole-frame houses covered with woven mats or hides. They went on several buffalo hunts every year during which time they lived in tepees.

SHAWNEE—Shawnee means "southerners" because for most of their history, the Shawnees lived south of the other tribes of their Algonquian language family. As wanderers, the Shawnee had a unique place in Indian history and culture, introducing cultural traits of the northern tribes to the southern tribes and vice versa. The Shawnee hunted, fished, gathered, and farmed.

Carol Diaz-Granados Duncan, professional archaeologist and part-time instructor at Washington University, will give a slide presentation covering her research on the petroglyphs and pictographs of Missouri at Jefferson College in the Little Theatre, Arts and Science building on April 18, 1993 at 2:30 p.m. Her research has been supported by grants from the National Science Foundation, the Cave Research Foundation, and Washington University. To date, Carol, with the help of her husband Jim Duncan, has documented 125 sites in the state. For over three years, they have surveyed sites with Frank Magre, the local authority on prehistoric rock art. Carol is finishing up her Ph.D. this spring at the university. The presentation is open to the public.

New Members into the Jefferson Heritage and Lanmark Society are most welcome. Annual dues are \$10.00. Dues may be sent to Mrs. Betty Olson; Treasurer c/o the DeSoto Library. Main St., DeSoto, MO 63020

Jefferson Heritage and Landmarks Society
Becky Gagnon
6413 Reynolds Creek Rd.
Hillsboro, MO 63050

