

conducted the first ferry. This was called the lower ferry—Michael Delorac had the upper ferry. The lower ferry was managed by many proprietors; the upper had but one. Michael Delorac, representative ferryman for Hamilton and Rossville, received his last license in 1821.

As early as 1815, the people felt that the ferries were inadequate. Often the river was filled with ice, and high water made it dangerous to operate the ferry boats and flats. The "old covered bridge" between Hamilton and Rossville was the first to span the Miami and the second of any size in the state.

Bridge Constructed

The Miami Bridge Company was organized with a capital stock of \$30,000, sold in 50 shares. Nathan S. Hunt was awarded the contract for building the bridge which was to be finished in September of 1819. The contract price was \$17,000, but the actual cost came near \$25,000. Mr. Hunt died that fall, and his brother Ira, assisted by William Daniels, directed the work of completing the bridge.

Jonathan Beal was the first toll gatherer, receiving an annual salary of \$200. Stockholders made their first \$5 payments late in 1817. By the time \$40 was paid on each share, the tolls were taking care of all debts and expenditures, and dividends were declared in 1821. On payment of one dollar, a man or any member of his family riding horseback could cross for one year. In 1829, 600 "years-men passes" were sold—the total toll receipts were six times that amount.

The covered bridge withstood severe floods in 1832 and 1847, but passed out in the flood of 1866.

Artificial waterways were talked about in the early teens. In the 1820's, the canal fever took and spread. That part of the Miami Canal between Hamilton and Middletown, altogether within Butler County, was the first to be completed. The first water was let in from Enoch's millrace above Middletown on July 1, 1827. The first boat, named for Engineer Samuel Forrer, was built by Robert E. Campbell of Middletown. Boats started running regularly in March of 1828. Pierson Sayre was the first collector of tolls at Debbysville, a mile east of town.

It was at once evident that business was moving out to Debbysville. This was averted by building a Basin, an arm of water which brought canal service to the town's doorstep. Travel by packet became one of the most important factors in Hamilton's early growth.

Northwest Territory Opens

As has been stated, when the Northwest Territory was opened, people came swarming in, looking for home sites. Those who came first opened "houses of entertainment." There were taverns along the army trails before any were started near the Fort. When this was abandoned, William McClellan started a tavern in one of the Fort buildings and used the Fort stables. Other taverns followed, among the better known of which were the Torrence, Murray and Wingate taverns, the Hamilton or Blair and

Schmidtman houses in Hamilton; the Delorac and Beaver taverns and the Falconer, Miami and Butler houses in Rossville. Rates varied. A night's lodging could be secured for six and a fourth cents and a single meal for eighteen and three-fourths cents. At better taverns, twenty-five cents must be paid for a bed—one of many in the same room.

In January of 1800, Congress was petitioned to allow Dr. Abraham Freeman to have sufficient part of some reserved land to build a grist mill on Dick's Creek. From this it is learned that there were no mills anywhere in the area which later became Butler County. The Harris mill on Elk Creek and the one Elijah Mills erected on the river in what is now Madison Township are both said to have been erected in 1800. Before 1802, Solomon Line had a mill on the big loop of the river that was cut off by the flood of 1805. In 1913, this became the Bigham mill.

In 1803, the St. Clair and Smith mill was built on Four Mile. This undoubtedly would have become one of the most important mills in the county had it not been destroyed by the flood which, in 1805, marked the course of New River. The Enoch and Vail mills on the river near Middletown were erected prior to 1803, as was the Williams Mill at the mouth of Bank Lick. The Millville mill and the Samuel Dick mill on the river below the mouth of Indian Creek were erected in 1805, and had long years of useful service.

The Matthew Hueston mill on Four Mile was erected in 1809. A short distance down Four Mile, where the Eaton Road now crosses, Joseph Watson built his Fear Not mill in 1816. The David Dick mill at Reily started in 1810.

Joseph Watson at an earlier date than his Fear Not mill had erected one on the east bank of the river about a mile below the Fort. Another mill was built across the river, drawing water from that stored by the same mill dam. Both of these became the well-known Traber mills. Thus we see that important mills were started all over the county before there was one in the county seat. The John Caldwell mill, which later became the Hamilton mill, apparently was the first, but even it was north of the town limits.

Sometime during the teens of the nineteenth century, a dam was constructed across the Miami at or very near the present dam. Long races extended out from above the dam, on either side of the river, curved back and emptied into the river below. This was at first called the Caldwell mill day. Isaac Fisher seems to have been the first owner of the mill on the Rossville side. Under various owners or managers, both the Hamilton and Rossville mills continued in active operation throughout the century.

Hydraulic Power

The lack of water power for industrial concerns led to the conception of the most important project in the history of our two towns—the Hamilton and Rossville hydraulic. The bed of Old River provided an ideal place for the Grand Reservoir, from which the 21-foot fall of water through the system was

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estimated sufficient to furnish power for 166 pairs of millstones with the necessary machinery. Skilled engineers declared this to be the best hydraulic system west of the Alleghenies.

The Hydraulic Company received its charter early in 1841. This was a time of great financial insecurity—money was almost a minus quantity—but so great was the promoters' confidence in the ultimate success of the project, that they gave and labored and won out. John C. Skinner and John W. Erwin made the hydraulic surveys and Mr. Skinner was retained as supervising engineer. Many of the leading citizens supported the work, but credit for actual accomplishment belongs to John Woods and William Bebb, who gave and borrowed and arranged for supplies for the workmen. The grand opening of the hydraulic was late in 1844.

Turnpikes and Railroads

During the 1830's, the building of turnpikes was started all over the county, to enable the farmers to haul their crops to stations on the canal for shipment. The rapid industrial growth which followed the completion of the hydraulic called for even better shipping facilities—the railroad fever took.

Cincinnati had its first railroad, the Little Miami. Now Hamilton men wished railroad connection with Cincinnati, and Hamilton men headed the Hamilton and Cincinnati Railroad Company. Lewis D. Campbell was president and John Woods was consulting engineer, or superintendent, although he called himself "agent." Dayton had its railroad to the Lake. It was evident that the proposed road should be extended to Dayton. Little had been accomplished under the first organization. Under a reorganization, it became the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad Company. Stephen S. L'Hommedieu was president and William Bebb Secretary. In September of 1851 the grand opening celebration was held in Hamilton. John Woods continued as "advisory," and became president of the two branches.

1800, First Church

Hamilton's religious foundations were started when General Wayne had a Presbyterian chaplain for his army. The first church edifice in the county, in 1800, which was before there was a county, was the Baptist Church at Trenton. Reverend Stephen Gard was pastor.

Late in 1815, a committee was appointed to see to the erection of a brick church to be used jointly by the Presbyterians and Associate Reformed congregations of Hamilton. This was the Miami Union building, near the present Third and Court Streets. After a decade or more, the building was sold and each congregation built a new church.

The third church organization was that of the Methodists who, in 1820, built a chapel on Ludlow Street at the present location of their fifth edifice. The Old School Baptists built in Rossville in 1829. The Episcopalians were organized in 1822, but St. Matthews Church at Front and Basin Streets was not completed until 1837.

The First Catholic Church was started in 1832, at Second and Dayton Streets, but was not finished

until 1838. The colored people had a chapel in 1839. The Zion Lutherans dedicated their first church in 1846. In 1852, the Universalists built at High and Front Streets, the edifice which was but recently removed.

First School — 1810

The first schoolhouse in Butler County was erected at Bunker Hill in 1810. Early schools in Hamilton were in charge of private teachers. John Ritchie is the first for whom a definite date is found—1807. The ministers were also schoolteachers—Wallace, MacDill, Monfort, Baker, Thomas, Wade, McMechan, and others. The first school edifice was the Literary Society's "brick schoolhouse" at Third and Dayton, built in 1818. It was twenty years before one was erected under the public school system. This was on South Front Street—the building still stands as it was enlarged for the first High School.

Hamilton's first library was opened in 1816. The people were hungry for information and entertainment. They organized debating societies, medical, educational and temperance societies, lyceums, a Mechanic's Institute, Harmonica Club, Mozart Society, Thespians, with scientific, industrial, political and agricultural groups.

Dr. Squier Littell of Trenton was attending the sick from Dayton to Cincinnati in 1802. Dr. Daniel Millikin, Hamilton's first practitioner in physic and surgery, came in 1807. Others prominent in the profession were R. B. Millikin, William Greenlee, Loammi Rigdon, John Dunlavy, Cyrus Falconer, Jacob Hittel, William Huber, Joseph Howells and Henry Mallory. Dr. Falconer held the longest record. He performed a Caesarian section several years before anesthetics were introduced.

The first local newspaper was the Miami Intelligencer, started June 22, 1814; a four-page sheet issued weekly. James Cameron, John Woods, Lewis D. Campbell, Taylor Webster, William C. Howells, I. T. Walters and J. W. McBeth were the leading newspaper men of early Hamilton.

Bank Of Hamilton

The Bank of Hamilton was chartered in 1817 and opened the following year. John Reily was president and William Blair cashier. Its doors were closed in 1824, but business was resumed in 1835. John Woods was then president and C. K. Smith cashier. They continued on a sound basis until it seemed wise to make an assignment in 1842.

For many years Hamilton affairs were managed by county officers, the sheriff holding the highest office. The town was incorporated in 1810, but very little was accomplished and the charter was lost. In 1827, Hamilton and Rossville were jointly incorporated. Old jealousies made this prove to be an unwise arrangement—each town was given a separate charter in 1831. James McBride was made Hamilton's first mayor in 1833. The two towns were interdependent. Years were spent in talking about a union, but this was not accomplished until 1854, when Rossville became the First Ward of the City of Hamilton.

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