

WEST UNION

Manner in Which North Side Received Its Name

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For many years all that part of the city of New Albany on both sides of the New Albany and Vincennes turn pike – east and west – from the north side of Falling Run creek to the Green Valley road, was usually called “West Union,” but in reality has no such legal existence. In 1830, Thomas Dodson came to this city from Dayton, O., and in 1840 laid out twenty acres of land he had purchased on the North Side into town lots. He recorded it as “Dodson’s plat.” Across the Miami river west of Dayton there was a hamlet which was called West Union, now covered by the Soldiers’ Home, and Mr. Dodson spoke of his plat occasionally as West Union, and, as time went on, others called the entire North Side by that name. But “West Union” has no legal record in the books of the recorder of Floyd county.

In 1850 the late Ezekiel R. Day laid off three plats on the North Side on high ground rising above Falling Run bottom. Each of these plats covered considerable ground, and some of them afforded fine views. These plats were recorded by Mr. Day as Eden plat; Mechanic’s Retreat plat, and Mt. Isom. In the entire three plats the lots sold quite well, and many good residences were erected.

A company purchased a tract of land lying on the Paoli pike and back of the Bono road, east, and known as “The Meadows,” three principal avenues running east and west through the plat – Olive avenue; Cottom avenue; Dunbar avenue. Other lots were laid off on the west side of the New Albany and Paoli turnpike, which are being built upon, and the North Side is really prospering, but all these plats have always been in the limits of New Albany. There never was any legal West Union in Floyd county.

When [Henry Clay](#), three times a candidate for president, manumitted his slaves here, they were given homes on the North Side by the great Whig statesman, and formed quite a colony in that part of the city and later other freed negroes came in. Quite a number of the descendants of these pioneer negroes still reside on the North Side, all of them good citizens.

The older families of negroes have always been ardent Republicans. They are industrious men and women, some of them well educated, and the parents having their children educated. The older families are all church members and lovers of law and order, and respected by both white and black. The North Side of the city has many beautiful building sites and all these will be improved with residences in a few years hence.

A tract of land has been purchased by a company with the intention of using it for fair grounds. This project would bring the advantages of the North Side prominently before the people.

C.W.C.

[Charles W. Cottom]