

BROOKVILLE'S ROUNDED CENTURY—JUNE, 1908.

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[A short sketch of "The Beginning of Brookville," by Amos W. Butler, was published in this magazine, December, 1905 (Vol. I, p. 209). In the same number there is an article, "Recollections of Early Brookville," by John M. Johnson (p. 195), an article on "The Whitewater Valley" (pp. 204-208), and on "The Richmond and Brookville Canal" (pp. 189-194).]

FAMOUS old Brookville, in the forks of the Whitewater river, in Indiana, is now celebrating its centennial. It will not be many years until a number of other old towns in the Hoosier State will be entitled to the same privilege; but as for Brookville, it has been slumbering for some years upon its rights, it would seem. One hundred and four years ago, we are told, Michael Pilky and Charles Zelier, who seem to have been Frenchmen, had been residing for some time upon the banks of the East Fork, somewhere near the confluence of the two streams; and Amos Butler, a young and enterprising Pennsylvanian, was on the spot, planning the erection of a mill and selecting sites for homes for his family and friends. A year later, in 1805, Butler's mill arose, and the company of immigrants who came with the proprietor on packhorses formed a considerable village.

It was in 1808, however, that the town was regularly surveyed, a blockhouse was built for its protection, and the settlement received the name of Brooksville—which name was subsequently modified by the dropping of the sibilant letter. A tavern was erected for the entertainment of sojourners, and various shops were opened for a variety of industries.

The age of Brookville, however, is by no means its chief distinction. Nor can it boast of having ever had a large population. Probably its inhabitants have never numbered more than its three thousand souls of to-day. Brookville's fame rests upon the astonishing number of distinguished men who have gone forth from the town, through the successive decades, to win laurels in various fields of endeavor. When visitors to the town have seen there the former residences of six famous Governors, they have uttered expressions of surprise. But, really, this showing is a

matter of little moment to the genuine Brookviller, for there are so many others—so many, when you come to think of them all—who are no less worthy of remembrance.

Without any great names to its credit, Brookville would still be famous for the singularity and beauty bestowed upon it by the hand of nature. On either side the clear rivers flow, and at the south end of the town they unite in a broad stream. Round about are piled high hills, which display an ever-present panorama of the changing seasons, as if painted on the sky. To the north is Butler's Hill, and between the ridges Butler's run hurries down "to join the brimming river."

In 1810 the village had become so populous and so secure that the blockhouse was not deemed necessary for defense, and it was enlarged and turned into a store and a hotel, becoming noted far and wide as the "Yellow Tavern." But in the War of 1812 the town was kept in a constant state of alarm, for it was threatened by hostile Indians. Saylor's Fort was erected about three miles below, to which the people might retreat if the worst should come to the worst. Meanwhile, it was a common thing for the houses to be provided with loopholes for use in sudden emergencies.

A reminder of that period is the Little Cedar Grove Church, which the Baptists dedicated in 1812, three miles to the southeast of the town, on the Harrison pike, and which, though now unused, looks much as it did in generations gone. It is built of hard bricks, of large size. It has a commodious gallery, supported by massive hewn pillars; and in the center of the church is a stone hearth, upon which charcoal was burned in cold weather—for stoves were not common in the West in that early day.

It is a legend of Brookville that the building of this church was a result of the "warning" given by the great earthquake of the previous year, 1811, which was felt very generally throughout the Mississippi valley, and which the preachers of that day utilized to great advantage in terrifying sinners. The first complete minutes of the "Little Cedar Grove Church Book" date from October 5, 1806; and the record, which is still preserved, comes down unbroken to April 3, 1830. In 1820 was built the old brick

church which stands in the cemetery near the old Brookville College, which is now the public school building of the town.

Immediately following the admission of the State, Brookville achieved high rank among the manufacturing centers of the new West. Grist mills, a sawmill, a fulling mill, a tannery, a ropewalk, a carding mill, a hat factory, a pottery factory, and shops of tailors, blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, saddlers and harnessmakers, weavers and wagonmakers were humming with industry. There were numerous stores, and a bank of wide circulation. The Whitewater was navigated in favorable seasons by boats of light draft, and cargoes of products were shipped direct to New Orleans.

In 1833 the cotton factory of Brookville turned 1,600 spindles and a dozen power looms. The lumber, flour, wagons, plows and other agricultural implements, rope, cotton and woolen cloths, paper, leather, hats, etc., manufactured in the town were widely famed and brought to the place a lively trade. The inhabitants began to build fine, large mansions. Stone pavements were laid. Cool, clear water was brought down from Butler's run and distributed through the town in wooden pipes.

The once famous canal, with its costly locks and viaducts, was opened on the 8th of June, 1839, when the "Ben Franklin" came from Cincinnati with its first boatload of passengers. The canal did service as a freight line until the close of the Civil War, after which its towpath was used for the construction of the present railway line.

But it was of the famous men of Brookville that I started to write. Let us, in imagination, visit the town in, say, the year 1820. Here is the land office, in charge of Robert Hanna, the childhood companion and lifelong friend of Thomas Jefferson, now in retirement at Monticello. Here is a store kept by Samson Powers, who lives with his widowed mother. Her other son is a clerk in Cincinnati, Hiram Powers, who is to become a famous sculptor. Here is the Eads store. William H. Eads is the proprietor. He is a member of the State Senate. His brother Tom is with him. Tom's son is the James B. Eads who is to build the great St. Louis bridge over the Mississippi, and to construct the greatest system of jetties that the world has ever

seen. There is another boy, about six years old. They call him "Abe." This is Abram S. Hammond, destined to be Governor of Indiana in the critical period immediately preceding the great war.

We shall find here a tavern kept by Andrew Wallace. Two of his sons, David and Thomas, are not at home. The former is at West Point, where he is to be graduated later with honor. He will yet be Lieutenant-Governor, then Governor, of his State. Later, as a member of Congress, he will secure, against fierce opposition, the appropriation of money by Congress to test the experiment of Morse—the magnetic telegraph—and thus give the world the great boon of that wonderful invention. Thomas Wallace, the other son, now at Annapolis, is to win laurels in the navy.

There is another boy also, young Oliver H. Glisson, who is to achieve celebrity as rear admiral of the United States navy.

Here is the blacksmith shop of the unkempt and careless Herndon, whose son, W. L. Herndon, is to be one of the world's heroes. Young Herndon will perform valiant service in the Mexican War, and will manage the great, proud Naval Academy, and, as a naval officer, will explore the Amazon region. Later, as commander of that ill-starred vessel, the "Central America," with its five hundred passengers, and its two million dollars in gold, he will sail from old "Aspinwall" (now the city of Colon, in the Canal Zone), on the 3d of September, 1857. In the awful ocean storm of the 12th he will refuse to desert his ship, but will put all the passengers and crew into the lifeboats, and, standing on the wheelhouse, glass in hand, a heroic figure marked against the sky, will take the awful plunge with the ship which he has commanded. A daughter of Herndon became the wife of President Chester A. Arthur.

On the hill is the house of James Noble, a forceful member of the United States Senate. Noah Noble, now sheriff of the county, is to be Governor of Indiana for two terms. Near him lives James B. Ray, who is to be Governor of the State for seven years—to serve as acting Governor, and to be twice elected for three-year terms. A noteworthy residence is the home of John Test, who has resided here since 1812, and who is to become a

noted Congressman. Jesse L. Thomas, a former resident of Brookville, now represents the State of Illinois in the United States Senate, where, in this very year—1820—he is to originate and carry through to enactment the Missouri Compromise restriction of slavery, so long mistakenly attributed to Henry Clay—a law which largely determined the ultimate overthrow of slavery in the Union.

Succeeding decades after 1820 did not show a retrogression of the town in respect of its citizens, though its industrial and commercial importance sadly declined. People of Brookville will point out to you the birthplace of General Lew Wallace, Governor of New Mexico, minister to Turkey and author of "Ben-Hur" and "The Prince of India." They will show you the old home of John P. St. John, the historic Prohibition Governor of Kansas and candidate for the Presidency. They will point out the birthplace of Maurice Thompson, the poet and naturalist, of whom the State is so proud. They will tell you of the boyhood home of Edward Eggleston, author of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," who created a new school of authorship in English literature. They will show you the old Tyner homestead, recalling memories of Postmaster-General Tyner, of Grant's administration. They will tell you of the boyhood of General James S. Clarkson, surveyor of the port of New York, and long prominent in the leadership of the Republican party. They will point out to you the home of Dr. John R. Goodwin, once Comptroller at Washington. Amos Butler, scientist and sociologist, president of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, is another of the one-time citizens of Brookville.

The Brookville of to-day does not seem nearly so old as seemed the Brookville of a quarter-century ago. Old towns grow younger in dress and in spirit as the generations pass and the antiquated is replaced by the modern. Relic after relic disappears from the landscape.

Near the East Fork is preserved the old Speer mansion, known as "The Hermitage." This is now the home of the artist, J. Ottis Adams, who took the first prize this year in the exhibit of the Western Artists' Association at Chicago, and who received the gold medal at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904 for his painting

portraying a bit of the east bank of the Whitewater facing the mansion. T. C. Steele is likewise associated with the place, having made it one of his chief resorts for years.

These artists, already long famous, are growing in reputation with each passing year. About them are wont to gather, in the summer season, the artists and art-lovers of a wide circle. Forsyth and Meakin, painters; Barnhorn, the sculptor, and Nakagawa, the Japanese water-colorist, are among the best known of these, whose works as well as their visits testify to the beauty of Brookville's scenery.