

They Elected Four What!

By Gary Knehans

From Civil War days, Pulaski County has been one of the most consistent of Missouri's counties to elect Democrat officeholders. Party affiliation in fact predates the war, during which most county residents harbored Southern Democrat sentiments and Confederate sympathies. When Union troops rolled into Waynesville in 1862, tore down the Confederate flag, and built a fort overlooking the community, the federal interlopers brought their Republican party beliefs with them. After the war, Union soldiers who settled here with their families formed the nucleus of growing Republicanism in Pulaski County.

Still, the party of Lincoln has enjoyed but few successes in electing candidates in Pulaski County. It is completely surprising then to learn that there was a year when not one or two, but actually four Republicans were voted into county office. That year was 1922.

The GOP winners were J. Arthur Shattuck of Wheeler for eastern district judge, Vasca Houk of Dixon for county clerk, Wood Carver of Crocker for circuit clerk, and Adrian Howard of Dixon for county collec-

tor. Shattuck beat William Prewett by 32 votes, Houk edged past Orville Laughlin by 54 votes, Carver defeated Thomas B. Rollins by 39 votes, and the 27-year-old Howard beat Sam W. Logan by 371 votes.

"For the first time, we believe, in history, Republicans have been elected to four of the most important offices in Pulaski County," wrote Arundall Goforth, editor of the *Dixon Pilot*, which was billed as the "only Republican newspaper" in the county.

"It was a big day for Republicanism in Pulaski County," he added. "While Democrats were being elected in so many other places to replace Republicans, the better class of Democrats in Pulaski County were helping elect Republicans in preference to their own party nominees.

"It is a hard and deserved slap at a brand of politics played up by Democrats in the county in recent years. With apologies, of course, to the *Pulaski County Democrat*, (which loves to call itself the "Official Organ"), the Republicans were elected because the ticket was made



DOWNTOWN WAYNESVILLE looking east toward the Waynesville hill. Courthouse out of view on the left. City Drug Store pictured on the right hand side. Postcard mailed Jan. 9, 1929. Courtesy of John F. Bradbury.

up of excellent men and afforded an opportune time to the better Democrats to teach the balance a lesson on account of the kind of political stunts they have been pulling off in this county. With many good Democrats, patience had ceased to be a virtue and they at last drew the line. They decided, as the votes show, that they would clean up Pulaski County Democracy by electing some good, clean Republi-

cans."

The Democrats of the county still had many successes, electing J. W. Armstrong to the post of state representative by a 504 vote margin. Armstrong replaced W. C. Christeson, Republican, of Dixon, who did not seek re-election. Other successful Democrats included G. W. Gan for presiding judge, Herbert Still for western district commissioner, and W. D. Johnson for

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Democrats elected without general election opposition were George W. Gan as presiding commissioner, Harry L. Mitchell as sheriff, Robert T. Hendricks as assessor, Vivian M. Christeson as treasurer, W. H. Jones as coroner, and Clyde H. Colley as probate judge.

There must have been some momentous event, or series of events, that caused such an upheaval in 1922. Further evidence of this is suggested by the fact that six Democrat officeholders whose terms expired that year did not seek re-election.

As a footnote, neither Vasca Houk nor W. D. Johnson served a full term in office. Houk died from what was thought to be stomach cancer on August 7th, 1923, after little more than seven months in the county clerk's office. He, his wife Gertrude Mae, and two daughters had only moved to Waynesville from Dixon a few weeks earlier. Gertrude Mae was appointed to serve out her husband's term in office, but lost a re-election bid in 1924 to Herbert Still.

Johnson died suddenly November 23rd, 1924. His appointed successor was a man he had defeated two years earlier, Roy W. Reed. But Reed got to serve only a few weeks, as he had been defeated by Democrat Tom A. Shockley a few weeks earlier in the general election. Shockley took office in January, 1925.

Memories Of The Good Ole' Days

By Gary Knehans

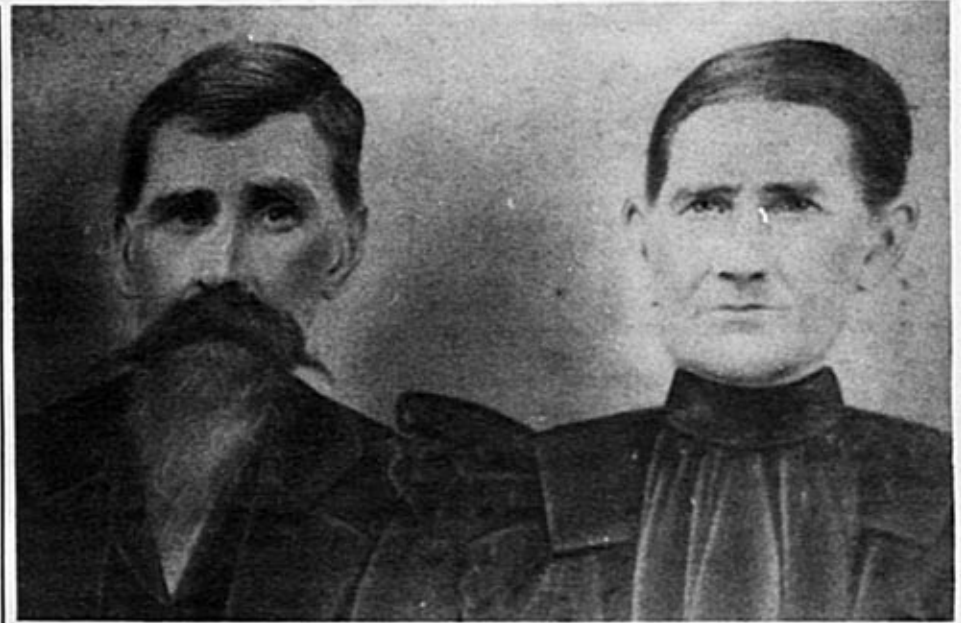
The next time you or someone in your family complains about the house being too cold in the winter, remember the bitter struggles of pioneer Pulaski County families who couldn't even imagine the creature comforts all of us enjoy today.

On her 97th birthday quite a few years ago, the late Maude Miller recalled the "good ole' days" when log cabins were so cold in the winter that ice froze on the table when it was washed after a meal.

According to Maude, it took all day to wash clothes. Water had to be carried all the way from a spring or creek and heated in a kettle. The elbow bending chore of scrubbing the clothes with lye soap on a scrub board just began the process. Each article was carefully handwashed, rinsed, handwring, and put out on a line to dry. The women also had to prepare three hearty meals a day for the men in the family, who were engaged in all day physical labor.

Maude recalled days when the Gasconade River was not spanned by bridges. The crossing was made by a cable-operated ferry boat.

Back in those days, well before modern refrigeration, families stored harvested food in a root cellar. Many of them had their own



WARREN AND LOUISA HARRIS. Parents of Maude Miller, who was Willis Carroll's aunt. Courtesy of Willis Carroll.

apple trees, selling their surplus crop at 50 cents a bushel. Some families even sold the harvested fruit by the train carload to be transported to large cities.

Men spent long, hard, sweat-drenched hours cutting and hauling cord wood and selling it at 25 cents a cord!

According to Maude, the biggest impact on Pulaski County's Ozark way of life came with the arrival of Fort Leonard Wood.

"The people swarmed the area looking for work," she explained. "I can't describe the change. It was big business to provide room and



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