

## History of Waynesville Township

De Witt County, Illinois

{This essay has been copied verbatim with added comments in french brackets {} and the Marvel lineage codes in square brackets []. The date of publication, as derived from the document could be as early as 1882. A version appears in the 1910 De Witt County History Vol 1, p 367. No author is acknowledged. See pages 4 and 5 for map and photographs}

Waynesville is situated in the extreme north-western part of the county, and formerly belonged to McLean County. It has the honor of containing the next oldest settlement in De Witt, having been settled as early as 1825. Originally it was very evenly divided between prairie and timbered land, the latter being somewhat in excess of the former. At this writing plenty of good timber abounds suitable to all the wants of the people. It is bounded on the north by McLean county, on the east by the township of Wapella, on the south by Barnett and on the west by Logan county, and contains 24 sections, upwards of 15,000 acres.

Kickapoo creek enters the township in the north-west part of section fourteen and flows south-west, passing into Logan county from section thirty. Prairie creek enters from the north in section seventeen and empties into the Kickapoo nearly on the line between sections seventeen and twenty. Rock creek flows north and west through township , and joins with the Kickapoo near the center of the section twenty. Other small streams abound, discharging their waters into some of the above mentioned creeks. From the above it will be seen that the natural drainage of the township is excellent, and yet the farmers are tilting largely, experience teaching them that it is money and labor well spent. The Illinois Midland Railway furnishes the transportation facilities, entering in the southern portion of section thirty facilities, entering the southern portion of section thirty, where it takes an easterly course to Waynesville. Here it forms an elbow, tending southward and crossing the township line between sections thirty-one and thirty-two. The surface is somewhat diversified. Along the creeks it is quite broken, and in places approaches in form to small bluffs. The soil is comparatively shallow but most excellent for the raising of wheat and blue grass. The prairies are slightly undulating and contain the rich alluvial soil of the world-renowned Grand Prairie.

### FIRST SETTLEMENTS.

The honor of taking the first steps toward civilization within the boundaries of Waynesville, belongs to Prettyman Marvel, Jr. [61334] and his wife Rebecca {Barr}. Mr. Marvel was a native of Georgia, and his wife was a South Carolinian. Their parents were pioneers of Indiana, where their children grew up together. In May {15} 1823, they were married {Owensville, IN} and the following year moved to Illinois and stopped in Sangamon county. February 1825, they moved to within a short distance of what is now Waynesville village in section thirty-one, De Witt county. Their mode of conveyance was a cart drawn by a yoke of oxen. It was ten o'clock at night before they halted. There was no light in the window -- no warm friends or home to greet them. That night the snow formed their bed to rest upon and the starry heaven was their shelter. A few sticks gathered and fired by the side of a log furnished the only means of warmth. The next day they fixed up a temporary cabin by driving four crotched posts into the ground. These were connected by poles and were overlaid with split slabs of wood for a roof. In time it was enlarged to two rooms by building an addition of the same kind. The former was aristocratically called a bed-room and the latter the sitting room. Let the present generation imagine, if they can, a "sitting room" with the ground for a floor, for such was the case with this mansion. The fire-place was outside of the entrance called a door. This consisted by hauling up

before the entrance a fore and back log, within which the fire was built, and here the cooking and warming was done. It was found when the snow melted away in the spring that the cabin had unfortunately been built in a slight depression of ground. Water stood a foot deep in their rude domicil. This they remedied by pounding in pieces of dry-rot logs and filling up to a sufficient depth to make the rooms a passable place to stay in for the time being. During the spring and summer a more comfortable cabin was erected on a more favorable site. Of course this log cabin was quite pretentious for the times, and being such we will give a slight description of it as given to the writer by "Aunt Becca" Gambrel, formerly wife of Prettyman Marvel, Jr. [61334], the pioneer. It was a small log cabin about 12x16, and covered with split staves four feet in length, while the floor was mother earth. The fire place extended nearly across one end of the building, with stick and mud chimney of the olden time. The beds were constructed by placing poles between the cracks of the logs a certain distance apart and laid over with rived clap-boards; the shelves for the table-ware were prepared in the same manner. This same spring Mr. Marvel broke a small piece of ground and planted it in corn and potatoes. This was the first farming done in the county with the exception of the performed by the Shugarts and Elisa Butler in Tunbridge, which was the same spring -- 1825. Wolves were then more plentiful than village dogs, and about as tame. It was very difficult to raise chickens or any of the small domestic animals, as the wolves were so bold that they would come up to the very door of the cabin, and would only leave when shot at or beaten off with clubs.

These lonely pioneers were cheered and encouraged in their new-found home by two children, mere babes then, John S. and James. they both grew to manhood, married and raised large families; several of their representatives are yet living in the county. John and James died several years ago. Nine other children were born in the township, Nancy, Cynthia, Lavinia, Prettyman, Rebecca, Mary A., Wiley, and George, all of whom are living but one a twin to Nancy, who died without being named. All reside in the county except George and Lavinia. The latter lives in Vermillion county, this state, and the former in Nebraska. Mr. Marvel lived to see and enjoy the fruits of his labors, owing a large farm at the time of death which occurred in the summer {23 July} of 1842 [buried Union cemetery]. Mrs. Marvel was again married to Thompson P. Gambrel of Indiana. He died in 1877, his wife surviving him. Mrs. Gambrel is at this writing an inhabitant of the village of Waynesville and enjoying excellent health and vigor of mind for some one her age, being in her seventy-sixth year [died 30 Sept. 1893, age 87, buried Union cemetery]. She is the oldest resident of the county, and has had eighty-six grand-children and thirty-two great-grand-children.

John Barr, a brother of Mrs. Gambrel, came here but a few days after Mr. Marvel, and lived in the same cabin with his brother-in-law until spring, when he built a small cabin just over the line in Logan county. Mr. Barr is upward of eighty years of age, and still resides near where he settled in the spring of 1825.

Samuel Curtright made his advent here the next day after Mr. Marvel, and settled on section thirty-two. He went to work at once to erect his cabin, which in architecture was much after the style of his neighbor's. He had quite a family, none, however large enough to aid him in his pioneer efforts. In March, 1828, he entered the W. 1/2 of the N. W. 1/4 of the above section. He remained there for several years, when he moved with his family to what is now Clintonia Township, where he became an active settler, building the first corn mill. He died several years ago; none of the family yet reside in the county. Felix Jones was a pioneer of 1825. he moved here from Indiana, having a wife and a large family of children. Soon afterward his wife died, when he married again, and drifted to parts unknown.

In the spring of 1826, John Glenn with his wife Jane and his son-in-law, Abraham Hobbs -- then a widower -- and the latter's four children, moved in and squatted in the Kickapoo timber, in section twenty-nine. Mr. Glenn was a native of South Carolina, and migrated to Tennessee in 1803. and from thence to Indiana, and afterwards to Illinois as above stated. He remained here but a few years, when he moved with his grand-children further west, where he died. Samuel P. Glenn, a son of the former, was born in South Carolina, and lived with his father until they moved to Indiana. Here he married Ruth Scott, and in the spring of 1827 mover here and settled in section twenty-six, and was one of the two persons to make the first land entries in De Witt county. His mode of conveyance was an ox wagon peculiar to travel in those times. He bought the "improvement right" of his brother, Thomas M., which was a few acres of ground and a pole cabin. To use the language of Mr. Glenn, "It was so meager and shabby that a person of to-day would not stable his horse in it." But it was the best he could do until he could build a better, and thus he and his young wife moved into it. Mr. Glenn is yet living, and one of the oldest citizens of the county, as well as a prominent farmer. After the county was organized in 1839, he was among the first to represent the people in the State Legislature. He served several years in the capacity of justice of the peace. He has been twice married; his second wife was Mary Riley, two children were born from the first marriage, and but one from the present union, Margaret M. who died but a few years ago. Mr. Glenn and his wife are now residing at the old homestead in section twenty-six, where he first settled in 1827. Thomas M. Glenn, brother of the above, was also born in South Carolina, and was with his father when he moved to Indiana. In 1825 he came to Illinois, Sangamon county, where he stopped until the following spring, when he located in section thirty-five, Waynesville Township. He had a wife and nine children, seven daughters and two sons. When he brought his family to this state his mode of conveyance was with pack-horses, but he had purchased an ox team and wagon before moving to Waynesville. A small log cabin was soon erected, and the family made comfortable. That summer he broke a small patch of ground and raised a crop. He remained here about twenty years and improved one of the best farms in the county. In 1855 he moved with his family to Iowa. But one of the family are now residing in the county, Nancy, wife of William Fruit.

James K. Scott, a brother-in-law of the Glenns, and one of the most prominent of the pioneers, was a native of South Carolina, and moved to Indiana in an early day. He caught the Illinois fever -- migration -- which was then prevailing, and in company with Samuel P. Glenn, landed here in the spring of 1827. He and Mr. Glenn, made the two first land entries in the county, being the 3d of November, 1827; the former locating in section 27, and the latter in section 26. Mr. Scott brought his family with him, consisting of a wife and two sons, Lorenzo Dow and John W. Five children were born to them in this county -- Martin H., Crafton P., Jane C., Polly A., and Lucinda. The former three -- Lorenzo, John and Martin -- died several years ago. The daughters are living in Missouri, and James C. and Crafton P. are residing near Kenney, in Tunbridge Township. Mr. Scott was a very active and useful citizen in his day. He represented the people in the State Legislature two terms, was widely known as a pioneer preacher, besides holding minor offices of trust and honor. He died several years ago, lamented by many warm friends. His remains lie in one of the oldest cemeteries in the county, situated on the premises of Samuel P. Glenn, in section twenty-six.

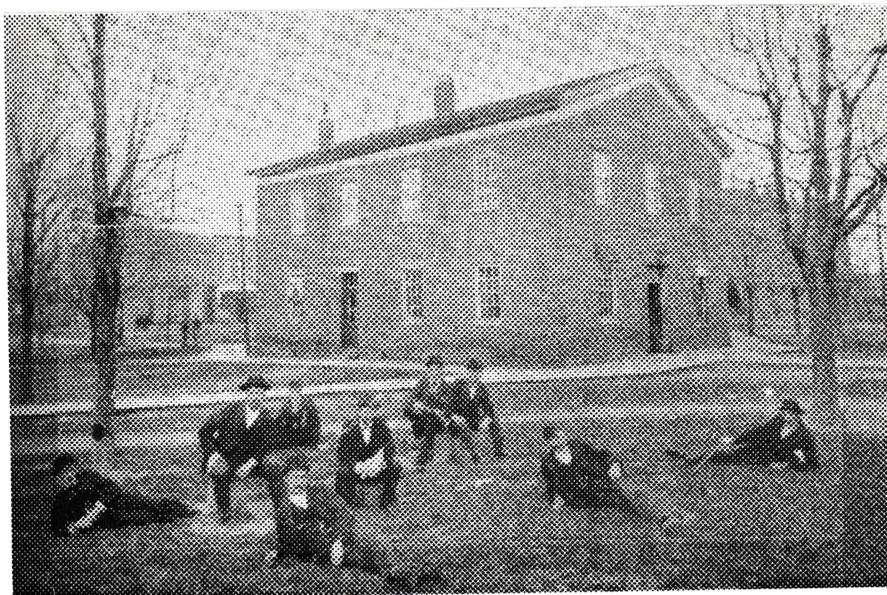
One of the peculiar pioneers, in fact such an one as we sometimes read about in "border life" novels, was Sylvanus Shurtleff, a native of Vermont. He was peculiar composition of genius and romance. He was of a restless, roaming disposition, and had lived more or less with the Indians. Indeed, he was initiated and became one of the tribe of the Potawatomies in 1823. He remained with them for some time, and in 1827 drifted to Waynesville then called Big Grove. From him comes the name of Salt



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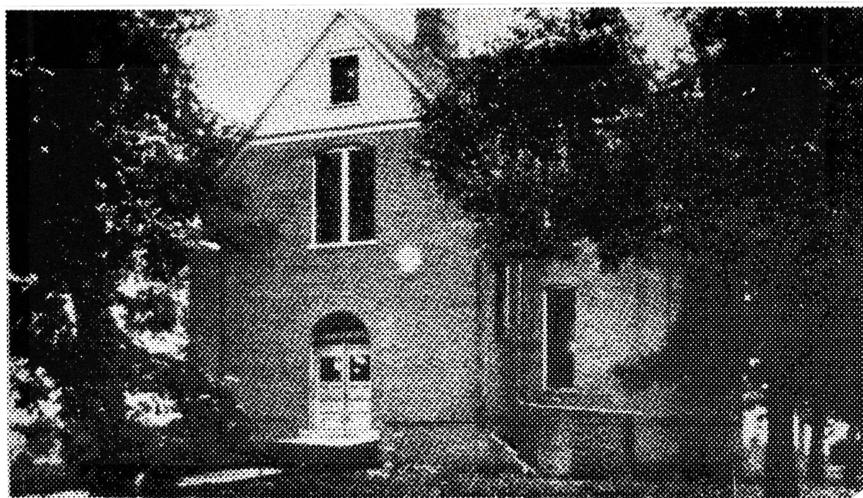
1910



Old Clinton Court House

Built 1849, Photo taken about 1891

From left to right: F. E. Pickering, George Marvel, Levi Murphy, Pick Savely, F. C. Davidson, John Davis, William Booth, John Sumner, and Squire Moreland.



Waynesville Academy



Waynesville Methodist Church



### **The Waynesville Band 1907-08**

Back row left to right: Charlie Bell, Gertie Teal, Joe Teal, Chester Teal, Vernon Jones, Matthew Connell, Mark Fisher, Ira Gambrel, Ollie Fisher, Edith Fisher, Ethel Fern Marvel, Henry Fisher, Leslie Price

Front row left to right: ? Narter, Glen Teal, Glen Sampson