

SHELBY IN EARLY TIMES

(By W. C. Clark.)

It seems that only a few years have passed since I came to the little city of Shelby, yet when I begin to count the years from 1866, I find that over 61 years have gone by. Shelby then had about 750 population. Not a church in it then, but some 4 or 5 saloons were doing good business. Church services were then held in halls and the school house, and often in waiting room at the old station.

At election time it was a common thing to see drunken men and street fights. One or two were killed in the early days. Dr. Gerard often would read the Church of England service in a room over the place now occupied by Smith & Bowling. The building was burned down years ago. The first church building was built by the Baptists and Methodists, jointly, at the corner of Walnut and 1st street, east. Each occupied it alternately, every other Sabbath for years. Then they concluded each was strong enough to have a new one, and the old one was sold. The Methodists were the highest bidder and they put up a new one on old stand. There is not a business house now in the city that was here when I came, and only five of us now are living who were here then. They are, S. G. Parsons, Chas. Miller and wife and Mrs. W. A. Reid. The beautiful prairies often in the fall of the year, were covered with prairie grass and often were set on fire. It made a great fire. Thousands of prairie

chickens would fly in and around the city; wild turkeys were plentiful; land was cheap and so were cattle and hogs. Fine hogs were sold as low as 2 1/2 a pound; butter 10c; eggs 5c a dozen; wages about \$1.00 per day; corn was cultivated with single or double shovel plows; much wheat was cut by the cradle. The threshing was done by horses walking around a tumbling rod. I sold the first steam power that ever turned a wheel, or a thresher in Shelby county, to one Wm. Powell, now dead. It was a little portable 6h. p. engine, yet did the work better than the horses did. I also sold the first twine binder that ever tied a bundle of wheat here. Jack Parsons brought a wire binder from Marion county about that time, but people did not like the wire.

Shelby has raised two boys that has made their mark in the world, of which we all should be proud. One is Clay Martin, now connected with Grand Trunk railway in Canada. The other, Frederic Haskin, now of Washington, D. C. We surely are proud of these young men. I have known them since childhood, and though their parents were poor, yet by sobriety and perseverance, have made for themselves and for others an example of what one can accomplish if he makes use of the ability that God has given all of us, if we use it right.

Opportunities are still open to our boys at present time, but they must have that character that leads to a useful and worthy life.

The recent death of W. O. L. Jewett brings to memory some of the associations I had with him some years before he was married, as he was living with my mother up to the time he went to Hunnewell for his future life partner. In those early days there were the Yorks, and Shaffers of the Northern states, who were republicans and Mr. Jewett was a democrat. Well, it happened the writer got in a argument with the son of old Hero Hopkins, who threw a stone at a small dog I had. I told Jim not to hit my dog, or you will have to hit me. He jumped over the fence and came at me. And as I was rather active those days, Jim went down and I came top pelting away, when out ran my father to his aid. And as I could not master both I let Jim up and start away, when this old man picked up a stone and hit me in the back. Well, then flew at the old man and caught him by his hair and kicked him up he also had enough. But Jim never came to his father's relief. But I was arrested. I had Shaffer & York my lawyers and Hopkins had Jewell. The case was transferred Justice Jameson's Court out at Murry Chapel. Well, it was a fight sure enough. Mr. Jewett was for to be bound over and my lawyers freedom. They came near having a fight among themselves, but I escaped by the skin of my teeth.

I recently wrote Mr. Jewett only a few weeks before his death and mentioned several of our early days episodes, and he answered that he had a good laugh over them.