

## "THE POND"

**M**ystery Solved!  
**W**ell **M**aybe

By Dave Hallemann

A few years back, members of the Jefferson County Historical Society had a discussion about "**The Pond**". One of our members was seeking the location of this landmark that was mentioned in a newspaper article dated Thursday, September 3, 1925, about the Old Settler's Association meeting. The article states, "Jno. H. Reppy as Committee on Old Landmarks made a verbal report calling attention to the Old Ford on a spur of Tower Bluff; to Painted Rock (an Indian Painting) on the bluffs below the Frumet Bridge; to Kennett's Castle; and *a now lost landmark, "The Pond", a mile north of Hillsboro, formerly the most widely known landmark in the county.*"

We talked it over and while we knew the locations of the other places, none of us had any knowledge of "**The Pond**." So it was filed away in the back of my mind until in June 2008. While looking at a book titled, "Road Commissioners Reports" located at the History Center at Jefferson College, I came across the following entry at page 466:

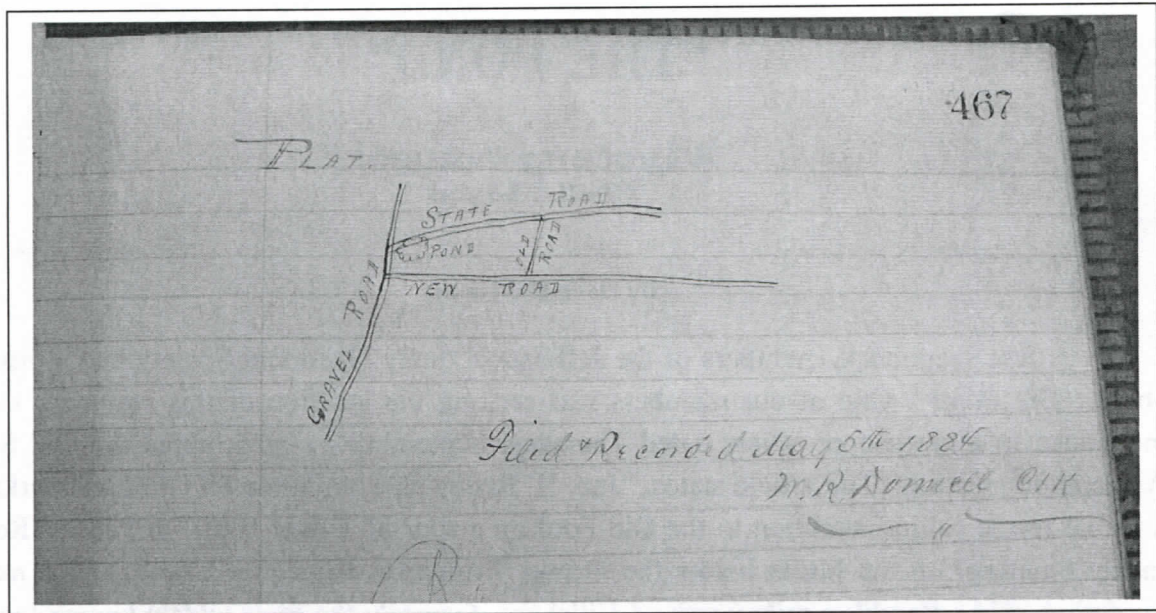
Hillsboro, Mo. May Term 1884

To the Honorable County Court,

The undersigned commissioner respectfully reports that in obedience to an order in Central Township by the County Court to make a change in the county road leading from Hematite to intersect the Hillsboro and Lemay Ferry road near **the Pond** through lands of Chris Dolder. That I proceeded to make said change according to said order. Beginning 15 feet north of the southeast corner of the east ½ of the northeast quarter of section 34 in Township 41 Range 4 east. Thence west 23 Chains [1518 Feet] & 7.5 links [59.4 inches] to the center of the Hillsboro and Lemay Ferry Gravel Road. This can be made as good a road as the old road and be considerable nearer to Hillsboro and this report is respectfully submitted with plat of survey.

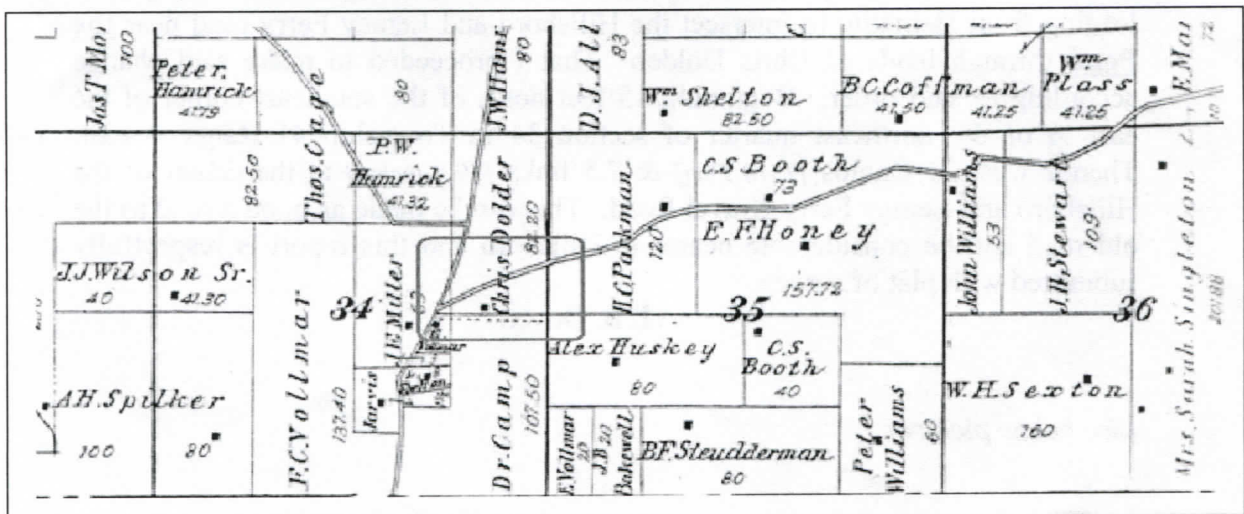
J. B. Dover

(See below picture)

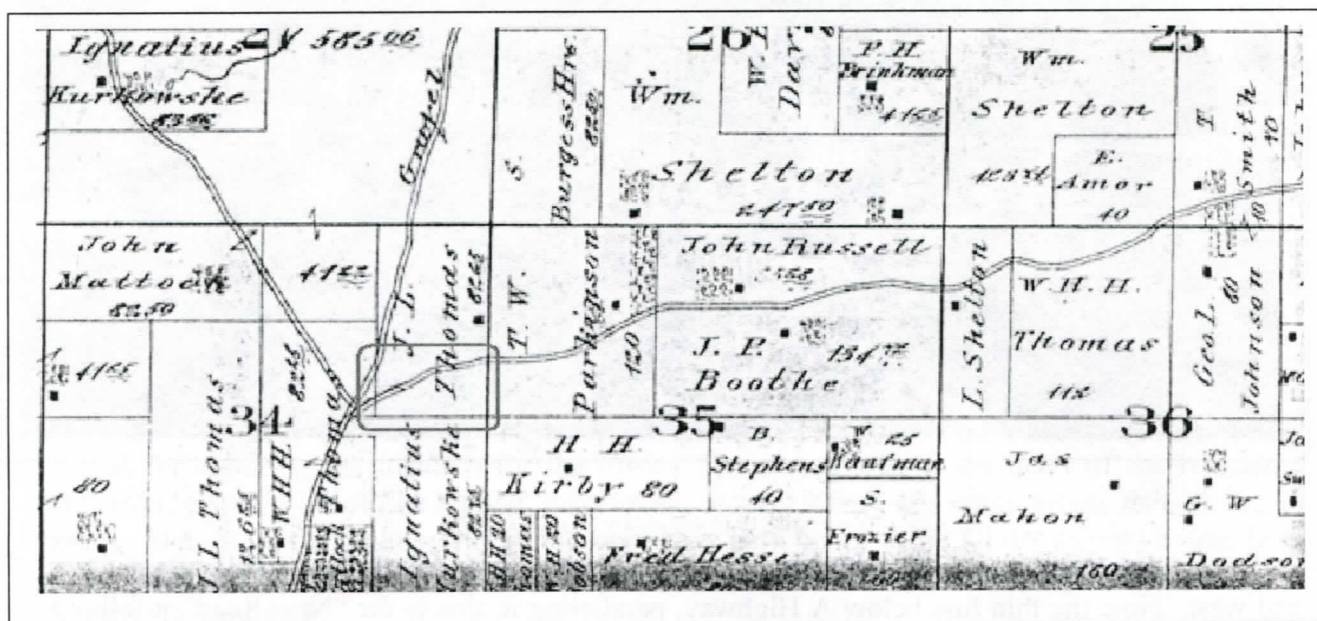


Not much to go on I must admit. The Gravel Road is Lemay Ferry (Highway 21 today), State Road is now Pioneer Road (Old highway A), New Road was unknown to me as was the short Old Road. Also note on this survey is an area denoted as **"POND"**. The only area I could orient to this drawing was where Highway 21 and Pioneer Road meet. Today Abney's Service Station is located in this area.

As can be seen on the 1898 Atlas, Chris Dolder owns the land in the E $\frac{1}{2}$  of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 34 Township 41 Range 4 east. **"The Pond"** would have been between Old Lemay Ferry Road the Chris Dolder house. Also note the dotted line along the south boundary. This would have been the "New Road". The pond is not shown.







Looking at the 1876 Atlas we see J. L. Thomas owns the tract. This is Judge John L. Thomas, a Supreme Court and Circuit Court Judge, Post Office Attorney General, historian, and past President of the Old Settlers Association.



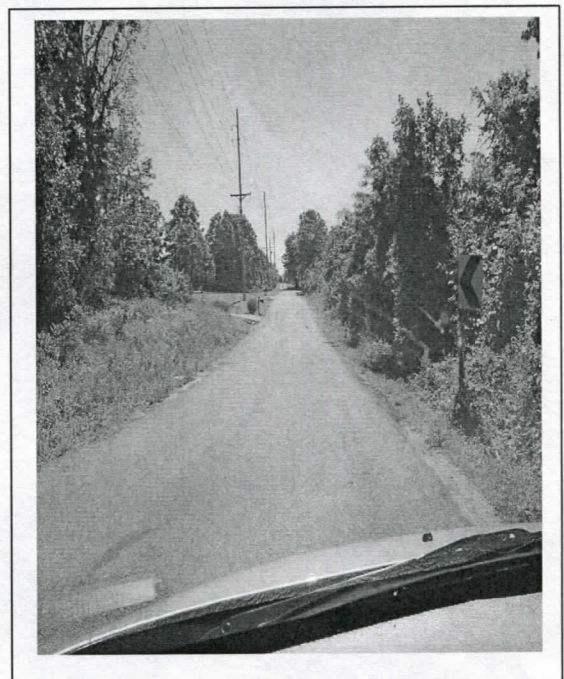
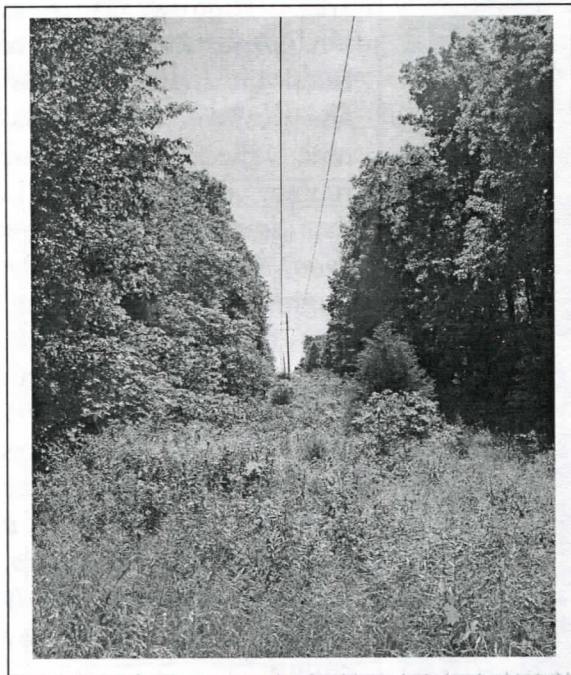
This is a 2007 Aerial Photo of the target area. Highway 21 is on left (gravel Road), Pioneer Road the major line east and west (State Road) and note the narrow line running east and west in the southern part (new road). Compare it with the original 1884 drawing. One can see the match. Also on a Google Earth map the distance is .95 miles as the crow flies from the courthouse to the target area (*"The Pond", a mile north of Hillsboro, formerly the most widely known landmark in the county.*")





In this view New A Highway can be seen as the major line in the north half running east and west. Note the thin line below A Highway, paralleling it, this is the "New Road" it follows the Township line across the county. Pioneer, or Old Highway A, can be seen as the squiggly line between the two in the left half.

I next went to see what this line is now and as can be seen in the below photos there is a power line following this "New Road". In the right picture Amy Clark Road follows the "New Road" for a short distance.



After feeling confident that I had found the location of "**The Pond**", I began wondering why this was such an important landmark. Yes, it was at the intersection of two major roads, Old Lemay Ferry and Hillsboro/Pevely Road, and yes, both humans and horses needed water especially if they had traveled a long way.

Looking at the context of the original 1925 story; "...Old Ford on a spur of Tower Bluff; to Painted Rock (an Indian Painting) on the bluffs below the Frumet Bridge; to Kennett's Castle and *a now lost landmark, "The Pond", a mile north of Hillsboro, formerly the most widely known landmark in the county...*" I noticed they are all water related.

But what about this pond was so special if indeed my assumptions are correct? Could there also have been a grove here? If there was, it would make a perfect picnic spot, after all Hillsboro had no large body of water. I know what you are thinking; the Big Spring was the reason for choosing the location for the town. The spring was in the heart of the Hillsboro. However, a spring is not like a pond, lake, creek, or river where one could swim, fish, picnic, or relax. And, could the county fairs of old been held here? After all it was only a mile from the courthouse, an easy walk or horseback ride from town. If so, then many people would have known this landmark.

Also ponds and lakes in the early day were not as common as one would believe. Many farm ponds were around but these were small, hand-dug, a "large pond" would be relative rare, most created by sinkholes that filled up. From the look of the drawing on the Road Commissioner's map this appears to be a sizable pond

Finally John L. Thomas owned this tract in per the 1876 Atlas, as well as many other tracts, so I would assume he wouldn't have been too upset if someone was visiting "**The Pond**." His homestead, the beautiful house and horse farm across from the Hillsboro School which today is known as Bridal Ridge Acres, a short distance south, contains a newer pond.

So is this "proof" that "**The Pond**" was here? Does this solve the mystery?  
Well maybe!