

# Reminiscences of Ohio County

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## REMINISCENCES OF OHIO COUNTY (From the Louisville Industrial Gazette)

There seems to be no authentic record of the first settlements made in Ohio county. Many surveys of land date back as far as 1786 and 1787, and some few perhaps as early as 1784, but at this early date there were few, if any actual settlers. As early, however, as 1795 Hartford was settled by quite a numerous population, and several other forts or stations in other portions of the county. The county of Ohio was formed in 1790 [should be 1798], and then included a large portion of Butler, Edmondson, Grayson, Breckinridge, McLean, Hancock and all of Daviess, counties. The town of Vienna (now Calhoon) was settled perhaps as early as Hartford, and actually underwent a siege of several days from the Indians, who were finally driven off by the resolution and courage of the inhabitants of the place.

The settlers about Hartford never experienced any real attack from the Indians, but several stragglers from the forts and settlements, were killed, and perhaps as many savages shot in return. The most disasterous case occurred on the farm now occupied by Dr. B. F. Nall, near Hartford. A party of women and children had left the fort or station at that place to attend preaching in Hartford; on their return in the evening they were attacked by a band of savages who killed some four or five, took one prisoner, and tomahawked and scalped a lady, who survived, and lived scalpless to a good old age.

Like most new counties Ohio county had adventurers from many other counties, among her first settlers. Two surveyors and land speculators seem to have induced or brought with them a large portion of the most permanent settlers. The first was Joseph Barnett from Pennsylvania, whose colony was composed of the Barnetts, Bairds, Rowans and others. The second was Ignatius Pigman, whose colony was very numerous, composed of the Stevenses, Barneses, Hackers [sic – should be Hockers], Millers, Bennetts and various others; these were from Maryland.

Harrison Taylor, while quite a stripling, made various trips from Frederick county, Virginia, to this portion of Kentucky, mostly as agent for land speculators, who employed him to attend to the location of their lands. It was said that several times he traveled the wilderness alone, and on more than one occasion when the regular surveyors became alarmed from Indians and abandoned their work, he took the compass and went on to complete the surveys. He finally induced his father, seven brothers, and three sisters all to settle in this county, all of whom reared large families, whose numerous progeny can be traced to most of the counties in this State, and to almost every State in the west and south.

At a very early date Daniel Barry removed from Bardstown to Hartford, and opened quite a flourishing school, at which some of the most distinguished young men in Kentucky were educated; among others the Hon. Ben Hardin, of whose eccentric freaks legends are still extant.

Ohio county has always had her share of men of talent and distinction, but like most remote counties they have generally removed to more favorable locations. The talented eccentric, Jo Daveiss, was a resident of Ohio county when he so gallantly fell at Tippecanoe. His brother

John was also a man of talent but unlucky in most of his political aspirations. Both of the brothers resided in that portion of the county of Daviess. Samuel Work and Henry Davidge were distinguished resident lawyers at an early day. Philip Thompson and Judge Thompkins both took their start at the Hartford bar; so did Samuel Tevis and Moses Cummings. Cummings was a man of the best natural sense, and the most consummate modesty (when sober) I ever knew, and almost the only man who was really interesting when drunk. Had he not been the victim of intemperance and a morbid modesty, or lack of self-confidence, he might have been one of the leading men of Kentucky.

Judge John Calhoon, John H. McHenry and the venerable Chancellor of Louisville, Henry Pirtle, all took their start at the Hartford bar, and all received their due honors from the people of Ohio county for their talents and integrity.

Volumes might be filled with the legendary stories about the eccentricities of some of the early settlers of this county, such as Steven Cleaver, Jo Barnett, (tick eyed) John Miller, Stephen Statler, Christopher Jackson, Anthony Thompson, Kit Dicken, Remus Griffith, Bill Smothers, Governor Duvall, John Handley, Peter Shown and a host of others too tedious to mention.

The talented Thomas C. McCreery has been giving a most interesting sketch of the life of Bill Smothers, during the last winter and spring, in the Owensboro Monitor; and Washington Irving, from the lips of Gov. Duvall, wrote a series of most amusing tales, which were published in the New York Knickerbocker some years ago under the title of "Tales of Ralph Ringwood," the scenes of which were mostly laid in Ohio county; most of the persons and incidents of which were real. Stephen Statler's first visit to Hartford forms a most interesting narrative, the principal incidents of which are given in Collins' History of Kentucky.

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#### FIRST TAX LIST OF OHIO COUNTY, KENTUCKY - 1799

From the book, Early Settlers of Ohio County, Kentucky, 1799-1840: A comparative study of census and tax records of Ohio County, by Jerry Long Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 1983, pp10-17):

Adams, Joseph	Adington, Henry	Ambrose, Lewis
Anderson, Athel	Anderson, Jonathan	Anderson, John
Ashby, George	Ashby, Horatio	Ashcraft, Daniel
Baird, James	Baker, Soloman	Barnard, William
Barnet, Alexander	Barnet, Joseph	Barnet, Robert
Bays, John	Bennett, Jeffries	Bennett, John Jr.
Berry, Benjamin	Berry, Benjamin Jr.	Bozeth, Jonathan
Briant, Alexander	Brown, Rheubin	Bryant, William
Burnet, John	Calloway, Chesly	Clark, Ichabud
Cleaver, Stephen	Coleman, George	Coleman, Henry
Coleman, Martin	Cooper, [blank]	Cravens, Elijah
Cravens, Jesse	Crow, Joshua	Davidge, Henry
Davis, Gedion	Davis, Frederick	Davis, James
Deen, Abraham	Douglass, John	Dulan, Daniel
Dulan, William	Dunn, Joseph	Eatherton, Aaron
Eatherton, Charles	Eatherton, Jonathan	Eatherton, John Jr.

Eatherton, John Sr.  
Fields, Aquilah  
Fields, John  
Galloway, John  
Galloway, Obediah  
Gentry, James  
Glenn, David  
Gum, Shepherd  
Hannah, Ichabud  
Hedge, Josiah  
Hocker, Philip  
Hornback, Abraham  
Howel, Charles  
Hynes, Isaac  
Jackson, Samuel  
James, John  
Jones, Richard  
Keele, Jacob  
Larkin, Presley  
Linch, Edward  
Mathews, [blank]  
McGrady, Samuel  
Miller, John  
Moore, Walker  
Mosleyb[blank]  
Nealy, David  
Odom, Willis  
Payton, Elisha  
Pigman, Ignatius  
Riley, Henry  
Shields, John  
Shutt, Jacob  
Smeathers, John  
Smith, Thomas  
Snider, John Sr.  
Spurner, Aaron  
Stephenson, John  
Tarlton, Charles  
Taylor, John  
Tennison, John  
Thomason, Samuel  
Thompson, Uriah  
Turpin, Philip  
Watson, Robert  
White, William  
Willson, John

Eatherton, Moses  
Fields, Benjamin  
Fields, Rheubin  
Galloway, John  
Galloway, William  
Gentry, Joseph  
Grass, Daniel  
Handley, John  
Hardin, Nicholas  
Herrel, Noah  
Hocker, Weaver  
Howard, Elihu  
Howel, John  
Jackson, Christopher Jr.  
? James, [blank]  
Jones, James  
Jordin, David  
Keele, James  
Lee, William  
Martin, James  
Mathews, [blank]  
Meeks, Atha  
Miller, John  
Mosley, John  
Mosley, Thomas  
New, James  
Ormsby, John  
Peeke, John  
Powers, Isaac  
Riley, Michael  
Shoemaker, Adam  
Smeathers, James  
Smeathers, William  
Smith, William Bailey  
Snider, Samuel  
? St\_\_, John  
? T\_\_, Henry  
Taylor, Benjamin  
Taylor, Philip  
Thomas, James  
Thompson, Anthony  
Toiler, Peter  
Venady, Martin  
Westfall, Cornelius  
Wilcox, Abraham  
Willson, Joseph

Faith, William  
Fields, Henry  
Fipps, William  
Galloway, John  
Gardeen, Henry  
Gill, Thomas  
Greives, John  
Haney, Francis  
Harlin, Ezekiel  
Hocker, George  
Hocker, William  
Howard, Robert  
Hust, Phelty  
Jackson, Christopher Sr.  
James, Daniel  
Jones, Mason  
Jordin, James  
Keele, Jesse  
Lewellin, Jacob  
Martin, Moses  
McDanold, George  
Miller, David  
Milligan, James  
Mosley, Robert  
Mothral, John  
New, William  
Owins, Benjamin  
Perregoe, Romey  
Powers, John  
Rizley, John  
Shults, Mathias  
Smeathers, Jacob  
Smith, John  
Snider, John Jr.  
Springston, Peter  
Stateler, Stephen  
Tanner, William  
Taylor, Harrison  
Taylor, Richard  
Thomas, Massey  
Thompson, ? (Leonard)  
Travis, Charles  
Wallace, Charles  
White, Joseph  
Willson, George  
Willson, William