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from Carol Huber
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CLARK COUNTY

CHARLESTOWN CEMETERY

At Charlestown Cemetery is buried the first Governor of Indiana and his two wives and a monument has been erected to the memory of Jonathan Jennings

JONATHAN JENNINGS, First Governor of the State of Indiana
1784-1839

Monument erected under an act of the General Assembly 1893

In memory of Ann Gilmore Hay Jennings 1792-1826 - married in 1811

In memory of Clarissa Barbee Jennings - married in 1827

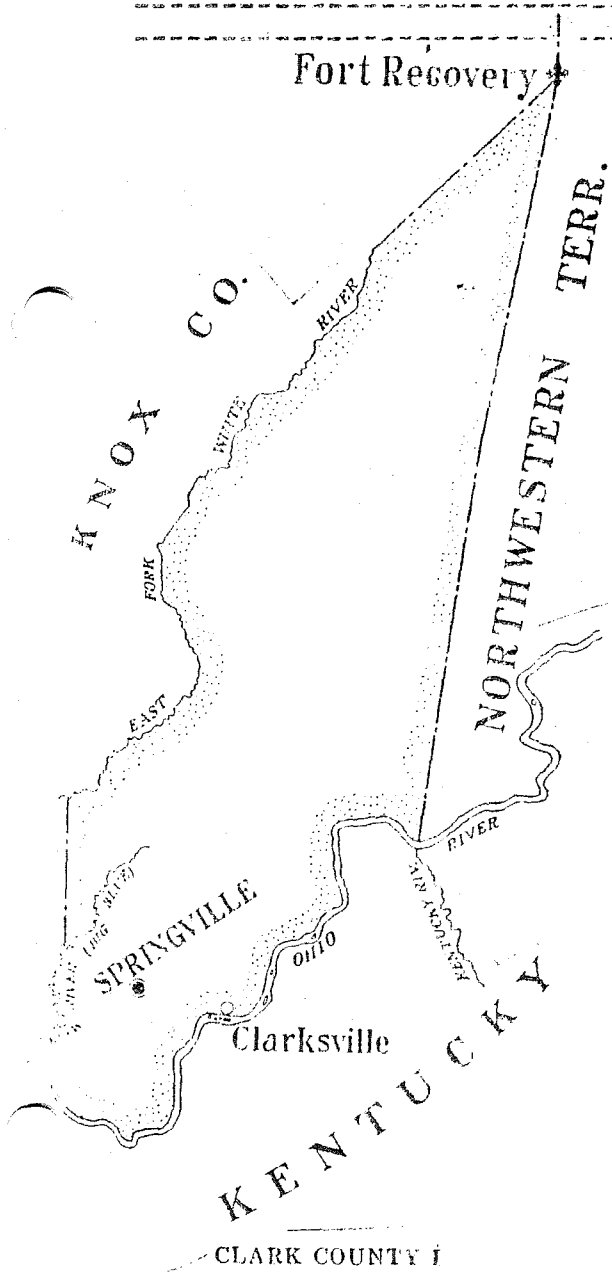
1809-1816 Delegate from Indiana Territory to U.S. Congress

1816 Delegate and President, State Constitutional Convention

1816-1822 First Governor of the State of Indiana

1822-1831 Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives

Rededicated and added, 1982



The history of CLARK COUNTY, to a large extent, the history of the early settlement of the southeastern part of the present state of Indiana. Clark County, the 2nd county to be formed (Knox being the first), even before the Indiana Territory was carved out of the great Northwest Territory, covered nearly the whole of what now constitutes the states of Indiana and Illinois.

Clark was the first to be created out of the territory included within the original boundaries of Knox, so that, at the time of its formation no county intervened between the original Clark and Knox Counties. Knox was organized 29 June 1790, and was made to include all the the country between Hamilton (Ohio) and St. Clair (Illinois) counties from the Ohio River to the Lakes

Emigrants from some of the southern states had begun to settle along the Ohio River, and it was found necessary to form other divisions for the convenience of the people, and so on the 3rd day of Feb. 1801, a new county was formed, like that of Knox, by gubernatorial proclamation, including within its boundaries as follows:

"Beginning at the Ohio River at the mouth of Blew River, thence up the said River to the crossing of the same by the road leading from Saint Vincennes to Clarks ville thence by a direct line to the nearest part of White River thence up the said river and that branch thereof which runs toward Fort Recovery, and from the head springs of said branch to Fort Recovery, thence along the boundary line between the Indiana, and North Western Territory, to the Ohio, thence down the same River to the place of beginning" (Territorial Executive Journal, 97)

CLARK COUNTY I

[Proclamation: Feb. 3, 1801]

CLARK COUNTY

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The Blue River was crossed by the road from Vincennes to Clarksville near the present northern boundary of Harrison County.

The proclamation forming the county directed that the first session of courts be held at Springville.

It may be a little difficult to trace the boundary lines as then given, but it can be, with tolerable accuracy, traced and its lines approximately determined.

This grand scope of territory containing nearly 1/5th of the present state of Indiana, the whole of the southeastern portion of it, was named after that grand and heroic man, General George Rogers Clark.

The town of Clarksville, was then the home of Gen. Clark and the county contained the grant of land made to his soldiers by the state of Virginia by act of Jan. 2, 1781. (see Journal Vol. VI # 1).

It is difficult to trace the history of the early settlement in detail of Clark County. Apart from its military occupancy very little settlement was made prior to the year 1800 when the Indiana Territory was organized and separated from the Northwest Territory, and given a territorial government with Gen. William Henry Harrison as its Governor. The exact time of the settlement of Clarksville is a little uncertain, but from the best data that can be had, it must have been about the year 1783. Notwithstanding Gen. Clark made it his home and Fort Clark was located here, its growth was slow, for it is alluded to in 1797 as a straggling village of only some 20 houses. The settlement of Clarksville extended up the river to the head of the Falls, where the city of Jeffersonville now stands, where Fort Finney was built which was afterwards known as Fort Steuben. Col. John Armstrong, in 1797 while commandant at Fort Finney, in order to more effectually protect the settlements in Kentucky, by preventing the Indians from crossing the Ohio River at Grassy Flats and Twenty-One Mile Island bar, where at low stages of the water, the river could be forded, built a block house at the mouth of Bull Creek, now in Owen Township in Clark County, which in honor of its founder was named "Armstrong's Station." Around it a small settlement of emigrants was located, but when the station was abandoned, which it was in a short time, the settlement was also abandoned for a time. Col. Armstrong returned to his old location in 1814, at the station, and continued to reside there until he died in 1816.

In 1800, at the time the new government of the Indiana Territory went into effect, its entire civilized population was 5,641. Of this population, 929 resided around the Ohio Falls, upon Clark's grant, but perhaps the larger portion in and around the old town of Clarksville. While much of the territory was composed of French emigrants and their descendents, the only settlements made by 'pure Americans,' were those made upon Clark's grant around and adjacent to the Ohio Falls, now included in Clark County.

The first county seat was located at a small village, but then supposed to be a rising and prosperous place called Springville, situated about four miles back from the Ohio River and some mile and half southwest of Charlestown, which subsequently became the county seat, where it remained for over a half century. This first county seat of Clark has wholly disappeared. Not a vestige of it remains to tell the curious where it once stood, and few of the present inhabitants of Clark know that any such town ever existed. The name Springville was taken from the fact that near this village was a spring which furnished good water for domestic purposes, and the village was on grant 115, the place grew to some size, perhaps numbering, in its most prosperous days 100 inhabitants. A short distance away, lived Jonathan Jennings, the first Governor of the State of Indiana. But all this prosperity was soon blighted, the title to the lands became involved in dispute, law suits sprung up, trials were had,

CLARK COUNTY

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enemies were made which ended only in the ruin and abandonment of the town. All these transactions took place within 8 years. There was no public courthouse at this time, nor was there any ever built at this place as far as can be discovered. The only court house at this time was simply a large room in one of the business buildings, but as short-lived as it was, the county seat was removed from it some years before it finally expired. But here on this site, where no habitation now stands, then the designated capital of the new county of Clark, assembled in solemn conclave on the 7th day of April 1801, the first court of justice ever held in southern Indiana east of Blue River. It was named the Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, and was composed under the commission of Gov. Wm. H. Harrison and the seal of Indiana Territory, of Justices Marston Green Clark, Abraham Huff, James Noble Wood, Thomas Downs, Wm. Goodwin, John Gibson, Charles Tuley and Wm. Harwood. Samuel Gwathney had been appointed and commissioned the first Clerk of the county, Samuel Hay was appointed the first sheriff.

The board divided the county into three townships, designated as Clarksville, Springville and Springhill.

CLARKSVILLE TOWNSHIP covered the territory now included in Floyd and Harrison Counties.

SPRINGVILLE TOWNSHIP included what now constitutes Clark County between Silver Creek on the west to Fourteen Mile creek on the east and to its northern limits.

SPRINGHILL TOWNSHIP was all east of Springville Township.

The development of the county made the necessity for frequent changes in civil divisions, and now not a single one of the names of the original townships remain.

Upon formation of the townships, Clarksville was from the Ohio opposite the mouth of Blue River thence up the Ohio to Peter McDonalds spring branch from thence to Pleasant Run, the branch on which Joseph Bartholomew lives, down Pleasant run to where it enters Silver Creek, then west to the western boundry of the county. Springville Township to begin at the mouth of Peter McDonalds branch thence up the Ohio to the mouth of 14-mile Creek, thence up the main branch to the head, thence west to the county line and lines of Clarksville Township. Springhill Township to begin at the mouth of 14 Mile Creek, thence with line of Springville Township to the county line thence with the same to the Ohio, to include all the rest of the county.

At the first court General W. Johnson was admitted as an attorney at law as was Robert Hamilton. Joshua Lindsey was to keep a tavern at Springville for one year, Samuel Hays and George Wood were his securities. The court appointed Joseph Bartholomew for 1 year, Peter Stacey for 2 years and Joseph Stewart for 3 years as commissioners to ascertain and lay the tax levy for the county.

Charles Floyd was appointed constable of Clarksville Township, William F. Tuley of Springville Township and Robert Wardel of Springhill Township.

Isaac Holman and Charles Bays were appointed to appraise each house in town, town lots, out lots, and mansion house in Clarksville Township.

William Combs Sr. & Absalom Little for Springville Township and John Owen for Springhill Township.

Leonard Bownan & William Wilson for Clarksville Township, Elmer G. George Huckleberry for Springville Township and John Petit and John Purdue for Springhill Township were named supervisors for public roads and highways. Commissioners to settle their accounts were George Huggins, James Davis and Francis McGuire for Clarksville Twp., John Clagham, George Woods and Nicholas Harmon for Springville Twp. and Abraham Huff, William Plasket and Wm. Brinton for Springhill Twp. Fence viewers, under

1801
 "Ohio"
 Joshua
 1798/9
 would be
 243 of 4
 this was
 J. Lindsey
 in 1809
 G. Hays

CLARK COUNTY

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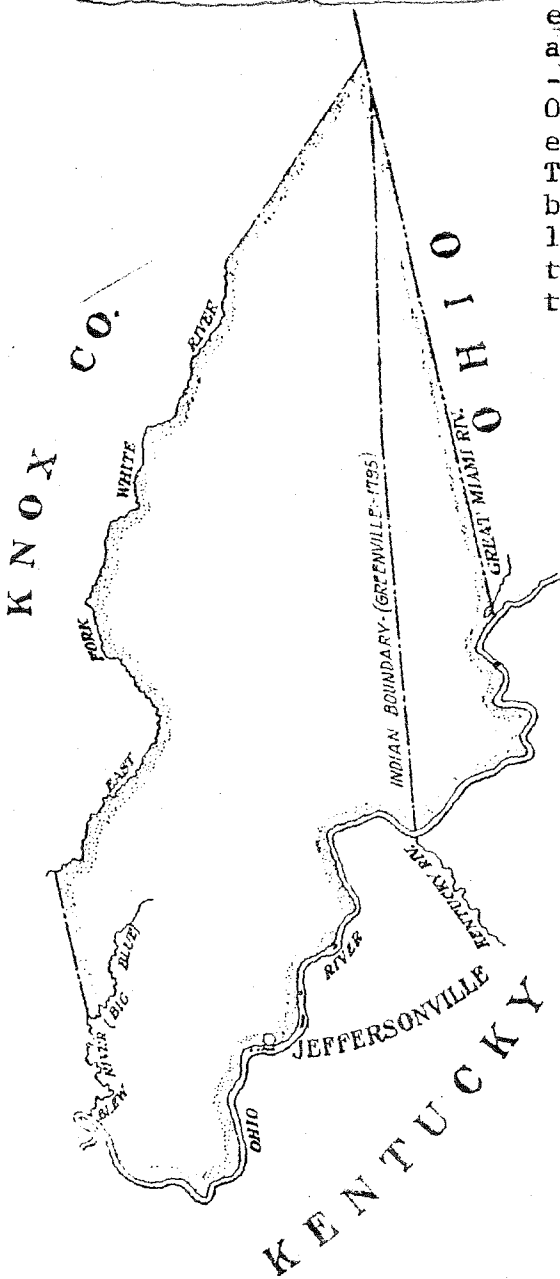
act regulating enclosures" were Philip Daily, Peter Stacey & Isaac Holman for Clarksville Twp., _____ Kaufman, Nathan Robertson and Frederick Rice for Springville Township, Jonathan Thomas, Christopher Fefler and Jacob Heberick for Springhill Township. Overseers of the poor were Benj. Redman & Isaac Holman for Clarksville Township, George Huckleberry Sr., & Abraham Little for Springville Township and William Plasket and John Bays for Springhill Township.

Ferry keepers were George Hughes, Major Robert Floyd, Samuel Oldham, Richard Ferrel and James N. Wood.

The Hoosier Genealogist has published an 1809 voters list for Clark County, and this was divided into the three original townships, so these townships still existed at that time.

OK
ACPL

There have been several boundry changes in Clark County and the immediate surrounding counties have all been formed out of the original Clark. Seeing the scope of Clark County originally, those early records can include anyone who lived in this part of the state - so never overlook early Clark County when searching for your ancestors.



On April 30 1802, alteration was made by Ohio enabling act, effective upon admission of Ohio. The tiny northeastern peak of Clark County between Fort Recovery, the Greenville Treaty line of 1795, and a "line drawn due north from the mouth of the Great Miami" was cut off by the formation of the state of Ohio.

Jan. 24 1803, alteration by proclamation effective upon admission of Ohio.

That tract of country included between a north line drawn from the mouth of the Big Miamie River, the Ohio and the Indian boundary line running from a point oposite the mouth of the Kentucky River, was attached to Clark County. This attachment was made pursuant to the Ohio Enabling Act of April 30, 1802, before Governor Harrison had "Sufficient Information respecting the settlements below the great miamie, to enable him to form (a government) in that tract.

By ordinance of the governor, June 9, 1802, Jeffersonville was made the county seat. The order was to become effective August 1, 1802.

Alteration by proclamation on 7 March 1803, the part that was added above formed Dearborn County. This was the first county formed from Clark County. It had belonged to Clark County but a short time, but remember, before becoming a part of Clark Co. it was part of what is now the state of Ohio.