

## *Country Jottings*

### An Eminent Early Hoosier, John Graham, a Surveyor and Statesman Who Made An Enviably Record and Established a Prominent Family.

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By HERMAN RAVE.

If you go through the realty records of old Clark County and later through those of Floyd County you will find a recurrent name which still exists in both of them and probably has spread from its focal point, New Albany, throughout the State. It is an old Scotch name, probably at one time the name of a clan in its mountainous home country across the sea. The first bearer of it here was John K. Graham, who came to what was then Clark County and is now Floyd County in the first decade of the last century. He was a surveyor, probably also a hunter, certainly also a farmer, for he acquired considerable land in what is now the city of New Albany. Almost all of our early leaders were surveyors, no matter what else they were with it. Washington, George Rogers Clark and many other prominent men were surveyors. Upon their science depended and depend the rights of property. John Graham was a noted surveyor among the pioneers.

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When he began his work there was no New Albany; Clarksville was a handful of cabins; Jeffersonville had not moved back from the river front. Indians roamed the forest, such a forest as it is difficult to reconstruct in imagination. There is nothing like it in Indiana now. There were panthers, wolves, wild hogs, bears, all more or less of a risk. Of course the forest also teemed with deer, turkey, pheasant and the lesser animals. When John Graham went out with his chainman and other assistants he took rifle, hunting knife and tomahawk along, for these were necessary accessories to travel in the forest where he and his men often had to cut a path through the tangled undergrowth to enable them to get a sight. After marching back and forth all day they often had to camp out for the night, or find some settler's cabin and lodge on the earth floor before the fire. In summer the shelter of the trees and the vast, starry sky were good enough, with a fire blazing in the center of their camp, their moccassined feet always turned to the blaze.

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When one thinks of these things it is evident that Graham must have led an active, laborious life. He was known all over Southern Indiana. There was no Northern Indiana then, not even a road north of Jackson County, nothing but old Indian trails, and not much else in Southern Indiana either. Naturally his surveys had to meet all the difficulties and peculiarities of those days. There are corners marked by big trees, by bends in the creeks, or by peculiar rocks.

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John Graham was a man of education; he came from Pennsylvania by way of Kentucky and settled at first on a place east of Silver Creek, but later moved into what is now Floyd County, some five miles north of New Albany, where he owned a large tract of land. There he died at a good old age, leaving a large family. Charles Graham, at McCulloch's Chapel, is one of his grandsons.

Besides his activities as settler, surveyor and farmer, he was also busy in the public life of the young territory. His wide, favorable acquaintance was responsible for sending him to the Legislature and later to Corydon as a member of the first constitutional convention. Such men as he were builders; just as great and important as the men who build great factories today. They were builders of States and cities and made possible this great country.