

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LOUISVILLE

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1820-1976

___ Since space is often a problem, this presentation about the town of Louisville and some of the men how led it, will not be as complete as we would like but we hope to hit the high points of the last 150 plus years.

Much of this material was sifted from the Clay County History Book published by the Clay County Historical Society, and from the Prairie Echo.

The year was around 1820, at least, well over 150 years ago, and a water grist mill splashed busily on the banks of the Little Wabash River, about one mile due east of the town of Louisville. No doubt it was a busy place, for the mill was thought to be the first one built in Clay County. A millrace had been built across the river to force the current under the water wheel so the mill could be used even in low water. A Mr. **Weatherspoon** had built the grist mill; a necessity in those days, but Louisville's first settler, George **Goble**, apparently offered him a price he couldn't refuse, for he bought the enterprise.

Goble was a Revolutionary War veteran and was with George Rogers **Clark** in the capture of Vincennes.

After Crawford **Lewis** came along and bought the mill in 1830, more settlers built in the area and it was time to officially make a town near the mill. Someone decided on the name of L-e-w-i-s-v-i-l-l-e, but a Mr. **Blackburn** of Vandalia, who plotted the town, misspelled the name, making it L-o-u-i-s-v-i-l-l-e. History does not record what Mr. **Lewis** thought of that but he planted a large orchard west of the river and later moved to Bible Grove.

The Little Wabash River was quite a commercial highway in the 1800's and for years it was the only means by which exports of grain, beef, pork and other produce could be shipped to more densely settled places such as New Orleans. To make three trips a year, the flatboats that were used for this purpose, were manufactured on the banks of the river by the farmers who used them.

As the town grew around the grist mill, more settlers moved in and other businesses were started. Among the first streets named wer Water Street, along the river, and Sycamore.

Around 1838, a man of varied talents, Peter **Green**, became a prominent citizen in Clay County and moved to Louisville to become a prosperous businessman. He had read enough medicine in Indiana to be called Dr. Peter **Green**, and was quite an enterprising man, buying up land in and around the old town of Louisville. He and William **Linn** started a general store. Today there is both a Linn and Green Street in Louisville. Others followed with a dry goods and grocery store, a harness shop, a blacksmith, carpenter and cabinet maker shop along with a shoe cobbler who joined