

SLAVERY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY L.R.H.

In the census of 1820 of Washington County there were 1,484 inhabitants; 26 of these being slaves. In 1830 there were 1,639 with 13 slaves held by owners.

In 1824 when the national election resulted in the choice of John Quincy Adams as the sixth President of the United States, the thirty counties of Illinois decided against Illinois becoming a slave state.

In the Washington County vote at that time which included what is now Clinton County 285 votes were cast--112 being for slavery and 173 against. This showed that the people were not all of one mind on the slavery question. I don't know what the vote in Oakdale Township was (it was called Elkton Precinct then) but we do know that there were some people in Oakdale Township who favored slavery.

The story is told that there was a small group who lived around Elkton who favored slavery very strongly. Most of the people that lived around Oakdale and the southern part of the township were opposed to slavery. It is said that on several occasions when people of that part of the township went to Elkton to trade, since Elkton was larger then than Oakdale or Ayers Point as it was called then, this group was often run out of town and threatened with bodily harm by a few of the pro-slavery people in Elkton.

Sometime before the Civil War, Robert Smith who ran a blacksmith shop in Sec. 28 along the road between Oakdale and Coulterville (on land that is now Ray Kohring farm) was working in his shop one day. He noticed a small group of men on horse back coming from the north, and he thought it might mean trouble. He put the end of an iron rod into the forge and got it red hot. When these men got to the shop and came inside, he knew they were the group that favored slavery. They began to threaten him. When some of them moved in too close to him, he pulled the red hot rod out of the forge and started toward them. They soon got out of the shop and rode away. Robert Smith, who believed in "keeping the Sabbath" as a day of rest often told that the only day he ever worked in his shop on the Sabbath was shoeing horses the day before Rev. Todd and his company left for the war. Later he volunteered as a Union soldier but the war was ended before they got beyond Coulterville.

I do not mean to say that many of the people who lived around Elkton were people of this type. Most of them were good citizens and history shows that some of our early officials of the county came from Elkton and worked hard to make this county a better place to live.

The HISTORY OF 1879 also related that Elkton's first settler, William Rountree, Sr. had freed twenty six slaves in Kentucky before coming to Illinois.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

The following is based on an interview with Mrs. Emily Steel McClurkin who died on Jan. 3, 1912. The interview was published in the NASHVILLE JOURNAL, preserved by the Hood family. Another source was GENEALOGIES AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES OF RANDOLPH AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES by Mrs. Ada Auld Torrens.

The phrase came into existence with the fierce discussion that preceded the Civil War, and passed out of existence with the war.

Slaves, who escaped or were freed, were helped on the way to Canada, as there were none of our states then, to which the "Fugitive Slave Law" would not apply. The slave was not safely free until he stood on British soil. So slaves were aided in the attempt to escape by the "Free Soil" people of the North.

This aid consisted in concealing them during the day, and then taking them to another house, still nearer Canada, during the night. Here they were hidden through another day, and so on, till they were over the border. As this was all done during darkness the process was likened to a railroad, that was underground, and whose "Rolling Stock", freight and passenger list was never seen. Time table was irregular and fluctuating.

Several homes about Oakdale were stations in the underground railroad. The Rev. Todd who resided on the hill west of town where Harold Auld lives, frequently used his home as a hiding place. On one particular occasion he was sheltering slaves in the upstairs room when the southerners hot on the trail stopped to talk with him. Perchance the slaves in their fear and excitement looked down into the yard and were spotted by the southern men. When they started to enter the house to get the slaves, the Rev. Todd quickly produced a pistol and stepped between them and the door saying coldly, something to the effect that if they entered, it would be over his dead body. Since the Rev. Todd's reputation as an abolitionist was well known over the area, the gentlemen left without those slaves.

Several homes throughout Southern Illinois whose residents were of the Reformed or Associate Reformed Presbyterian faith aided in the work of the Underground Railway. There were known stations in the vicinity of Eden, Cutler, and Sparta as well as at Oakdale and Richview.

A Mr. Evans from Sparta seems to have often brought loads of slaves from his house to the house commonly known as the John B. Carson farm, now owned by Ray Francis. The children were used as messengers to carry food to the fugitives which were usually hidden in the barn. If the slave hunters were deemed too close they were secreted into the woods and hidden along the creek. The farm adjoining the home of Rev. Todd, now owned by Mrs. Ward Auld, as well as the old brick home of John Hood, now owned by Ray Kohring were also hiding places.

Cyrus McClurkin and John J. Torrens usually drove the slaves to the next station north. The slaves were hidden in wagons constructed with double beds, the upper one loaded with what appeared to be sacks of wheat.

COVENANTER SOLDIERS' RECORD OF OAKDALE, ILL.

The following was found in a SCRAP BOOK kept by Mr. John Piper and published in the COVENANTER WITNESS. The list of names which follows the article was compiled by Mr. John Boyd and Mr. Piper in the spring of 1909. The article also states that Elder James Morrison, who had been hovering on the brink of the grave for some weeks, expressed his interest in the Young People of New Concord, Ohio publishing the list of Covenanter veterans. Mr. Morrison died April 24, 1909.

"Covenanters in Southern Illinois felt the heat of the Anti-Slavery conflict more perhaps than in any other section of the Church. Being so near two slave states, Missouri on one side, and Kentucky on the other, many Covenanters became conductors on the Underground Railroad, and their cellars and barns became the depots and waiting rooms for the fugitive slaves from both states. In those days many a Covenanter in the darkness of night started out from the vicinity of our old church on Elkhorn Prairie, with his covered wagon loaded to the guards with fleeing slaves, with the North Star as his guide, he would land his passengers before daylight in the friendly cellar of some other "Black Abolitionist" near Hoyleton or Richview. The first settlers of this part of Illinois were mostly Covenanters, who were driven from the South because of their hatred of slavery; and an opposite element from Kentucky and Tennessee, who, like the "Border Ruffians" of Kansas, were determined to make Illinois a slave state. For many years before the war, there was bitter contention between these two elements, and the Covenanters were subjected to much persecution. Was it strange, then, when the war came, that the sons of liberty loving pioneers felt impelled to enter the army, that they might improve the opportunity to strike down slavery? We believe that no Covenanter congregation can furnish as large a list of soldiers in the Civil War as Oakdale. The pastor, Rev. A.C. Todd, went as captain of a company composed largely of young men of his congregation. They often speak of the scene at the old church, when Captain Todd and his company were leaving for the battlefield. There were few eyes not suffused with tears, as they made the grove resound with the melody of the grand old battle Psalm, sang to the tune of "Cowper;"

Jehovah hear thee in the day
When trouble He doth send;
And let the name of Jacob's God
Thee from all ill defend."

They parted that day from many who never returned alive, but most of their bodies were sent home, and now sleep in the old church yard."

The following is our Roll of Honor:

Rev. A.C.Todd, Captain Co.F., 10th Mo.
 D.W.McClurkin, Captain Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Alexander Caldwell, M.D., First Sergeant Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Elder Andrew T.Kennedy, Sergeant Co.F., 10th Mo. Wounded and taken p
 prisoner at Jackson, Miss. May 14, 1864.
 Elder John Boyd, Sergeant Co.F., 10th Mo. Wounded and taken pris-
 oner at Jackson, Miss., May 14, 1864.
 John J.Torrens, Sergeant Co. F., 10th Mo.
 Archibald Hood, Sergeant Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Thomas Luney, Corporal Co.F., 10th Mo.
 S.P .Williamson, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Thomas McClurkin, Corporal Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Thomas Meichen, Corporal Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Barney Donohue, Drummer, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Samuel Keady, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Moses Keady, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 John Luney, Co.F., 10th Mo., Wounded at Champion Hills, Miss., 5/23/'63
 Samuel McCloy, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Rev. D.G.Thompson, Ohio Volunteers
 C.F.S.McClurkin, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 John McLean, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 William Miller, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 William McCair, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 J.R.McClurkin, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 J.C.McClurkin, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 James Rainey, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 James N.Ramsey, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Alexander H.Sloane, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Captain John C.Kennedy, Co.G., 13th Ill. Cavalry
 Samuel G.Williamson, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Deacon Robert Luney, Co.G., 13th Ill. Cavalry
 Deacon James M.Torrens, Co.I., 80th Ill., wounded at Perryville, 10/9/
 James H.Hunter, Co.F., 80th Ill.
 Elder James R.Morrison, Co.F., 80th Ill.
 Andrew Cook, Co.F., 80th Ill.
 Elder David Duguid, Co.K., 129th Ind.
 Charles McElhinney, Co.D., 48th Ill.
 Thomas G.McLean, Co.I., 30th Ill.
 Deacon John Piper, Co.B., 111th Ill., wounded at Kenesaw Mt., 6/27/64
 James H.Sloane, Co.B., 136th Ill. (taken prisoner.)
 Robert Kelso, Co.I., 80th Ill.
 James Kelso, Co.G., 13th Ill. Cavalry
 John Montgomery, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Robert McElhinney, Co.G., 13th Ill. Cavalry
 James Dermond, Co.G., 13th Ill. Cavalry
 D.W.Wylie, Ohio Volunteers
 J.W.Wylie, Ohio Volunteers
 John Danaldson, Co.F., 10th Mo.
 Andrew McClurkin, Co.G., 146th Ill.
 Rev. John Hood, Capt.Co.F., 80th Ill., taken prisoner at Rome, Ga. and
 confined to Libby until the war elo
 Kennedy Hood, Capt.of a NewYork Regiment
 James E.Sharp, Co.F., 10th Mo.

A BROTHER'S TRIBUTE

The following is part of a letter written by Gen. John Kennedy of Denver to Editor James Flannigan of Fort Morgan, Colorado, Herald.

The parties are well known in this community having been raised in the vicinity of Elkton and Oakdale. The war record of Andrew Kennedy will be especially interesting to many readers.

"I have returned from Illinois where I attended the funeral of my brother Andrew". He died Dec. 3, 1897.

"As you no doubt remember Andrew was badly wounded at the battle of Jackson, Miss., he was captured in the hospital two days after the battle and taken to Libby Prison where he lay for two months, with the ball still in his foot, he got gangrene in it while in the prison, but was exchanged in a very peculiar way, or through a strange incident; the morning after an artery had broken and left him very weak, he was placed on a cot in the corridor, about that time a quantity of prisoners were forming in line for the purpose of answering to their names and being exchanged, a young boy stood opposite brother Andrew and he noticed him looking at him, finally he reached in his pocket and took out an envelope and across the corner he wrote his name, then he stepped over to the cot and told Andrew, when that name is called you answer "here" he did not say anything more but turned and walked into the ranks and finally into the prison. Brother understood what it meant and when the name was called he summoned all his strength and answered "here" as loud as he could speak it, his comrades at once took up the cot and carried it to the door and then one of them took him on his back and carried him down to the landing, the excitement incident to getting among friends and the sight of the stars and stripes, which he had not seen for months together with his great weakness, caused him to lose the little piece of paper that bore the name of his comrade, who as it appeared afterward gave his life in order that Andrew's might be saved. For many years brother made diligent search for this noble hero, but all to no avail."

"This wound in brother Andrew's foot never healed, more than thirty-five pieces of bone were taken out from time to time, as a consequence he was always thereafter a subject of weakness and attacks of disease."

"We buried him in the old church yard, beside his first wife. There were about five hundred persons at the funeral, many from surrounding towns.... As we went by the place where the little brick school house stood and at the old church yard I could not help remembering the times of our early boyhood when the singing society of Professor Wesley Hunting and the debating society used to meet in the church and the school house, there is much there to recall old times,"

THE UNION LEAGUE OF LOYAL WOMEN OF AMERICA

The Union League of Loyal Women of America was an organization with headquarters in Upper Alton, Illinois. Their purpose was to provide bandages, lint, dried fruits and vegetables, and money for such things as stamps and letter paper to the hospital for use of the sick and wounded soldiers.

Miss Gail Boyle has the Secretary's book of the League. The minutes begin:

"The Rev. Mr. Willoughby with his wife and Miss Kenedy met at Mrs. Thaxton's today (June 14, 1864) to organize a Ladies League
 --- --- "The league was known as the Pilot Knob Union Ladies League No. 370.

The names listed as members on the first day were as follows:

| | | |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| President | Jane McClelland | |
| Vice -Pres. | Sarah E. Smith | |
| Secretary | Adeline Baggs | |
| Treasurer | Delilah Thaxton | |
| Merald | Adah Maxwell | |
| Chaplain | Jemima Moore | |
| Members: | Mary McMunn | Mary Kirby |
| | Sarah Cox | Martha A. Smith |
| | Elizabeth McClelland | W.G. Marcy |

Later members were:

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Annie Maxwell | Sarah Guthrie |
| Rebecca Ewing | Evelyn Rowland |
| Harriet Perkins | Elizabeth Moore |
| Caroline Moore | Amanda McKibben |

In the book was a letter written by B.H. Mills from Upper Alton, in which he told that they now had 412 sick and wounded soldiers at Camp Butler. His son who was Hospital Steward had written that they were badly in need of vegetables. He requested them to send a few barrels of onions, potatoes, etc.

It seemed that the league met twice a month all summer and fall. They collected dues and fines for failure to attend the meetings regularly.

The last meeting recorded was Nov. 18, 1864. It seemed they were getting ready to have James McClelland deliver some socks, dried apples, potatoes, onions, canned fruit, dried herbs and papers. They had sent \$ 12.50 to the Christian Commission in St. Louis. They planned not to meet again before spring.

It seemed that Mr. Robert G. Carrick was a patient at the hospital. People had been asking him if the soldiers got things sent for their use. Apparently he was on board a ship being moved to Upper Alton. He tells that while they were at the wharf a Sanitary Commissioner came by, telling them that anyone wishing to write a letter, might go up to his room and write as many letters as they liked. He said that at present there were 20 people there writing letters.

Mr. Carrick was in Co. I 49th Illinois.

FROM "NASHVILLE JOURNAL", May 31, 1867

"Last week a man named J. Meyer in the employ of Robert Hood near Elkton, took wheat to the Fayetteville mill to dispose of it for his employer. He also took with him, for Robert McClurkin, an order to draw money for wheat previously sold. When Meyer got to Fayetteville he got the cash for Hood's wheat and McClurkin's order; \$583.00 in all, left the team at the stopping place and decamped for parts unknown. Meyer is a young man about 5 feet 10 inches high, light hair and whiskers, and has a finger off one of his hands. He bore a good reputation before this and had been in the neighborhood about a year."

Lawrence Hood gives the following note about the above clipping.

In 1964 I went to Nashville to see Walter Snyder about some old Oakdale history. He talked about a hired hand of Robert Hood's taking a load of wheat to Fayetteville. I told him about the clipping from the old Nashville Journal. When I got through he said, "Do you know the rest of it?" I said that I didn't any one now living who knew anything about it.

Walter Snyder grew up in Oakdale, leaving about 1911. He said that he remembered his father, John Snyder, telling him the story several times when he was a boy.

He said that Meyer was known to the people of Fayetteville because he had been there several times with loads of wheat. The last any of them saw of him was that night as he was in a saloon drinking with two other fellows that were not known in Fayetteville. In the morning all three had disappeared.

A few years later a farmer that lived at the edge of Fayetteville decided to clean out his pond and as they were digging the dirt out of the bottom of the pond they uncovered a skeleton. They very carefully uncovered it and found it had large rocks tied to it with wires. It was about 5 feet 10 inches long and had a finger off one hand. They were sure that it was the skeleton of Meyer.

They thought that Meyer had drunk too much and had either talked too much or had shown the other two fellows the money he had. They probably decided to murder him and take the money, then weighted the body and threw it into the pond.

Robert Hood was my grandfather and lived at that time where I live now. Walter Snyder died about one year after he told me this story at the age of 80 years.

INDIAN MOUND IN OAKDALE TOWNSHIP

The largest Indian mound in Washington County is located on the south end of William Kennedy's farm in Section 30-3-4 Oakdale Township in Mud Creek bottom about 150 yards south of the creek. This mound is about 25 feet high, 135 feet long and 115 feet wide at its base. There are trees growing on top of this mound that are 12 to 18 inches in diameter.

WELLS, FARGO & CO. IN OAKDALE TOWNSHIP
by L. Hood

The following is taken from THE WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA:

"Fargo, Wm. Geo. (1818-1881) pioneer American Express owner, born in Pompey, N.Y. After working as a grocery clerk, freight agent, express messenger, and resident agent in Buffalo he became a partner with Henry Wells in Wells and Co. The first express company to operate between Buffalo and western points.

The company merged in 1850 with two others to form the American Express Co. of which Wells was president and Fargo was secretary. In 1852 the two men organized Wells, Fargo & Co. which was later absorbed by the American Express Co. of which Fargo was president from 1868 to 1881."

"Wells, Fargo & Co. was an early American express organization. Henry Wells and William G. Fargo founded the company in 1852. They planned an express service from San Francisco to New York City with the American Express Company serving as an eastern representative.

In 1866 Benjamin Holladay sold his overland mail and stage-coach business to Wells, Fargo & Company which soon became the most powerful firm in the Far West.

Wells, Fargo & Co. carried passengers, freight, mail. It specialized in shipping gold and silver from the western mines. It developed a banking business on the Pacific Coast. The firm lost heavily after the completion of the Central-Union Pacific in 1869. Wells, Fargo & Company merged with the American Railway Express Company in 1918."

Through perseverance and the combined efforts of many people much interesting local history can be discovered. Some years ago, when 'oil men' were interested in abstracts around Oakdale, one of them chanced to tell Herman Freiman, the local garage owner, that Wells-Fargo had once held land near Oakdale and asked if he knew where it lay. When Lawrence heard of this, he began to inquire trying to locate where it lay. One day he happened to ask Walter Elliott if he had ever heard anything about it. Walter had, because a friend of his had recently owned the land and knew from the abstract, where it lay. As soon as Lawrence Hood had located the site, Virgil May became interested too and was able to verify the rumors by a copy of the abstract.

Pertinent parts of the abstract follow:

| | | |
|------|------|--|
| | | S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 34-3-4-Oakdale Twp. originally |
| Book | Page | |
| J | 620 | John O'Neill, rec'd from Gov't Nov. 27-1854 |
| K | 586 | John O'Neill & wife to Aaron Long Centralia 3/18/56 |
| O | 124 | Aaron Long & wife to Charles Wells May 24, 1858 |
| Q | 645 | Charles & Louisa Wells to (in trust for the American Express Co. Feb. 22-1856 |

Book P age
32 373

Charles H. Wells & wife of city of New York, to Henry Wells of N.Y. & John Butterfield of Wica, N.Y. & Alexander Holland, City of New York & James Thompson of Springfield, Mass. & James C. Fargo of City of New York & Edward B. Judson, of Syracuse, N.Y. Deeded this June 5, 1867.

- 46 35 April 13, 1872 Henry Wells of N.Y., William G. Fargo of Buffalo, N.Y., Alexander Holland of N.Y. City, Jas. C. Fargo of N.Y. City and Edward B. Judson of Syracuse, N.Y. to James C. Fargo.
- 46 507 Feb. 19, 1873 James Fargo & wife of N.Y. City and William G. Fargo, President of the American Express Co. a joint stock company party of the second part containing 80 acres, being the same premises described in a deed from Henry Wells and others to the said James C. Fargo, one of the parties of the first part hereto bearing date of the 13th day of April 1872
- 60 216 Quit claim Deed, William R. Neighbors to Rudolph A. Wheatley. Neighbors from Perry Co. and paid \$ 270. for said 80 acres. April 5, 1883
- 67 285 May 3-1879 William G. Fargo, president of the American Express Co. a joint stock association, parties of the 1st part and R. A. Wheatley and W. R. Neighbors of Du Quoin, Ill. parties of the second part. \$ 200. 80 acres.
- 86 150 William Weise, Master in Chancery sold to George F. Benedict (foreclosure on mortgage not paid) March 27, 1918
- 223 391 Many other transactions are recorded until on Feb. 8, 1957 the parcel of land passes into the hands of Paul & Betty Kelly.
- 252 612 Paul & Betty Kelly to C.D. & Della M. Brooks of Bell-ville, Ill. Dated Jan. 11, 1964 Recorded April 29, 1964

Steve Schaefer tells Lawrence Hood there is still evidence of where the old trail crossed the area.