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A Texas man's study of his Owen County WILSON - LINDSEY - McCORMICK connection

by Richard A. Crawford

This chapter of the family tree begins with the Fort Wayne Treaty of 30 Sep 1809. The first white settlers bought land for \$2.00 per acre from the U.S. Government at old Post Vincennes. The period before the treaty and until 1816 was a scene of continuous danger and bloodshed resulting in the Indian War of 1811. Jackson County was settled in 1810, and to guard against Indian depredations and to protect the settlers, military companies were organized along the border. Their campaigning consisted of frequent long marches, visiting distant points in the interior and along the border. On account of the peculiar nature of their service, they were called Rangers. Several of these rangers became citizens of Owen County. Philip Hart, a Kentuckian, was one of these rangers who came to Owen County in 1816. Rangers James Bigger and Neely Beem arrived in 1817. William Lindsey, also a ranger and on the first traverse jury in Owen County in May 1819, must have come to Owen County in 1816-1819 with his fellow rangers. He is recorded as a county Lister (assessor) in 1822, and is documented as one of the first settlers of Washington Township, along with John and Hudson McCormick, Thomas Wilson, and Daniel and Amon Ragsdale. John McCormick registered a land purchase in the township on 20 Sep 1816. Washington Township was organized on 4 Mar 1819, and those outside Spencer were farmers and clearers of land. "The pioneers of Washington Township were men of strong mind and courage, and their names are legacies to their descendants.."

Our group of settlers that went on to Iowa were a Christian group and several references are found to the Baptist Church in Owen County. The "Union of Owen" church belongs to the Separate Baptist denomination and is located about six miles east of Spencer. First meetings were held in an old log church on McCormick's Creek. Bethel Baptist church was organized about three miles northeast of Spencer. They then built a frame church in the southeast part of Spencer, and later moved the church six miles southeast of the town, where most of the congregation lived.

Jefferson Township seems the most probable for our Wilson group. There is a graveyard at the Pleasant Bethel Church. Bethel Christian Church was established in the early 1820s. In 1832, the church had a difference of philosophy, and "several of their members withdrew from

them, and they shortly after removed in a body to Iowa. Those who went to Iowa organized a congregation, retaining their practice of feet-washing and night communion. Others afterward went to the same country and organized after the practice of the mother church. Listed in the church record as "Those who preached irregularly" were Joseph Wilson and William Wilson. It is noted that Andrew Wilson purchased land in Jefferson Township prior to 1837. The Bethel Baptist and Salem Baptist in Clay Township on Raccoon Creek are the Carolina Wilsons of Susan Henderson. Wilson Trent of Morgan Township was a prominent Baptist preacher and school teacher who sold out and moved to Iowa. Vernal Church records show on June 1820, Brother William and Nancy Lindsey were received by experience. The June 8th 1822 entry reads "Whereas sister Nancy Lindsey being received by experience and neglected her duty in being baptized sent father Jas. Chambers to know cause..." June 13, 1822 "...and sister Lindsey came forward and was baptized." Nov 1826 "dismissed by letter sister Nancy Lindsey." Nancy's husband William Lindsey died in the summer of 1826. Nancy married Jesse Peden soon thereafter. These Vernal Church records are located at Franklin College.

John "Jock" McCormick migrated with his family from Jackson County, West Virginia (the family name going back to North Ireland and Scotland). William Lindsey came from Kentucky with his Ranger Company, and William D. Wilson with his family from Harrison County, Kentucky. The first census of Harrison County was in 1790, and it was admitted to the Union on 1 June 1792, with a population of 73,677. Harrison County was organized 21 Dec 1793 from part of Bourbon and Scott Counties. The War of 1812 caused a financial crisis which lead to immigrations. It was a 10 day journey from Kentucky to Owen County in small one-horse carts, the father and mother walking the entire distance, the children and what few household effects they possessed being stowed away in the vehicle. Others came on horseback, and sold their steeds upon their arrival for money with which to enter their lands. Most all early settlers were from the southern states, a great many from Kentucky and North Carolina. It appears Washington, Jefferson, Taylor, and Harrison Townships received heavy populations of Kentuckians.

Owen County was named in memory of Major Abraham Owen, a gallant Kentucky officer who was killed at the Battle of Tippecanoe, and Spencer was named in memory of Captain Spencer, another brave soldier of Kentucky killed at Tippecanoe. When the County began, there were only three townships, Washington, Franklin, and Montgomery. The first newspaper was *Gosport Chronotype* in 1842/3. The *Western Chronicle* began about 1846-48 then changed names to *The Republican*. *The Busy World* began in 1850 and served Spencer.

Owen County veterans: Samuel McCormick was a veteran of the War of 1812, and Andrew Wilson was a musician in Company B, Fourth Indiana Volunteers in the Mexican War. Corporal Henry H. Wilson served in Company I, 19th Indiana Volunteers, and Christopher Wilson was a wagoner in Company B, during the Civil War. Also in Company G, 155th Indiana Volunteers were: Pvts. James M. Wilson the first, and James M. Wilson the

second, and Joseph A. Wilson. Early teachers in Spencer include James Wilson, and Professor W. B. Wilson who greatly improved the Spencer Schools, and served as Superintendent for many years - ca.1872. The name Peden is associated with a bank, and there was a barber by the name of Wilson. Matilda Wilson married James Barnes in Montgomery Township. In Taylor Township there resided a merchant H. D. McCormick, and a J. W. Wilson belonged to the F&AM Lodge. In Jennings Township I. Lindsey speculated on some land in 1816, and many Kentucky Baptists moved in during 1833. Mt. Peasant Baptist Church was organized in 1839 by Thomas Evans. Cataract Baptist Sunday School Superintendent was William McCormick.

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