PLACE NAMES

Have you ever heard of Sherley Knob? It was a name well-known to Floyd County residents 120 years ago – the location of a tavern operated by John Sherley along old Vincennes Road. Today we call it Grandview. It is one of the many place names in Floyd County which have changed through the years. Many other names have remained the same for a century and more. The story of some place names – past and present – is the topic of today's Historical Series.

It is easy to trace the origin of many place names in New Albany and Floyd County, but the exact origin of many others have been lost in the passing years, leaving only legends to account for the name and the legends are often wrong.

Sometimes not even legends are left – as is the case of Franklin Township. It was formed in 1819 shortly after Floyd County itself came into being, but the Commissioners' records of the time give no clue as to why the name was chosen . . . simply that the township was to be called Franklin. The best guess would be that it was named for Benjamin Franklin, but there seems no way to prove it.

In the case of the other four townships, the origin of the names is obvious. Three were named for towns located within them – New Albany, Georgetown and Greenville. Lafayette Township was named for the French patriot who was such a help to the American colonies during the Revolution. The name was especially appropriate because of the many French settlers in that area.

The oldest name in the county and one that has never changed is Silver Creek. A map made in 1784 shows Silver Creek by that name. Earlier maps

showed the stream, but with no name, so that we may assume it was named about the time the first settlers arrived in Clarksville and the Clark Land Grant. Why was it named Silver Creek? We have only hazy tradition handed down through the years that the Indians called it Silver Creek because of a silver mine near it.

The Clark Grant has given a name to a road in Floyd County, the Grant Line Road which follows almost exactly the western line of the Clark Grant.

Two other roads which have names dating back to the beginnings of settlement here are Gutford Road, recently changed to Old Ford Road, and Garrettson Lane. The Gut Ford was a crossing or fording place in Silver Creek, the point where the buffalo had crossed and the only place where early settlers could take wagons across the creek. The inclines or gullies in the steep banks on each side were just wide enough for a wagon. These gullies were called guts, a word which has passed out of use. Thus the name of Gut Ford, and the road which led to it, was called the Gutford Road.

This road existed before New Albany was founded and went north of the present city approximately along Daisy Lane and then up the Knobs near where Highway 150 is today. When the County was formed Jacob Garrettson, Jr., who owned land in the area, was named supervisor of the road from Gut Ford to the top of the Knobs. The road soon became known as Garrettson Lane. Only a short stretch remains today, extending from Charlestown Road to Slate Run Road. Slate Run is another old Floyd County Road and takes its name from the creek by that name, which gets its name from the slate rock in the bed of the stream.

The name of Lone Star for the area around the junction of Slate Run and Charlestown Roads dates back to about 1850 when Capt. William L. Sanderson returned from the Mexican War and renamed his father's tavern "Lone Star" for

the State of Texas. The area was also known a Graysville for a blacksmith named Gray who built a shop there about 1830. The old Lone Star Tavern, which became a grocery during Prohibition days, was torn down only a few years ago to make way for an ice cream drive-in stand.

The Budd Road is another old name in Floyd County, dating back to about 1815, when it was cut through by Col. Gilbert Budd, a Virginian and veteran of the War of 1812 who settled in Franklin Township.

Within New Albany itself the early influence of New Orleans through the river traffic is still evident in Chartres Street and in Poydras and Corti, two now-vanished streets in Lower Albany. All three were named for famous New Orleans thoroughfares.

Dewey Heights, near the K & I Bridge, received its name from Charles Dewey, one of Indiana's most able lawyers of a century ago and one of the developers of the height as a residential area. Charles Dewey was the grandfather of Admiral Dewey who won fame at Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War. Before the name Dewey Heights was given to the area a century ago, it was known as Conner Hill because of the huge Conner family mansion which stood alone on the rise and which still stands at the corner of Dewey and Vincennes, high above the roadway.

Turning again to the County, the name Mount Tabor dates from 1836 when New Albany Presbyterians acquired ground at the site for a camp meeting area and named it for the place where Christ was transfigured.

Edwardsville, which came into being in 1853, was named for Henry H. Edwards who owned the land and founded the town. Greenville, one of the oldest towns in Floyd County, is said to have been named for the Green family from South Carolina who settled in the area before the founding of the town in 1816.

Most Floyd County roads take their name from the towns they reach or the families whose farm they pass. Among the exceptions is Brush College Road which was named for an old elementary school in the woods which was jocularly known as Brush College.

One place which should be the easiest to trace, and yet is one of the most difficult, is the name of the County itself. The conflicting stories of how Floyd County got its name will be the subject of next Sunday's historical program.

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