

## Early History of Pioneer Pulaski County Families

By Mrs. Hicks

This is the first chapter of my writings of the pioneer days of the families that I can remember about and some of the things that has been told to me by my grandparents, Silas Messer Page and Charlotte Johnson Page, whose bodies are resting in the Big Piney Cemetery.

Grandpa was born in 1820 and passed away in 1905 and Grandma was 5 years older than he. She passed away about 1912. He was 85 and she was almost 95 when they went to be with Jesus.

Grandpa was a pioneer preacher and she was a wonderful house wife.

She carded wool off of sheep and cotton they raised. She wove cloth to make part of their clothing, blankets, and bedspreads. Some of the cloth she made was called lincy or lincie. I can't find it in the dictionary. It was a heavy cloth to make clothing. *[Emma was most likely referring to linsey woolsey, a coarse fabric made with linen and wool or cotton and wool.]* She did her own coloring and sewed by hand with a needle and thimble. She spun yarn and knit stockings, sock and gloves.

I can remember her big old wooden loom that set by the big old fireplace. She also wove what we called rag carpet. They had heavy cotton thread and used worn clothing torn

in strips and tacked together for what they called the filling.

Outside of this they washed by hand, milked cows, carried water from a spring. I could go on and on what she done. Then the women today think they have a lot of work to do.

Grandma always had time to cook for a big family and company. She went to church on Sunday. Grandpa preached wherever the settlers could get together in a home or in what they called a brush arbor.

I can remember them moving out the beds at Grandpa's home, a big hewed log house. They laid boards on chairs for seats. This was when I was 5 or 6 years old. I can remember my Grandma getting happy and praising the Lord also some of my aunts. I write as these things come to my mind.

I intended to tell about their move West first. I don't know why or what the circumstances were.

It was after the Civil War about 1857 when my grandparents and their family left near Mt. Vernon, Ill., in two covered wagons with an ox team to one, and a horse and mule to the other. I don't know how many came together. *[The date of 1857 must be a misprint, as that year was before the Civil War. Emma must*

*have intended the date to be 1867.]*

My Grandpa had two brothers, Uncle Jimmy and Uncle Hosea Page, that came, also the Sneed family in their covered wagons.

This was when they homesteaded land in this part of Missouri. I don't know how long they were traveling, for it was slow. My father was about 10 years old and he remembered them crossing the Mississippi River on a ferry boat.

My Grandpa homesteaded 80 acres of land about one and one-half miles north of Big Piney on a dry branch called McCortney and two good springs near where they built their house.

It was all timber of all kinds, and wild grass in the low grounds, over a man's head on a horse. They didn't have any trouble getting their meat for there were deer, wild turkeys, wild hogs, rabbit, squirrels, also wild pigeons. I have heard my father, Benjamin F. Page, tell how they would locate a pigeon roost, and after they would take a sack to put them in, also a torch to blind them with for there would be so many roosting on low limbs of small trees that the limbs were bent and they could rake them in a sack. *[Sounds like the over-hunting of the passenger pigeon.]*

They could go out anytime and kill deer or turkeys.

I don't know if they came in the fall or the spring, but I suppose it was in

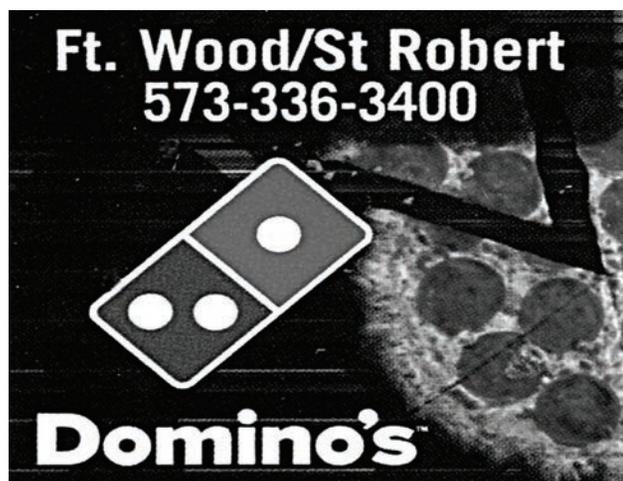
Emma Belle Page was born in 1886 in Pulaski County. She taught school at Hopewell, Big Piney, and Bloodland. She married her first husband, William O. Ichord, in 1906. After William died, she married C. C. Setser in 1924 and, upon his passing, she married John L. Hicks in 1954.

Emma wrote a church news column for the *Pulaski County Democrat*. On March 17, 1977, she published her first article about Pulaski County families and pioneer life. She was 91 years old when it was printed. Emma wrote over 300 articles spanning a period of six years. Emma Belle Page Hicks died on April 6, 1988 in Waynesville at the age of 102.

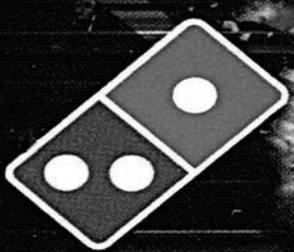
Emma and the *Pulaski County Democrat* are both gone now. We plan to publish more of her recollections and anecdotes in future issues of the *Gazette*.

warm weather.

They lived in their wagons until they could chop down small trees and get logs to build them a log house. Many of you older folks have seen log houses but many of you young folks haven't. *[Hill folk in southern Pulaski County were still building and living in log houses in 1940 when displaced by the construction of Fort Leonard Wood.]*



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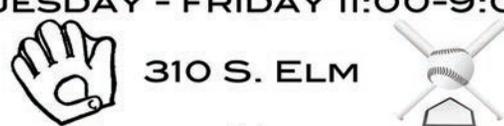
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There are some of these kind of buildings that have been kept as antiques. Anyway, this was the kind of houses, or many would call them log huts.

These men that came were strong and would help each other lift these logs to build their houses.

The logs were notched at the ends and fitted together at the corner.

If they had a floor in the houses, they were called puncheon floors. They would split a big log open and hew it smooth on the flat side with what they called a broad ax.

They they would fill in and fit them together.

The covering on the roof was what they called calkboards. They split these out of big blocks of wood cut from the log of a big smooth tree and put on and lapped in a way so that

the water couldn't run in.

The spaces between the logs were filled in with mud or a red clay that would harden and stop up the cracks. Where the cracks were large they would put in pieces of wood to hold the dobbing [*daub*] or clay.

The settlers or immigrants to this new settlement brought the tools they needed to work with. They cleared land and made rails to fence with. Their gardens and yards were fenced with what they called palings or pickets rived out of easy to split timber and sharpened at the top.

They set posts and would nail two rails one at the top and one at the bottom, and the pickets were nailed to them. I suppose these were made several years later. It took time to do all they had to do. And it took a lot of hard labor. They were a very

strong and healthy family.

They didn't have a doctor, but they knew different kinds of roots, bark and herbs that were good for different kinds of ailments.

They would drink sassafras tea made from the roots of the tree. They also made a tea from the limbs of a bush called spice wood. I remember this bush growing above their spring where they got their water. It was real good for it had a spicy taste. In

the early spring they gathered wild plants called sallet or greens. They didn't have a cellar but they would lay grass, leaves or straw and pile their potatoes, turnips, cabbage, and beets in piles, then cover them with clean straw then shovel dirt on top of this so deep they wouldn't freeze. They would pat this down smooth.

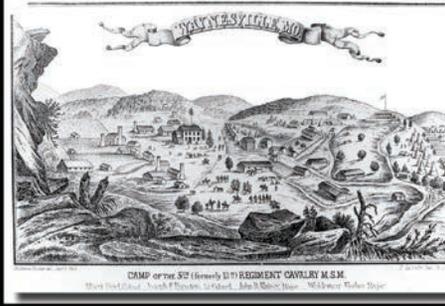
I hope you young folks will enjoy this and all will save each clipping.



An unidentified family outside of their hewn log house on land that became Fort Leonard Wood. Courtesy of The State Historical Society of Missouri.

## Records from Post Waynesville 1862-1865

Edited by  
John Bradbury  
and  
Terry Primas



This 84 page booklet (5.5 by 8.5 inches) provides the Civil War buff with the recorded activities at Post Waynesville. The records were transcribed by the authors from the original documents held in the collection of the National Archives at Washington, D.C. Available at

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—from the Introduction

...The documents represent military bureaucracy and soldierly concerns. Amidst the minutia are reports on cavalry weapons, skirmishing at the California House, scouts to Spring Creek, Big Piney and Texas County, and the doings of the Tilleys. Only two reports from these records appear in The War of the Rebellion: the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. The other documents from Post Waynesville are available here for the first time.



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