

History of Audrain County, Missouri: written and compiled from the most authentic official and private sources, including a history of its townships, towns and villages; together with... biographical sketches of prominent citizens

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CHAPTER XI WILSON TOWNSHIP

Boundary -- Streams -- Old Settlers -- The First Settler in the Township--The Early Settlers, Where From--Persons Living in the Township In 1848-- Switzer-- Thompson's Station -- Its Business Directory

Wilson township was one of the five townships into which the county was divided in 1837. It extends from Callaway to Boone county, and embraces about 1133 square miles. It is bounded on the south and west by Callaway and Boone counties and Saling township, on the north by Monroe county, and on the east by Salt River township. It is admirably watered, and the streams are so located that almost every part of the township receives its supply of water. Young's creek, with its tributaries, are in the northern part of the township. Seven Mile branch and Cedar creek are in the southern portion, and Skull creek and Salt river in the central portion.

OLD SETTLERS

The first white man to locate within the limits of this township was Benjamin Young, who came in the year 1821, and settled on what is now known as Young's creek, in the northern part of the township. A more complete sketch of Young will be found in the first chapter of the history of Audrain county

The early settlers of Wilson township were from North Carolina and Kentucky, a large majority coming from the former State. The neighborhood of Thompson's Station and the farm where Reuben Pulis now resides was perhaps the next portion of the township settled, after the settlement made by Young in the northern part of the same.

The parents of Zachariah Jackson, who were from Ireland, settled in Pamlico county, N. C. Zachariah was a soldier of the War of 1812, and was at the battle of New Orleans, where he was captured and held as a prisoner of war until peace was declared. He then settled in Williamson county, Tenn., where he married Malinda Slocum, by whom he had Sarah A., James, Mary J., Zelpha, Slocum, Riley, Malinda and Permelia. Mr. Jackson removed to Missouri with his family in 1819, and settled in Howard county, from whence he removed to Boone county in 1822. James, his eldest, married Asanith Turner, and settled in Audrain county in 1834. He was appointed first sheriff of the county, but declined, and was elected the first representative. He served two terms. The revenues of the county were so small at that time that his expenses had to be paid by the State. He was afterward clerk of the State Senate one term, and served as judge of the county court eight years. He is also a Baptist preacher of the Old School. Mr. Jackson says he was never "tight" but once in his life, and then he felt so good he tried to burn the grass on the prairie when the snow was a foot deep. He was very fond of hunting in early days, and one time while out on the prairie he came upon a rock about eight feet high, that had been split in the center, and the two halves were lying about eight feet apart. In 1860 he saw the same rock again, and the two pieces had grown fast together, and were only three feet high.

John Reynolds, of South Carolina, married Nancy Griggs, by whom he had Allen, John, Sarah, Shadrach, Emily, William, Wiley, Judith, Joseph and Durham. Mr. Reynolds settled in Boone county, Mo., in 1829, and in Audrain county in 1832.

Thomas Copher was born in Pennsylvania, but settled in Virginia. His children were Josiah, Jacob, George, Reuben and Jesse, all of whom settled in Kentucky. George came to Missouri in 1820. Jesse married Elizabeth Boone, daughter of George Boone, and settled in Boone county, Mo., in 1819. They had Thomas, Samuel B., David N., Phoebe, Endecia, Jerusha, Sally, Hattie and Millie. Samuel B. lives in Audrain county. He was married first to Anna Thompson, and second to Anna Maupin. Thomas was a soldier in the War of 1812. The rest of the children lived and died in Boone county.

Henry Shock, of Germany, emigrated to America and settled first in Pennsylvania, from whence he removed to Greenbrier county, Va. His children were Henry, John, Jacob, Rayner, Christina and Sally. John married Polly Shiley, and they had Milley, David, Henry, Hector P. L., Eliza, Polly, William, Rebecca, Peggy and Sarah. Mr. Shock settled in Boone county, Mo., in 1816, and built a horse-mill. His son Henry was married first to Mary Jackson, and second to Hannah L. Cox, and by his two wives he had sixteen children. He settled in Audrain county in 1831, and bought out Richard Willingham, "stock, lock and barrel," for \$80. He afterward purchased the property of Col. Robert Fulkerson, whose land adjoined his, and the latter removed to Montgomery county.

Mr. Shock is called the "fat man" of Audrain county. David Shock married Cynthia Gibson, of Boone county. Hector P. L. married Sarah A. Jackson, and settled in Bates county, where he died. Eliza married Thomas Strickland, the first stage contractor on the Boone's Lick road. Polly married William Brewer. William married the widow Evans. Margaret married Perry Cox. Sarah A. married Milton Blythe. Richard died in childhood.

An English family named Gantt, and consisting of five brothers and two sisters, settled in North Carolina. Their names were John, James, William, Zachariah, Isham, Heziah and Sally. William married Fannie Ripley, and settled in Ray county, Mo. Isham married Sally Rippey, and they had Jane, Levi, Josiah, Jesse, William, Thomas and Isham, Jr. Mr. Gantt died, and his widow afterward married his brother James, by whom she had James, Jr., and John. Josiah and Thomas, sons of Isham Gantt, Sr., settled in Audrain county in 1835. The former married Nancy Farcett, and the latter married Cynthia Hurdell.

Edward Farcett, of North Carolina, settled in Audrain county in 1835. He married Nancy McRay, and they had John, Thomas, Nancy and Sally. Nancy married Josiah Gantt, of Audrain county. Zachariah Reed, of Richmond, Va., married Margaret Cockrell, by whom he had five sons and five daughters. They left Virginia and settled in Kentucky, where they lived for many years. Their son James married Susan Williford and settled in Boone county, Mo., in 1826, and in Audrain county in 1834. He served in the War of 1812 under Isaac Shelby, in Canada. He had two sons and seven daughters.

The parents of John Pulis, of New York City, were Irish. John was married twice, and by his first wife he had David and Conrad. His second wife was a Miss Plunkett, by whom he had Peter and John. David was married in the City of New York to Phoebe Taylor, by whom he had Elizabeth, William, John, Reuben, Conrad and Samuel E. Mr. Pulis removed to Kentucky, where he lost his wife, and was married again to Mary N. Gardner, by whom he had Thomas M., Stephen M., George and Joseph. He then removed to Warren county, Mo. where he died in 1848. William and John Pulis married and settled in Missouri in 1829 and 1830. Reuben ran away from home when he was sixteen years old and came to Missouri. He landed at Hannibal, which at that time consisted of one house. There he made a bark canoe and went down the Mississippi river to St. Louis, from whence he worked his way back to Kentucky on a steam-boat. He then learned the trade of a blacksmith, and married the widow Hutson. Her property consisted of a feather bed, a gun, a cradle, two chairs and a pair of scissors; while he had \$25 in money and a set of blacksmith's tools. He paid the \$25 to a man to haul himself and wife and their property to Missouri. They settled first in Audrain county, removed from there to Callaway, and returned to Audrain again in the spring of 1834, where Mrs. Pulis died, and he afterward married Nancy McDonald. Mr. Pulis was a justice of the peace in Audrain county for six years. Conrad, Samuel, Thomas and Stephen Pulis married and settled in Missouri, Thomas in Audrain county. When Reuben Pulis first came to Audrain county he settled in Salt River township, on Beaver Dam creek. He afterwards went to Wilson township, and located near Thompson's Station in 1844. His neighbors at that time were Wiley Runnels, William Runnels, Thomas Keaton, Henry Keaton, Barnett McDonald, David Woods and his son John Woods.

The first mill was erected in Wilson township in 1844, by William James; it was a horse-mill and was located near the main branch of Skull Lick creek. James built also a saw-mill on the south branch of Salt creek.

William Dobbins taught the first school in the township, some time previously to the year 1844; the school-house stood near the banks of Salt creek.

William Jesse was the first minister to declare the gospel of peace in Wilson township. He was a Missionary Baptist. Robert Younger, a Methodist preacher, came soon after.

The father of Edward Tinsley came from Scotland, and settled on James river, in Virginia, before the Revolutionary War. Edward married Elizabeth Buford, who was a sister of Col. William Buford, of the Revolutionary War. They had Caleb, Henry, Joshua, William, Abraham, Judith, Elizabeth, Rachel and Frances. Caleb married Elizabeth Medley, of Virginia, and their children were Ann, Mildred, Peachy, Frances E. and Abraham B. Mr. Tinsley removed to Kentucky in 1816, and settled in Callaway county, Missouri, in 1837. Abraham B. married Rachel Jains, and settled in Audrain county in 1837. He was sheriff of that county three terms, and represented it in the Legislature two terms.

Thomas Turner, of Virginia, married Catherine Smith, of the same State, and settled on the Yadkin river, in North Carolina. They had a son named William, who was born in January, 1778, and was living in Audrain county in 1874. He was a member of the Old Baptist church for seventy-six years. He went to Kentucky with his parents in 1790, where he married Elizabeth Crooks, and in 1837 he settled in Boone county, Mo., where he resided until 1869, when he settled in Audrain county. His children were Thomas, James, Clinton, John, Samuel, Silas, Mary, Lucinda, Nellie, Sarah, Margaret, Narcissa, Elizabeth and Catherine. Four of Mr. Turner's brothers, Smithton, James, John and Thomas, settled in Boone county, Mo.

Many years before the Revolutionary War, a family of Willinghams lived in North Carolina. About 1800, two brothers of the family, named John and William, settled in Kentucky, and in 1816 they came to Missouri and settled in Boone county, from whence they removed to what is now Audrain county in 1825. John Willingham had a son named Jack who was the first sheriff of Audrain county. He collected the revenues in 1837, which amounted to \$32 in money and six wolf scalps.

The following persons were living in Wilson township in 1848 --Richard Wilson, Jackson Turner, D. P. Cox, Powell Riggins, S. J. Bush, John Crockett, John Beshears, G. M. Sims, Riason Ridgeway J. W. Kilgore, E. Davis. J. B. Smith, Minor Perry, B. McDonald, Joseph Gant, Henry Shock, B. S. Maise, J. J. Berry, C. H. Carter, J. W. McLean, J. T. Faucett, J. Campbell, T. J. Triplet, T. Goff, John Morehead, John M. Dollins, W. M. Sims, William Bradley, Thomas B. Garrett, Thomas Pulis, S. Smith, A. W. Berry, W. W. Maise, A. B. McMillan, John Biggins, David Wilson, H. L. Berry, John Steward, Thomas B. Ridgeway, Reuben Pulis, Joseph Brown, J. S. Hill, John Faucett, W. P. L. Shock, John Wilson, Jerry Shepperd, John B. Smith, Minor Pate, A. Pool, D. D. Maise, James Jacks, Z. J. Ridgeway, John Pulis, Richard Dollin, John McDonald Elisha Goff, G. Boswell, N. Hines, James Hiverson, Jerry Edwards, G. Z. Berry, Jasper N. Berry, Terry Bunton, Jones Reed, Isaac Johnson, William Gardner, Henry R. Keaton, P. Ford, A. Boswell, Allen Rose, David Majors, A. P. Edwards.

SWITZLER

Switzler is a discontinued post-office in the northern part of Wilson township. Modoc, or Ridgeway's Store, as it is locally called, is situated in the southern part of Wilson township, ten miles south-west of Mexico.

THOMPSON'S STATION -- BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Jesse Carter, constable; John T. Hisey, grain; Z. C. Hudson, justice of the peace; Joseph James, constable; Kerry Hotel, John Rose, proprietor; M. B. McDonald, live stock; McDonald & Go., general store; Charles Moore, blacksmith; John Rose, proprietor Kerry Hotel and grocer; M. M. Scott, physician.