

Makers of Bartholomew County

By GEORGE PENCE, Columbus

A paper read March 18, 1921, at the celebration of the centennial of the organization of Bartholomew County.

We are told in the book of Genesis, "There were giants on the earth in those days." The life of John Tipton, like that of General Bartholomew and other history-makers of Indiana, is a chapter of itself. My account must be brief.

John Tipton was born on April 14, 1786, in Sevier County, Tennessee, then rejoicing in the name of "the State of Franklin." His father, Joshua Tipton, was shot to death by a marauding band of Cherokees in 1793. His mother, Jeanette Shields Tipton, was of the same line as the Shields and Blishes of Seymour.

In the year 1807 the widowed mother, with two daughters and the son, removed north to Indiana Territory and settled at Brinley's ferry on the Ohio, in Harrison County. Here John Tipton took upon himself the care of the family, repairing guns, splitting rails, working as a farm hand, until he was able to purchase fifty acres of Harrison County land.

Tipton developed a thrift that later gave him wealth and fame. With that element he became the owner or part owner of the original county seat towns of Columbus, Huntington and Logansport. He was Indian Agent at Fort Wayne and at Logansport.

In 1831 he was elected United States Senator to fill the unexpired term caused by the death of James Noble and in the next year, on the 19th ballot was elected for the full term. His services in the Senate as chairman of Indian Affairs were of incalculable value.

Tipton, who was a member and ensign of Spier Spencer's "Yellow Jackets," was engaged in the Harrison campaign on

the Tippecanoe. In the battle of November 7, 1811, in which his company took an active part, every one of its commissioned officers was killed in the fight. Harrison made Tipton a Captain on the field of battle. He died at Logansport on February 4, 1839. At the time of my story he was one of the three members from Harrison County in the lower house of the General Assembly of Indiana.

Joseph Bartholomew was born in the State of New Jersey, March 15, 1766. At the age of five years his widowed mother removed to Laurel Hill, Pennsylvania. Here he lived a life of frontier adventure, and at eighteen was noted as an Indian fighter in the settlers' defense against the marauding bands of Indians.

Bartholomew married in 1788 and removed to Kentucky, settling four miles from the village of Louisville. In August, 1795, he was present at the Wayne treaty at Greenville, Ohio. He received but little schooling, but became self-taught. In 1798 he removed across the Ohio River into Indiana, before the organization of the territory, and settled in Clark County, where his wife died in 1809. His second marriage was in 1811 with a Miss McNaught.

In Indiana Territory he became a leader of men and became prominent, particularly in militia affairs. He became the trusted and intimate friend of Governor William Henry Harrison, and in the Tippecanoe campaign, as a lieutenant-colonel, was placed in command of part of the militia, and was officer of the day on November 7, 1811, when the Indians attacked Harrison's forces at Tippecanoe. In this engagement he received a severe wound in the left wrist, which maimed his arm for life.

He was an ardent Whig and in the presidential campaign of 1840, he took an active part traversing the states of Indiana and Illinois, whither he had removed, on horseback in behalf of his former commander. At the greatest of political meetings ever held in Indiana—at the Tippecanoe Battle Ground in 1840—he presided, as he also did at a similar one at Springfield, Illinois.

As one of the bondsmen he had to make good for a defaulting agent of the United States Land Office at Jeffersonville, the surgeon who had dressed his wound at Tippecanoe,

and was thus compelled to sell his Clark County possessions. In 1831 he removed to the Sangamon country in Illinois. The exposure of the 1840 campaign on horseback brought on the illness which was the immediate cause of his death, which occurred on November 4, 1840, the day before the presidential election of that year. His grave is at Clarkstown, Illinois—a town laid out by him and named for his old-time friend, Marston G. Clark. At the time of my story, as has been mentioned, he was a member of the Senate from the County of Clark and parts of Scott and Floyd counties. From him Bartholomew County received her name.

There has been but one change in her boundary as originally ordained. In 1836, when the county of Brown was erected, a strip of three miles was taken from the west side. In 1845 there was a petition before the General Assembly for the formation of a new county out of parts of the counties of Decatur, Jennings and Bartholomew, to be called Hart County, for Gideon Blackburn Hart, a prominent citizen of this county, for whom the town of Hartsville was named by its proprietors—but “for want of time,” as the *House Journal* reads, the matter was postponed and the proposed county never had any further action.

Mention has been made of the writ issued for an election for February 13, 1821. From the word we have there was a full vote, as this was the first opportunity that the settler had of seeing and meeting all of his new neighbors. William Graham, the Jackson County member and Speaker of the House, was there looking after his fences as a coming candidate for the Senate from the senatorial district of Jackson, Scott and Bartholomew counties. Judge William S. Jones has told us that Graham told him, on that day, that he did not know what the people would have done if the county had not been organized; that Graham had no idea that there were so many people in the county. He also averred that he had worked hard to secure the passage of the act. The election was held to choose two associate judges, a clerk and recorder (both offices held by the same person), and three county commissioners. I found the certificate, in the Secretary of State's office, of Joseph McKinney, Sheriff, under date of February 14, 1821, the day following the election. It reads:

THE STATE OF INDIANA,
BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY.

I, Joseph McKinney, certify that agreeable to the returns of an election holden in said county for the purpose of electing two Associate Judges and one Clerk and Recorder, that John Pence and Ephraim Arnold are duly elected Associate Judges and that Edward Ballenger was duly elected Clerk and Recorder of said county.

Given under my hand and seal this 14th day of February, 1821.

[Seal]

JOSEPH MCKINNEY, Sheriff.

This certificate had been sent to the Secretary of State that commissions might be issued. The commissioners were not commissioned by the governor, but received certificates of their election from the county sheriff. The commissioners elected were William Ruddick, Jesse Ruddick and Solomon Stout; Daniel Ziegler was elected coroner.

In the archives of the county auditor's office is a thin, diminutive home-made book, now aged and time stained, in which are contained the minutes of the organization and of other early sessions of the board of commissioners of Bartholomew County. The book is in the careful handwriting of the newly elected clerk and recorder, Edward Ballenger. Many years ago I made a search of the first commissioners' record of Jackson County. I found the names of a number of the Bartholomew pioneers who had lived in and performed some kind of public function in that county before their emigration northward to Bartholomew County. Edward Ballenger was one of them. In 1817 he was a grand juror, in 1818 was a guard of the county jail, and a road viewer in 1819.

On the paper cover of this first record of the board of commissioners of Bartholomew County are a number of scribblings in Ballenger's handwriting. Possibly he was testing the nibs of a new goose quill pen. Amongst the scribblings are the names of Giles Mitchell, Wm. Logan, James Delaney, Divinish Taylor, and Captain James Bunch. Giles Mitchell, with Charles DePauw, built the first court house. Mitchell later removed to Morgan County, where he built the first court house at Martinsville and became the founder of the noted Mitchell family of that town. Charles DePauw was the second representative in the legislature from Bartholomew County.

He was also a general of militia. William Logan was one of the early appointed treasurers of the county, and James Bunch had but recently been elected captain of one of the companies of Bartholomew militia.

There is also scribbled the following: "Edward Ballenger was born August 10, 1789; present date Aug. 11, 1822, thirty-three years." Another: "Nancy Ballenger born March 17, 1794; present date Aug. 11, 1822, twenty-eight years and five months." In the militia commissions I found that Ballenger was commissioned major of the 36th regiment, the Bartholomew County regiment, on August 31, three weeks after the scribbled date.

And as a proof of the uncertainty of life, even in those days, I found the returned commission of Joseph McKinney as sheriff bearing date of September 23, 1822. Within this short period, August 11 to September 23, Edward Ballenger had died and McKinney had resigned the office of sheriff to become a candidate for clerk and recorder in place of Ballenger. McKinney was elected and Gideon Blackburn Hart, a young collegiate, 23 years of age, from Marysville, Tennessee, was appointed sheriff to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Joseph McKinney. Later Hart, although a democrat, was elected school commissioner, which office he held for nineteen years.

Joseph McKinney was elected clerk and recorder *vice* Edward Ballenger, and I found the unique document in the secretary of state's office certifying his own election to that office, under date of October 22, 1822. There were four McKinney brothers—Joseph, John, Lambkin and Alfred. Joseph was clerk and recorder for fourteen years, and later was strong enough to have his brother-in-law, Isaac Smith Boardman, elected as clerk. Boardman captained the first company raised here for the Mexican war. McKinney removed to Greensburg and later to the far west, in Oregon, where he was drowned in a swollen stream.

Section 3 of the Bartholomew County enabling act named the commissioners to select and fix the county seat of the new county. These were Ebenezer E. Morgan, of Crawford; James Hamilton, of Jackson; William P. Thomasson, of Har-

rison; Robert Robertson, of Clark, and John E. Clark, of Washington County. One of these gentlemen, fifty-three years later, was here as a guest of the county upon the dedication of the courthouse in 1874. My recollection is that it was Mr. Thomasson, of Harrison. The house of John Parker, up in the Hawpatch, was named as the place where they were to meet on the second Monday in February—"and then to proceed immediately to discharge the duties according to law."

There is an old Latin saying: *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*—which means, "Of the dead nothing except good,"—or translated freely, "Never speak ill of the dead." But let an old tradition of the Bartholomew courthouse be mentioned. It is this: When the present courthouse was completed in 1873, and the old courthouse was to be dismantled, the board of commissioners rather than provide shelving for the accumulated documents and old papers in the auditor's office and other county offices, ordered a carload of them to be sold as junk. I have spent many hours in search of the record of the order of the sale. I did not find it—nor did I find any record of any proceeds of such sale.

The diminutive record book, which I have mentioned, shows that the board of commissioners met at the house of Luke Bonesteel on Thursday, the 15th of February, 1821. Present were William Ruddick, Jesse Ruddick and Solomon Stout, who each presented the sheriff's certificate of his election. Edward Ballenger was appointed clerk of the board. The next in order was the acceptance of the report of the commissioners to select a county seat, which report was ordered to be recorded. The record fails to show the report—not even a "here insert."

Local historians have written up these early meetings so often that I shall not now mention them again. Enough to relate that allowances were made to the county seat commissioners and the foreign sheriff. Elections were ordered in the three election districts for justices of the peace, and constables and school land superintendents were appointed.

Eleven days later, on February 26, at the second meeting, John Lindsay was appointed agent for the town of Tiptona. This is the first mention of the name of the new county seat,

but tradition hath it that it was suggested by the county seat commissioners in honor of John Tipton. John Lindsay was our first member of the legislature.

The record shows that Luke Bonesteel was appointed county treasurer (county treasurers were not made elective until the year 1843), and Joseph Pownall was selected to list all taxable property within the county and make return of same on the second Monday in May. Pownall was also selected as superintendent of the school section 16 in Township 9, Range 5. Besides these duties, we find in the office of the Circuit Court that he solemnized four marriages in 1821. The certificates are signed "P. G."—preacher of the Gospel—but we have not learned under what denomination he was licensed to preach. Bartholomew County had no "marrying squire" in 1821, and the record shows that there were no justices of the peace qualified until after June 13, 1821.

I found a letter dated June 13, 1821, from Edward Ballenger asking the secretary of state to send commissions for Ebenezer Ward, William Carter, James Van Zant, Joseph Robertson, Benjamin Crow and John S. McEwen, who had been elected justices on March 31; the secretary of state had been notified, but commissions had not been received, and as Ballenger writes, "We are standing very much in need of a justice of the peace." The clerk's marriage returns show but twenty-one marriages solemnized during the year 1821, but in August Squires Carter and McEwen show up with one apiece.

Ballenger's letter to the secretary of state on June 13 was sent at the hands of a Mr. Butler. There were no United States mail facilities. I have seen two Columbus written letters to the secretary. One of them was post-marked Brownstown and the second Salem. Doctor Hiram Smith, a Kentuckian, was the first physician to practice medicine in Columbus and became the first postmaster. He was the first Master of St. John's Lodge No. 20, F. and A. M., which was chartered in 1822.

At the session of February 26, John Lindsay was ordered to have the town of Tiptona surveyed and laid off into lots 60 by 120 feet. There were to be four main streets and 12-foot

alleys. May 1 was fixed for the lot sale. The center of the public square was to be fixed at the half mile stake of fractional sections 24 and 25.

John Lindsay was given the ferry right across Driftwood and ferry rates fixed by the board, according to law made and provided. From a letter I recently read in the Tipton collection at the State Library, it would appear that the ferry was owned by Tipton. John Lindsay was a relative of Tipton by marriage and had built a house on the break of the slope on the west end of Walnut street—now Fourth street—just west of the Pennsylvania main line. The letter was from Calvin Fletcher, Tipton's retained attorney, at Indianapolis.

The board then adjourned until the next day at 9 o'clock.

March 20, 1821. The commissioners' record starts off like a prohibition meeting, or a double-barreled pop-gun:

Ordered that the former order made herein for the laying off of Tiptona be rescinded.

Ordered that the name of the town of Tiptona be altered and hereafter known by the name of Columbus.

The two drastic orders, unquestionably were made for cause. What the cause was I cannot tell you—there is no record. Whether the new name was in honor of the great navigator, or for the village of that name over in the state of Ohio, I do not know. Anyway John Tipton had been honored for 22 days—from the 26th of February to March 20.

From my boy days I have ever held the idea that Tipton had made a donation of land to the county for county seat purposes, and for this donation the town was named in his honor. I knew that on the earliest map and in several early deeds, the north line of the original town was known as the "Donation line"—the south line of the St. Denis Hotel and north line of the Wolf property on Washington Street. In this way I have always thought that he was treated unkindly, if not unfairly, in altering the name to Columbus. And even when 60 years later the name of Tipton Street was changed to a numbered street, Third Street, I felt it was unfair. And Tipton Knoll! Who ever heard of the beautiful elevation at the west end of the Third Street *cul de sac* being called Tipton Knoll? Yet all these names are of record.

My later investigation, however, resulted in failure to find any donation made by him to the county—or the one that was understood to be made to the Methodist Church “for the purpose of promoting religious worship and in consideration of one dollar,” according to the gift he was supposed to make of the lot now occupied by Marshall, Baker, Meyer and Rost for purpose of erecting a Methodist meeting house. This I found in a letter from the late William Herod to Tipton asking him for the agreed deed. Tipton replied that “Such calls had been so frequent that he felt that he should not then be required to make the deed, but would think about it—besides he had other plans for a disposition of the premises.” The County Recorder’s office shows that the good Methodists did receive a deed from Tipton for a half interest, consideration \$25.00. Some years after, they obtained a deed for the other moiety from Joseph McKinney, for \$100.

The County Recorder’s office also discloses a deed from John Tipton for thirty acres of land commencing at the half-mile stake of fractional sections 24 and 25 then west 50 poles to the knoll—then north 48 poles, then east far enough to make thirty acres. The deed was made at Columbus, April 19, 1822, signed by John Tipton, the grantee being John Farquar, county agent; witnesses, Jonathan Jennings, who was governor at this date, and Luke Bonesteel, acknowledged before Ebenezer Ward, J. P. Consideration, \$2,000. The thirty acres had cost Tipton but \$37.50, a few months before. The tract conveyed is situated north of the middle of the Court House square, north to the St. Denis Hotel. Luke Bonesteel about the same time deeds thirty acres adjoining on the south, consideration \$2,000. This extends below “Old Smoky Row” and both tracts extend east to the Big Four Railroad yards.

The late Doctor John C. Beck of Cincinnati—he was an 1825 native of Columbus—has related to me the story of the change of name. That Tipton being an intense Democrat and the political influence of the county being Whiggish, that there was thus a partisan feeling in the matter. [This is a sample of English that was used here in 1828.]. That it was remarked by his foes that “Tipton is getting along a little too damned fast.” He also mentioned that Tipton in his trips

was accompanied by a young negro body servant who was called Bill Tipton. The Whigs, in ridicule, kept insisting to Tipton's Democratic friends that the county seat had been named for Bill Tipton and not for their friend John. Doctor Beck also related that it was currently reported that it was Tipton's intention to remove to the new county seat.

At this meeting the town of Columbus was ordered to be surveyed and subdivided into lots 75 by 150 feet, with eight lots to the block, and their sale to be made on June 15. In the new survey the center of the public square got shifted to the west 150 feet; of this there is no mention in the record.

Maybe if we had some of that carload of junked documents we might learn how the lots were to be sold in June, 1821, when we did not have a deed for the lands until April 19, 1822, nearly a year later. But *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*.

Joseph Pownall was able to report on May 14, showing:

355 Male inhabitants with 50-cent poll.....	\$177.50
440 Horses at 37½.....	165.00
4 Stallions	11.00
45 Work oxen at 25.....	11.25
33 Silver watches at 25.....	8.25
1 Gold watch.....	.50
3 Four-wheeled carriages at \$1.25.....	3.75
Lindsey's ferry.....	5.00
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Total taxes for the year.....	\$382.25

It must be remembered that under the compact made with the United States congress at the Corydon convention all United States lands sold within the state should not be taxed until five years after date of sale.

The total tax of \$382.25 recalls the prophet, Zachariah, who said, "For who hath despised the day of small things." The taxes on the Bartholomew County duplicates for 1921 are \$884,550.24.

The Board of Commissioners then took up the important matter of establishing and the laying out of public roads. The legislature of 1820 had provided for a number of permanent roads. Later, these main arteries were termed state roads. One of the 1820 permanent roads was a road 70 feet wide from Madison, by way of Vernon, to the proposed

permanent seat of government of the state. This was prior to the selection of the site at Indianapolis. The survey of this road had been made and we know from the records that the line ran through Flatrock and German townships, striking section 3 in township 10, range 5, near Edinburg. It was opened only in Jefferson County.

At this May session a number of petitions for roads were filed. Viewers were appointed and in course of law the roads were established. Two of these intersected the road from Madison to the state capital. The first from the northwest corner of the public square, north on Jackson Street, then the main street of Columbus, became in time the Edinburg Road. A second road, north on Washington Street, is now known as the Hawpatch Road. Another road south on the Bartholomew trail, east of Driftwood, is the Azalia Road. Another, west of Driftwood, is now called the Rockford Road; and still another, east from Columbus across Hawcreek, near the present bridge, by way of Weber Smith's old homestead and the Beam farm, east to the Decatur County line, was known as the Brookville Road.

In 1823 there were fourteen state roads established from different parts of the state to Indianapolis, or, as Joseph McKinney wrote it in one place, "Indiana Police" and in another, "Indiana Polis." As McKinney's records show that he "spelled by ear," we can judge how the name of the state capital was pronounced in its infant days.

Two of these roads passed through Bartholomew County; the Madison and Indianapolis State road by way of Vernon and Columbus, and the Mauk's Ferry State road from the Ohio River by way of Corydon, Salem and Brownstown to Indianapolis. John Tipton was surveyor of the latter and missed the town that was once named for him two miles to the west, on the old Indian trail from the lower rapids at Rockford to the upper rapids at Lowell. I have wondered whether John would not have shifted the line so as to strike Tiptona, the county seat, if it had retained its earlier name.

The survey of the Madison State road, as depicted on the map in the state land office, shows and describes the line as striking the southeast corner of the court house square, thence

northwest through it to Jackson Street, thence to the north line of the town, thence veering east to the half-mile line now on North Washington Street, and crossing Flatrock at Highfill ford. The north end of Columbus was then at the south line of Hege and Company's property on Jackson Street.

The county, east of Driftwood, was filling fast in the early twenties and the records of the land offices of Jeffersonville and Brookville show entries galore. Sandcreek township, particularly, was being settled rapidly. The Newsoms, five of them, Daniel, Willis, Joel, David and John, all of them North Carolina Quakers, moved over in Bartholomew from Orange and Washington counties.

I recall that there were fifty-three Newsoms on the Sandcreek tax duplicate in 1895 when I was county auditor. With them came the Coxes, the Parkers, the Halls and others, all of them Quakers, and good at everything on earth—except voting the Democratic ticket.

The Friends in Sandcreek organized their church in 1824, the same year that the Presbyterians organized in Columbus, but a year after the good Methodists purchased the lot on the southeast corner of Washington and Fifth Street, then called Harrison Street, in 1823. The Baptists had also organized in the Boaz settlement, six miles north of town on Flatrock. One of their preachers, Mignon Boaz, attended school under my great grandfather, after he was a grown man, over on Sand Hill. He had but one textbook, his Holy Bible.

Joseph Fawsett, who entered land in German Township in 1821, was a Baptist preacher. He came here from Jefferson County. He was, possibly, the earliest school teacher here of whom I have an account. Later, he became connected with the followers of that holy man, Alexander Campbell, and became a preacher, and founded, as I understand, the Christian Church at New Hope. When I was a youngster I recall seeing Alexander Campbell, who was visiting the churches on a farewell tour.

A few years later—late in the twenties—there was an immigration and settlement of a fine lot of people from North Carolina and Pennsylvania, who organized the Moravian Church at Hope—which town was then called Goshen. The

Reverend Martin Hauser was their first minister and leader. Truly, Bartholomew has ever been under the good influences of God and morality.

I regret that I do not have time to make mention of the improvements of the new county, its stray pen, its courthouse, and the buckeye jail which had to have the sprouts pruned for two years after it was built, the sale of lots and some of the owners, the flat boating, the musters of the militia, the early merchants, taverns and the first circuit court, *et al.* Nor can I tell of the families of Glantons, the McEwens, the Rudicks, the Irwins (Benjamin Irwin, a Whig, was sent to the legislature for four terms), the Hubbards, the Washburns, three families of Jones, two of Carters, two of Thompsons, the Hagers, the Records, the Harts, the Sloans, and scores of others who were all prominent in making Bartholomew County history. But there is to be another centennial in the year 2020.

All of this gives me the same sort of home pride that the apostle had, as recorded in Acts 21, verse 39: "But Paul said I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city." But here I shall borrow from Mark Twain in his last paragraph of *Tom Sawyer*, a book I read some 47 years ago, commencing on Saturday evening after supper and finishing it at half past three on Sunday morning. It reads thus:

So endeth the chronicle. It being strictly a history of a boy, it must stop here; the story could not go much further without becoming the history of a man. When one writes a novel about grown people, he knows exactly where to stop—that is a marriage, but when he writes of juveniles, he must stop when he best can.