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# Bits of History of Petersburg, Kentucky

By

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Boone County  
by Mary Beck

BITS OF HISTORY OF PETERSBURG, KENTUCKY

The town of Petersburg is delightfully situated on the Ohio River about 25 miles below Cincinnati, Ohio, and midway between Lawrenceburg and Aurora, Indiana, on the Kentucky side of the river. It is in Boone County, which was named in honor of that daring, heroic, and noble personage Colonel Daniel Boone, the first pioneer into the state of Kentucky. Its banks are high and above the high water mark. It occupies a level plain hemmed in on all sides, except the river front, by a chain of lofty hills, the tops of which command a magnificent view of La Belle River, and the surrounding country for miles around. It has a landing for steamers of any size at any stage of the river, unsurpassed by any place along the river.

Petersburg was first settled by Mr. John Tanner and his family about 1790, and called Tanner's Station. A blockhouse and a stockyard were erected as a protection from the savages. Tanner's Creek on the opposite side of the river in Indiana was named for John Tanner.

Tanner had several sons and daughters. On one occasion, after the family had been residing in Petersburg for some time, and began to be somewhat used to Indian depredations and learned to be a little too venturesome, two of the boys who were quite young, both under twelve years of age, named Edward and John, went to gather walnuts. After searching for some time they found a tree about a quarter of a mile above their home. They were filling their baskets, never suspecting any danger, when suddenly they were surprised by Indians who fired upon them wounding the younger boy, John, in the leg. They captured both of them and took them over the river, carrying the lame boy and forcing the other to walk until night when they encamped a short distance above the mouth of the Miami River.

During the night the boys had a long talk in regards to making their escape. The Indians knowing that one of the boys was unable to walk, and naturally supposing that one would not go without the other, had not secured them firmly. They agreed that the older, Edward, should make his escape if possible and reach his home and arouse the neighbors and trust to fortune to rescue the younger. Accordingly, Edward, after the Indians were fast asleep, succeeded in freeing himself from the bonds and escaped, assuring his brother he would soon be rescued from the savages. He swam the Ohio and Miami River and reached his home in safety that night.

Of course the settlement was aroused and in the morning the father with some of the neighbors started in pursuit of the Indians. They came to where the Kidnappers were encamped the

before, but they had left and no trace of them could be found. After a hopeless search they were obliged to return, greatly dis-heartened, to their homes. Nothing was heard from the other boy and he was given up for lost.

Finally, Allen Morgan, a boy who Mr. Tanner had brought up, decided many years afterwards to make a search for John. He succeeded in finding him somewhere in Michigan and brought him home. He was a man now and was married to an Indian squaw, and had several children. He had become so attached to the Indians he could not be induced to civilized life. Even though his friends offered him every inducement to remain, he would not be persuaded to leave his wife and children, and his savage habits and customs. He soon left them and returned home among the Indians.

#### INCORPORATION

Judge John J. Flornoy purchased the land from Tanner and laid out the Town. Up to this time it had been called Tanners Station, though by some it was called Calidonia. The town originally contained 54 acres, but some 20 more was added. Subsequently, an old plat of the town in the possession of Post Master Botts reads thus: Plat of the town of Petersburg, Boone County, Kentucky, established by and laid on the lands of John J. Flornoy in the conformity to an act of the assembly passed January 17, 1818.

The streets are as follows: Water, First, Second, Third, and Fourth, with the following crossing them at right angles; Grant, Main, Market, Tanner, Broadway, Mill, and Washington.

Bearing the same date, January 17, 1818, the Petersburg Bank was chartered by the legislature, with the following stockholders; John J. Flornoy, Benjamin G. Willis, Absolum and Reuben Graves, and others, with Willis as President and John Grant as Cashier.

The first manufactory was a tannery and a distillery on the side of the hill now called Prospect Hill. The old stone house just out of town, before you get to the first turn in the road was the distillery.

Copied from an old issue of the Kentucky State Journal, by C. A. Weindel.