

DEFIANCE 100 YEARS AGO

Brunersburg's Two Distilleries; Blacksmith Teaches School in Shop; Coys, Snider and Halls Start Settlement

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In my last I barely mentioned the commencement of the settlement of Bean Creek, above Brunersburg, and in this I purpose pursuing that subject farther.

Commencing at Brunersburg I find that in the settlement of all new countries 50 or 60 years ago it was thought absolutely necessary, as soon as provision was made for cracking corn enough to supply the inhabitants with cornbread and mush, to provide some means to counteract the ague, and consequently distilleries had to be erected to furnish whiskey in which to keep the dogwood and wild cherry bark. Two were erected in the neighborhood of Brunersburg, one on the east side of Bean Creek a short distance above the dam, and subsequently another was erected between Brunersburg and the mouth of Bean Creek.

Most Settlers Sober

I have been unable to learn who ran the distilleries, or the amount of business done, but think the sales to the Indians was the principal trade, although in those days few families were without whiskey in the house at all times; but to the credit of most of the early settlers whom I have named very few of them used whiskey to excess, and many of them not at all.

The first dam across Bean creek was built in the fall of 1821, or early in 1822, and a sawmill was erected on the east side of the creek by John **Perkins**, in which he had one run of stone for cracking corn for bread and for the distilleries. John **Perkins** had been one of the surveyors and as the surveys were not closed until the spring of 1821 no land could be purchased of the government before

that time, and settlers who came prior to that had to squat, as it was called, and wait until the land came into market.

Indians Not Dangerous

I think Ephraim **Doty** was the first settler above the Lawrence farm on the east side and the John **Partee** farm on the west side of the creek, and probably a first settler in Tiffin Township. He was also the first school teacher, teaching school in one end of his blacksmith shop, which was a double log cabin. One at least of the first scholars he taught is now living. Dr. Houston **Russell**, of Evansport. It required some courage in the children to attend school in these days, as the country was full of Indians, but to their credit be it said, they were not really as dangerous as many of the degraded white man of the present day.

Doty settled in section 21, so that he was nearly in the center of the township. He was one of the first justices of the peace and trustees of said township. He built the first sawmill erected in Tiffin Township, on what was then called **Doty's Run**, and he informed the writer of this that in early times he could run daytimes for about six months in the year.

Stream Run-off Slow

The run heads up in Adams Township, near Munson **Whitney's** and the grass and fallen timber kept the accumulation of water from snow and ice and spring rains back until midsummer. Now the stream furnishes hardly water enough for stock. A part of the lumber in Henry **Newbegin's** house came from that mill.

Enos **Partee** settled in Section 20 not far from **Doty's** in 1826, and it is reported that he helped build the dam at Brunersburg. It is probable that he helped repair and strengthen the dam in 1828, at which time John **Perkins** put up the first grist mill erected in the county of Williams. I stated in my last article that Samuel **Hughes** helped do the millwright work on that mill, but think I was mistaken. It was Isaiah **Hughes** who in company with

Samuel **Holton**, afterwards built a grist mill on Fish Creek, in St. Joseph Township, Williams County.

Samuel Russell and his brother-in-law, John **Acus**, came to Brunersburg in the fall of 1830 and spent the winter there, and in the spring moved in pirogues up the creek to section 20 and settled on the west side. Peter **Knipe** was located somewhere in the township, but just where I have been unable to learn. Also, James **Guthrie**, who was elected the first clerk of said township was located somewhere near Doty's. Probably he soon removed to Springfield Township, Williams County.

Mill Builds Evansport

In the fall of 1831 seven families removed from the south part of the state, and set their tents about half way between **Doty's** and where Evansport now is, and commenced putting up cabins' and clearing up farms, which made a settlement able to protect itself. They were Jacob **Coy**, now living at Evansport, past 80, and his wife but recently deceased; John **Coy**, also verging upon 80, and John **Snider** a brother-in-law, both of which are near their first hunting grounds; Adam **Coy**, now deceased, and Mary **Coy**, a widow who afterwards; married Oliver **Conrad**, both now deceased; George **Hall**, Sr., now an octogenarian, and his brother Jacob Hall, now deceased.

Four out of the seven heads of families who landed there over 55 years ago are still alive, showing that hard work and poor fare does not shorten life. Jacob **Coy** was one of the first justices of the peace. John **Snider** was the first constable and treasurer. Both were faithful public officers. Coy and Snider built a grist mill at Evansport, which did much towards the settlement of that section and the township north, in Williams County.

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