

wedding feast was well worthy the name. The champagne was good old whisky, manufactured at some local distillery, clear and pure as mountain dew. Then there were venison steaks and roasts, turkey and other wild meats, and other delicious edibles, sufficient to appease the appetites of the most fastidious guests. The particulars of the first marriage or marriages in Benton County cannot now be given, nor the names of the first parties married, unless they were some of those mentioned in connection with the War Eagle Settlement. If any public record of the early marriage was made, it has been lost or destroyed, as no such record can be found in the clerk's office prior to the year 1860.

The record was commenced in 1861, and records only three marriages for the year 1860, viz.: March 28, Thomas Wells and Miss Adaline Baker; August 30, James Riddle and Mrs. Emla* McWilliams; October 9, T. J. Holum, aged twenty-three years, and Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas, aged forty-one years, all being solemnized by Rev. H. Powell. Sixty marriages are recorded for the year 1861, and six in January, 1862, and then no more are recorded until July, 1865, after which forty-two are recorded for that year. The war suspended marriages, or else they were not recorded. For subsequent years the record shows the number of marriages in the county to have taken place as follows: For 1866, 108; for 1870, 133; for 1880, 142; for 1887, 243, and for the present year, up to August 7, 142.

INDIANS.

Tribes.—At the beginning of the settlement of the territory now embraced in this county, it was occupied by roving bands of the Osage and Delaware tribes of Indians, though it was not then and had not been the permanent location of these tribes. While the tribes were at enmity with each other, they were at peace with the whites, and friendly to the early settlers.

Removal.—The Indians were not numerous here, and did not remain long after the settlement by the whites began. In 1837 the removal of the Cherokee Indians from Georgia to the Indian Territory began. There were several thousand of them, and

* So spelled on the record.

before the removal took place they were divided into two parties, under the respective leadership of two chiefs, named John Ross and John Ridge. They were accordingly designated as the "Ross Party" and the "Ridge Party." In treating for their removal, the Government recognized the Ridge Party, whereupon Ross and his party claimed that Ridge and his party had no authority to enter the treaty, and at first refused to be removed. But upon further negotiations Ross entered into a contract with Gen. Scott to remove his party, by which it cost the Government about \$54 per head for their removal. In making the removal the Cherokees were divided into several detachments of about 1,000 each, and each detachment was properly officered with white men. A military escort and provisions were furnished by the Government.

They started on their journey in the fall of 1837, but, like Moses in the wilderness, they lingered by the way, and did not reach their "promised land" until the spring of 1838. They congregated at and started from Calhoun, on the Hiwassee River, in McMinn Co., Tenn. The detachments started at different times, and one of them, belonging to the Ridge party, traveled westward, and crossed the Mississippi at Memphis. The others came by way of Nashville, Tenn., crossed the Ohio River at Golconda, and the Mississippi at Green's Ferry, thence westward, passing through Benton County to their destination, some of them passing directly through Bentonville.

Judge A. B. Greenwood, now of Bentonville, then a young man, was appointed commissary for one of the detachments, and came with it as far as Nashville, then resigned, and returned to Georgia for his family, and moved directly to Bentonville, where he has ever since resided. He was here to witness the passing of the Indians on their way to the Territory.

For a number of years following the Indians would come out of the Territory and establish camps in Benton County from which to hunt game. Being unmolested they became bold and a little treacherous, and did not at all times confine themselves to the capture of wild game, but began to appropriate the hogs which the settlers had turned out to feed upon the mast. Being discovered in their thefts they were finally ordered by the cit-

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izens to retire from the county, and not return again for the purpose of hunting. The order was obeyed, and no further trouble was had. On one occasion, in 1840, a band of Indians encamped on Flint Creek, about a mile above the present site of Springtown. After committing some thefts a body of armed citizens met to drive them out, peaceably or otherwise. W. W. Burgess, now of Springtown, was in this party, and on their way he killed a deer, near the site of Springtown, and threw it into the big spring there to keep it cool until their return. Arriving near the Indian camp the citizens notified them to leave instanter, which they did, and thus all further trouble on that occasion was avoided. Aside from killing a few hogs and committing some petty thefts the early settlers of Benton County were not molested by the Indians.

COUNTY ORGANIZATION.

First County Court.—Benton County was organized in accordance with an act of the General Assembly passed or approved September 30, 1836. In accordance with the act the first term of the county court, Judge George P. Wallace, presiding, was held in April, 1837, at the residence of said Wallace, one and a half miles east of the present site of Bentonville, when and where the organization of the county was completed. The first county officers were as follows: George P. Wallace, judge of the county court; John B. Dickson, county clerk; Gideon G. Pace, sheriff; Henry C. Hastings, treasurer; Henry Ford, coroner, and A. McKissick, surveyor.

The County Seat.—According to the act creating the county, an election was held for the selection of three commissioners to select and fix upon a site for the county seat. On counting the returns it was found that Robert Cowen, Robert Weaver and Thomas Swaggerty were elected as such commissioners. On the 7th of November, 1837, they filed with the county clerk a report of their proceedings in the words and figures following, to-wit:

We, the undersigned commissioners elected under an act of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas, after having been duly qualified, and giving the notice required by law, and having duly examined the various situations, donations and conveniences, beg leave to report that we have selected a site.

to-wit: The south half of the southeast quarter of Section 30, in Township 20 north, Range 30 west of the fifth principal meridian, as presenting to your commissioners, duly considering its situation, the donations offered, and its eligibility for a county seat, more advantages and conveniences than any other situation which was presented for the consideration of your commissioners. They have, after selecting the same, in accordance with the powers vested in them as commissioners, proceeded to lay off a town thereon, leaving a square and 136 lots, and have named and called said town Bentonville; all of which is respectfully submitted to the court.

[Signed.]

ROBERT COWEN.
ROBERT WEAVER.
THOMAS SWAGGERTY.

The report was addressed to the circuit court, to which tribunal the law required it to be made, and on the second day of the first term of that court, which was held in November, 1837, the report was presented to the judge thereof, and the following entry was ordered to be made of record, viz.:

And now on this day comes the commissioners elected to locate a county seat for the county of Benton, and present their report, which is approved by the court and ordered to be filed and recorded. And it appearing to the court here that a court-house will be prepared for the reception and use of the court by the next term thereof, it is therefore ordered by the court that the clerk of the Benton Circuit Court do move all the files, records and papers of his office to the town of Bentonville, the county seat so selected by said commissioners, or within one mile thereof, at least thirty days before the next term of this court. And that the town so selected be established as the seat of justice for said county, and be called and known by the name of Bentonville, in honor to the Hon. Thomas Hort Benton, and that all writs and process hereafter issued from this office, shall bear test and be made returnable at the court-house in the town of Bentonville, county of Benton.

In accordance with this order the books and papers of the court were moved to the court-house in Bentonville before May, 1838, in which month the second term of the court was held in the established county seat, which has ever since remained as such.

Lost Records.—The records of the proceedings of the county court from its organization to the year 1857, and again for a number of years including the war period, have been lost or destroyed. It is thought that many of them were destroyed by soldiers during the war. In consequence of the absence of the records some important items of the proceedings of the county court, that might otherwise appear, will necessarily have to be omitted.