

HISTORY OF APPANOOSE COUNTY - WELLS TOWNSHIP

WELLS, STEVENS, JONES, COOKSEY, SCURLOCK, FINDLEY, HORN, STANSBERRY, CRAIG, ELAM, BOND, ROBINSON, ANKROM, EDWARDS, LAW, DEAN

Posted By: Alice & Wayne Daniels <Nina2295@aol.com>

Date: 2/16/2003 at 09:16:15

THE TOWNSHIPS - FIRST COMES WELLS BECAUSE IT WAS FIRST SETTLED - PIONEERS AND THE TOWNSHIP OF THEIR CHOICE - OPENING OF A NEW COUNTRY THAT IS NOW TEEMING WITH GOOD FARMS AND FINE HOMES -

HISTORY OF THE VARIOUS TOWNSHIPS AND VILLAGES - Past and Present of Appanoose County Iowa, Volume 1, 1913, pg 351-353

WELLS TOWNSHIP

Wells Township was an inviting locality for the early settler. There was man that settler in Appanoose county and is honored in having given to the locality the name of the pioneer, **Colonel James Wells**.

The township was organized in January, 1848. It is the extreme southwest township of the county and was quite heavily timbered in the center, running diagonally from the northwest to the southeast. There is considerable good farming land in this vicinity and there are farms that will vie with any in the county in productiveness. There are many small streams, the principal one being the Chariton, which mean that the land is generously watered and drained. The township is traversed by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, Keokuk & Western and the Iowa and St. Louis railroads.

Colonel James Wells was the first settler, coming with his family in 1839. He selected a location on section 16 and in the fall built a log cabin, in which he installed his family. Two years after he began the construction of a sawmill on his claim, which was followed a few years later by a flouring mill.

During the year 1841 Adolphus Stevens made a claim not far from where Wells had set his stakes and in the same year Austin Jones settled in the neighborhood. Jones remained but a few years and then removed to California. Stevens improved his farm and became a fixture in the township, living on his place for many years.

William Cooksey and family were also settlers in this township in 1841 and the Cookseys later became well known in the township. The name of **Cooksey** figures quite prominently in the history of the county.

Wells Township was an inviting locality for the early settler. There was plenty of timber, water and arable land. It is unfortunate, however, that all the names of the pioneers cannot be given. A few follow:

James Milton Scurlock was a "Buckeye." He came to this locality in 1844, in territorial days, and married Matilda Cooksey, daughter of **William Cooksey**, in 1845, which shows that the Cookseys were pioneers of Wells township and of the county. When Mr. Scurlock arrived here all he had in the world was a large stock of courage and determination - and ten dollars in his pocket. It is a tradition in the family that five years passed before he saw ten dollars more.

C. F. Findley, a Pennsylvanian, came and located here in 1855, purchasing eighty acres of land.

William Horn lived on section 3 for many years. He came to the county in 1848, soon after attaining his majority. Mr. Horn accumulated several hundred acres of land and became one of the valued men of this township.

G. S. Stansberry settled in the township in 1852 and acquired through habits of industry and frugality, a competency. In 1854 he married Rebecca Cooksey, daughter of **William Cooksey**, one of Wells' pioneer farmers.

James Craig came to this township from Morgan county, Ohio, with his parents, in 1856. The family located on section 2, where James remained after the death of his father in 1864.

S. P. Elam, a native of Virginia, emigrated from Kentucky to Iowa in 1850 and located in this county. He traded a horse for his first quarter section of land, on which he put up a log cabin and made the furniture from hewn timber. The bucket for carrying water was purchased with money he secured from the sale of a 'coon pelt. Needless to say, Mr. Elam succeeded and became well and favorably known.

John and Ann Bond, natives of Ireland, were among the early settlers of this county, having located in Wells Township where their daughter, Sarah Louise, who married George Robinson, was born March 28, 1846.

Eli Ankrom settled on a farm near Moulton about 1852.

Matison S. Edwards, with his parents, William and Marilla (Elliott) Edwards, arrived in Appanoose County from Kentucky late in the year 1851 and located on a farm five miles south of Moulton. Here the elder Edwards engaged in raising

and selling live stock for a period of thirty years, when he retired from the farm to Moulton and died there in 1885. He was followed to the grave by his wife in 1902.

Thomas and Rachel Law of the Buckeye state, soon after their marriage came west and settled on a farm in Wells Township, Appanoose County. They were the parents of seven children, of whom O. H. Law, an attorney and real-estate man of Centerville, is one. He was born on a farm just south of Moulton in 1857.

HAMLET OF DEAN

A village had been contemplated for section 2 and its name chosen. Leona was to be built upon the southeast quarter of the section and was actually laid out and platted. But the project died abornin' and has long since been forgotten.

Not far from the projected and rejected town of Leona, on section 4, was built the little hamlet of Dean. The "future great" was named in honor of Henry Clay Dean, a noted, although eccentric Iowan of his day, who spent his declining years on a farm four miles south and over the Missouri line. Dean was a station on the Missouri, Iowa & Nebraska railroad, but is not now so noted by the assessor in making out his returns. For some little time it was considerable of a trading point, but it has been discarded for places of more importance. Coal abounds in this section and is mined quite extensively.

HILLTOWN

Hilltown was a hamlet established close to the Missouri line, on the Chariton River in 1845, its principal business being done through the mines established in this vicinity. But after a connection has been made with the railroad at Dean and the mines, this source of revenue was taken from Hilltown and then it declined. An important adjunct of the settlement was the Wells mills, established in 1845, which brought no little trade.