

## Early History of Pioneer Pulaski County Families by Mrs. Hicks

For several years we have wanted to reprint some of Emma Page Ichord Setser Hicks's ruminations on local history. She wrote a weekly column for the Pulaski County Democrat from 1977 through 1983. We have occasionally used short quotes from her columns and have utilized them in our research. Seems we always ran out of room in these pages for some of her columns. This year we have the space and reprint her first two columns which appeared in the March 17 and 24, 1977, issues of the Democrat.

This is the first chapter of my writings of the pioneer days of the families that I can remember about and some of the things that have been told me by my grandparents, Silas Messer Page and Charlottie Johnson

Page, whose bodies are resting in the Big Piney Cemetery.

Grandpa was born in 1829 and passed away in 1905 and Grandma was 5 years older than he. She passed away about 1912. He was 85 and she was almost 95 when they went to be with Jesus.

Grandpa was a pioneer preacher and she was a wonderful house wife.

She carded wool off of sheep and cotton they raised. She wove cloth to make part of their clothing, blankets, and bedspreads. Some of the cloth she made was called lincy or lincie. I can't find it in the dictionary. It was a heavy cloth to make clothing. [She is probably referring to linsey-woolsey.] She did her own coloring and sewed by hand with a needle and thimble. She spun yarn

and knit stockings, socks and gloves.

I can remember her big old wooden loom that sat by the big old fireplace. She also wove what we called rag carpet. They had heavy cotton thread and used worn clothing torn in strips and tacked together for what they called filling.

Outside of this they washed by hand, milked cows, carried water from a spring. I could go on and on what she done. Then the women today think they have a lot of work to do.

Grandma always had time to cook for a big family and company. She went to church on Sunday. Grandpa preached wherever the settlers could get together in a home or in what they called a brush arbor.

I can remember them moving out the beds at Grandpa's home, a big hewed log house. They laid boards on chairs for seats. This was when I was 5 or 6 years old. I can remem-

### Emma Page Hicks (1886-1988)

Emma Page was born near the village of Big Piney and taught in three nearby country schools, as well as a short stint in Crocker (see map on next page). Emma was married three times: first to schoolmate Bill Ichord (1906-1917) who died of tuberculosis; C. C. Setser (1922-1951), who died of a stroke and with whom she had a son and daughter; and Reverend J. L. Hicks (1954-1958). She wrote more than 200 columns for the *Pulaski County Democrat*.

ber my Grandma getting happy and praising the Lord, also some of my aunts. I write as these things come to my mind.

I intended to tell about their move to the West first. I don't know why or what the circumstances were.

It was after the Civil War about 1857 [which was **before the Civil War**] when my grandparents left near Mt. Vernon, Ill., in two covered

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wagons with an ox team to one, and a horse and mule to the other. I don't know how many came together.

My Grandpa had two brothers, Uncle Jimmy and Uncle Hosea Page, that came, also the Sneed family in their covered wagons.

This was when they homesteaded land in this part of Missouri. I don't know how long they were traveling, for it was slow. My father was about 10 years old and he remembered them crossing the Mississippi River on a ferry boat.

My Grandpa homesteaded 80 acres of land about one and one half miles north of Big Piney on a dry branch called McCortney and two good springs near where they built their house.

It was all big timber of all kinds, and wild grass in the low grounds, over a man's head on a horse. They didn't have any trouble getting their meat for there were deer, wild turkeys, wild hogs, rabbits, squirrels, also wild pigeons. I have heard my father, Benjamin F. Page, tell how they would locate a pigeon roost, and after dark they would take a sack to put them in, also a torch to blind them with for there would be so many roosting on low limbs of small trees that the limbs were bent and they could rake them in a sack. *[These would have been the extinct passenger pigeons.]*

They could go out anytime and kill deer and turkeys.

I don't know if they came in the fall or spring, but I suppose it was in warm weather.

They lived in their wagons until they could chop down small trees and get logs to build them a log house. Many of you older folks have seen log houses but many of you younger folks haven't.

There are some of these kind of buildings that have been kept as antiques. Anyway, these was the kind of houses, or many would call them log huts.

These men that came were strong and would help each other lift these logs to build their houses.

The logs were notched at the ends and fitted together at the corner.

If they had a floor in the houses, they were called puncheon floors. They would split a big log open and hew it smooth on the flat side with what they called a broad axe. Then they would fill in and fit them together.

The covering on the roof was what they called calkboards. They split these out of big blocks of wood cut from the log of a big smooth tree and put on and lapped in a way so that the water couldn't run in.

The spaces between the logs were filled in with mud or a red clay that would harden and stop up the cracks. Where the cracks were large they would put in pieces of wood to hold the dobbing *[daubing]* or clay. *[The pieces of wood filler were called chinking.]*

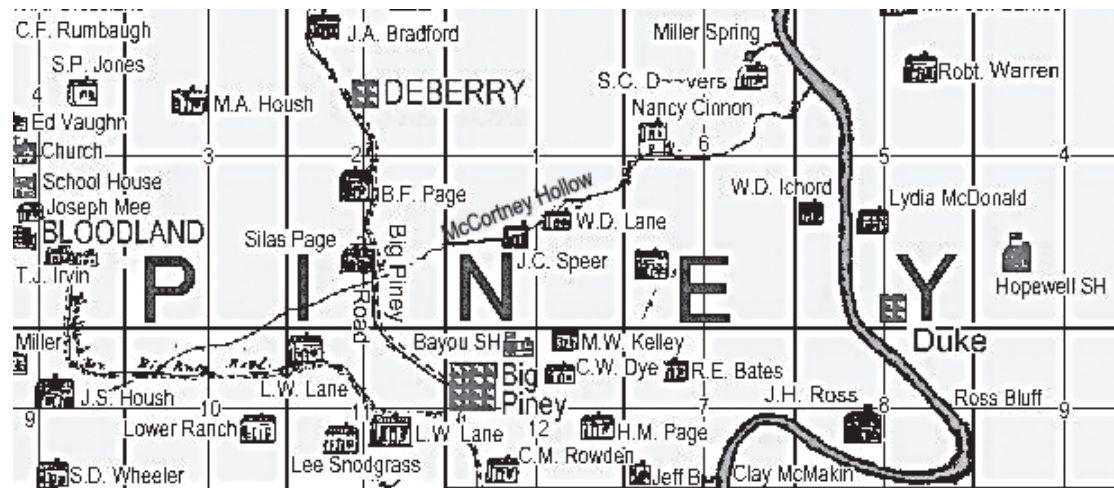
The settlers or immigrants to this new settlement brought the tools they needed to work with. They cleared land and made rails to fence with. Their gardens and yards were fenced with what they called railings or pickets rived out of easy to split timber and sharpened at the top.

They set posts and would nail two rails one at the top and one at the bottom, and the pickets were nailed to them. I suppose these were made several years later. It took time to do all they had to do. And it took a lot of hard labor. They were a very strong and healthy family.

They didn't have a doctor but they knew different kinds of roots, bark and herbs that were good for different kinds of ailments.

They would drink sassafras tea made from the roots of the tree. They also made a tea from the limbs of a bush called spice wood. I remember this bush growing above their spring where they got their water. It was real good for it had a spicy taste. In the early spring they gathered plants called sallet or greens. They didn't have a cellar but they would lay grass, leaves or straw and pile their potatoes, turnips, cabbage, and beets in piles, then cover them with clean straw then shovel dirt on top of this so deep they wouldn't freeze. They would pat this down smooth.

I hope you young folks will enjoy this and all will save each clipping.



Emma's neighborhood in Piney Township until she moved to Crocker in 1922. The house of Silas Page, Emma's grandfather is located, along with the house of B. F. Page where Emma was born. Emma taught in the three schools (Bayou, Hopewell, and Bloodland) that appear on the map. Map detail from 1906 Mathews map of Pulaski County, enhanced by Leonard Fetterhof.

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**Above** Bayou School in the village of Big Piney. The 81 students were all in one long room with three rows of seats and black boards all around the wall. Picture was taken in 1899 by Ben F. Page, Emma's father. Emma is in the fourth row, seventh from left. Courtesy of Larry Lercher.

**First row**, pictured left to right: unknown, Ches Helton, Boss Page, Linsey Clark, Charley Lawson, Homer Page, John Helton, Pansy Carroll, Maggie Lane, Anna Lane, unknown, unknown;  
**Second row**: unknown, unknown, Burley Dye, Charley Lawson, Ora Hendrix, Bert Clark, unknown, Anna Woods, Retta Helton, Celesta Ross, next two Bray girls, Pansy Lane;  
**Third row**: Woods boy, Silas Kelley, Peck Woods, Eddie Vaughn, Bill Page, Frank Ichord, Clarence Kelley, George Carroll, Nute Woods, Teacher George Phillips, Stacy Lane, Icy Rowden, Nannie Vaughn, Ethel Dye, Laura Page, Pansy Ross, Ellen Bray, Gusta Lawson, May Carroll;  
**Fourth row**: unknown, Dick Ichord, Lula Clark, Stella Helton, Vina Vaughn, Ada Page, Emma Page, Retta Page, Mollie Page, Dora Page, Clara Ichord, Lizzie Page, Anna Page, unknown, Mattie Sneed, Ada Page, Carrie Rowden;  
**Fifth row**: Pete Dye, Dick McDonald, Ollie Sneed, Ora Hendrix, Ed Woods, Wayne Clark, Bill McDonald, Whis Dye, John Ichord, Jimmy Lane, Bill Ichord, Harley Dye, Charley Page, Bob Page, Zina Sneed, Jake Lane, Ed Clark, Sherman Page, Joe Miller or Woods.



**Right**—The Page Family: Sitting are Silas Messer Page and Charlottie Page; from left to right standing Benjamim Franklin Page (Emma's father), Solomon Neuton Page, Sallie or Sarah Page Dye, Jane Page McDonald, and Lizzie Page Sneed. This was taken about 1890.

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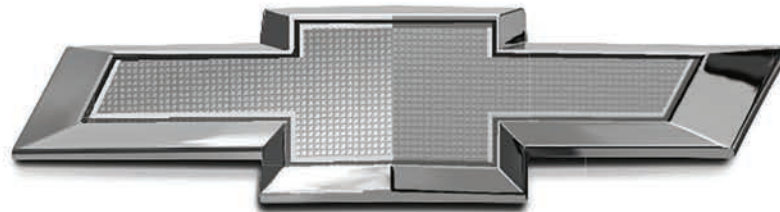
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