

HISTORY
OF
VAN WERT AND MERCER COUNTIES,
OHIO.

WITH
Illustrations and Biographical Sketches

OF
SOME OF ITS PROMINENT MEN AND PIONEERS.

WAPAKONETA, O.:
R. SUTTON & CO.
1882.

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Communion of their members in that neighborhood. They held church and Sunday-school in the building until 1873, when they erected a frame church near the old one, 30 by 40 feet, which has served them for religious purposes. They, however, retained their membership in the Salem Church until June, 1881, when they were declared by Presbytery to be an independent organization, with Morgan H. Morgan as Elder. They have no regular minister, but occasionally the pulpit is supplied. The Rev. J. P. Morgan has preached for them several times. Their Sabbath-school is well attended by young and old.

Kingsley Methodist Episcopal Church.

In 1869, David Thomas and others, organized a class in Dibert's school-house, with Mr. F. Ross, first class-leader. The class consisted of fourteen members, and their services were held in the school-house two years, with Rev. James S. M——, Pastor, assisted by others.

In 1870 the organization resolved to erect a house for church purposes, which was a frame building, 30 by 40 feet, and which was completed at a cost of twelve hundred dollars, and in which they have since worshipped. This church has grown from fourteen to sixty-five members, with a good Sabbath-school, of which R. L. Ross is superintendent. The church was dedicated in October, 1872, by Rev. Samuel Roberts, the Presiding Elder.

Whitfield Methodist Episcopal Church

was organized in the school-house of district No. 6, by Rev. David Thomas (a local minister) in 1873, with eleven members. Shortly after its organization they made arrangements to erect a church, the building to be framework, 30 by 40 feet, in the southeast section of No. 4, and was dedicated January 4, 1874, by the Rev. J. Crooks.

Their present membership is eighty-two. They have had the following pastors: Rev. David Thomas, Rev. J. Crooks, Rev. Caleb Hill, and Rev. J. F. Mounts. The class-leaders were: John S. Barton and Henry Hipshire, who have filled the position since the society was organized.

Three years prior to the church organization, the Sabbath-school was established, which has been a perfect success. Number of scholars in attendance about thirty-five.

VENEDOCIA.

This beautiful village is located in the southeastern part of Van Wert County, on the line of the Toledo, Delphos and Burlington Railway, with the line between Jennings and York townships, passing through the centre of the town.

The first improvement on the land was made in 1847 by William Bebb, and was used for farming purposes for many years. In 1861 the land on which the main portion of the village is located, came into the hands of D. W. Evans, a son-in-law of Mr. Bebb.

In 1863 Mr. Evans sold the first lot for building purposes to Mr. W. E. Jones, who immediately erected a frame building. The next lot was sold to R. J. Whittington and E. A. Evans, who erected a store-room and engaged in the mercantile business. Lots were sold by Mr. Evans promiscuously to different parties and built on until 1880, when the town

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was surveyed, and lots regularly laid out and numbered. The number of lots in the plat is forty-three.

In 1875 Mr. E. B. Evans made a survey, and sold some lots off the southeast corner of section 12, near where the depot is now located, upon which there are several fine dwelling houses. Another portion of the village is struck off the southwest corner of section 7, in Jennings Township, which were laid off by Rev. J. P. Morgan. Upon these lots several residences, a wagon and blacksmith shop have been erected.

The population of Vendocia at this time will number one hundred, and contains two dry goods and general store; one drug store and hardware store combined; one boot and shoe store and shop combined; one grocery store, near the railroad depot; one wagon shop; one blacksmith shop, and one grain warehouse at depot; three physicians and surgeons; one church and one school-house.

The village is prosperous, and there is much, if not more, business done in this village, than any other of its size in Van Wert County.

BIOGRAPHIES.

MORGAN H. MORGAN

was born in Wales, June 3, 1843. His parents, Hugh and Mary Morgan, emigrated to America and located in Pittsburgh in 1844. In 1849 he became an apprentice to Messrs. Bylas & Brown in their nail-cutting establishment, and served three years, and then as a journeyman.

In 1853 he went to Jackson County, Ohio, and worked at the carpenter and joiner's trade, being compelled to relinquish his former trade on account of ill health. He served three years to acquire a knowledge of the carpenter trade; after which he worked as a journeyman. On May 4, 1857, he married Mary Davis, of Jackson County; in which county he carried on his trade by contracting and erecting buildings. In 1864 he moved to this county, purchased the farm on which he resides in Jennings Township, and has turned his attention to farming and stock-raising. He has one of the best-improved farms in Van Wert County. They had two daughters. Mrs. Morgan died Dec. 20, 1866. In June, 1868, he married Mrs. Ann Jones, of this county.

In January, 1865, he was elected superintendent of the Horeb Sabbath-school, which position he held for many years. In 1868 he was elected township trustee, and in August of the same year he was elected elder of the Vendocia Presbyterian Church, and held the office until June 15, 1881, when Presbytery organized the Horeb Presbyterian Church, and Mr. Morgan was transferred to this church from the Vendocia Church, where he still retains his membership.

In 1873 he was elected county commissioner, and served three years. With the assistance of his two colleagues, Messrs. Miller and Mercer, the fine court-house was erected, which is an honor to the county and State.

In August, 1877, he became connected with the building of the Delphos and Kokomo Narrow Gauge Railroad, now known as the Toledo, Delphos and Burlington Railroad. He devoted much time to the raising of money and securing the right of way, and was one of the building committee.

In 1879 he was appointed notary public by Gov. Bishop, which position he still holds, and is regarded as one of Van Wert's most honored citizens.

JOHN L. THOMAS,

farmer and tile manufacturer, was born in Wales, March 8, 1829. In 1851 he emigrated to America, and located in Ebensburg, Pa., for one year; but in 1852 he went to Cincinnati, where he engaged as a journeyman at the boiler-maker trade, and continued in it for six years. In 1858 he came to Van Wert County, and located near Vendocia.

He purchased 87 acres of land one fourth of a mile east of the town, on which he made improvements, and attended to farming operations. In 1867 he manufactured brick, and followed the business several years till the spring of 1876. At this time he turned his attention to the manu-

WASHINGTON

THIS township is in the eastern part as township No. 2 south, range 4 east. Jackson Township and Putnam County, on the South by Allen and on the west by Ridge Township. for the organization of this township an area of Washington Township is thirty miles square.

How Watered

It is one of the best watered townships in the county. It is watered by Little Auglaize, and East and West, different portions of the township, and, a network whose branches penetrate and thus establish an excellent system of drainage.

The surface is generally level, but slightly elevated in the east. The township is crossed by a sand loam, and is very rich and fertile, and it contains some of the finest farms in the county of Washington Township, and that the soil is of an excellent character, and betokened thriving inhabitants, particularly in the eastern part of German descent.

Washington, in its natural state, was thickly covered with wild animals of various kinds, those who were fond of hunting. This, a favorite hunting-grounds for many years, and some of the most interesting experience of the settlers in their contests with the wolves, bears, and deer that have met the Smith Hill's rife in these woods.

Apple Tree

The first apple tree discovered in what is now Washington Township, was in the year 1812, in what is Washington Township, where a white man who was on a visit to this section, among the forest trees to an immense sized mound, which belonged to the past. The mound was on the bank of the Auglaize River, where the river passes the residence of Mr. Tussing, not far from the residence of Mr. Tussing, in Washington Township, the former home of Oliver Stacey, who had built the first house in that part of the county. The mound was cut down to make way for the road, and the tree was exposed to the effects of the wind, and to wither and die.

Early Settlement

First Settlers.—The first settler in the township who entered his land in April, 1835, but he died in 1836. There were several pieces of land, but were not occupied for several years. Mr. Stacey came he was followed by Nathaniel and Orrin Burrett, and they, in the fall of 1836, John Summersett.

First Buildings.—The first log cabin in the township was built by Oliver Stacey. This cabin is still standing to the present time.

The first hewed log house was built by Oliver Stacey. The first school house was built by Silas Newton.

School House.—The first school house was built by Silas Newton.