

MARBLE HILL

Here on a scenic hill at the junction of crystal-clear Crooked and Hurricane creeks, Thomas Hamilton laid out Marble Hill after Bollinger County was organized, March, 1851. First called New California, the town was later enlarged, renamed Dallas, and made the county seat. In 1868, confusion with Dallas County led to adopting the name Marble Hill for the unusual marble-like limestone outcroppings found in the vicinity.

First among pioneers in the county area were Swiss Germans from North Carolina who took up Spanish land grants along the Whitewater and Castor rivers in 1800. The county name honors George F. Bollinger, the leader of these settlers. Pioneer legislator, he had a big mill near Burfordville covered bridge in adjacent Cape Girardeau County.

On the opposite bank of Crooked Creek, just southwest of Marble Hill, is Lutesville, laid out in 1869 by Eli Lutes who gave land to the St. Louis and Iron Mt. R. R. (Mo. Pac.) to win the depot location. Lutesville grew as shipping and trading point and Marble Hill as the county seat and banking town for a grain and livestock farming country.

(See other side)
Erected by State Historical Society of Missouri
and State Highway Commission, 1957

MARBLE HILL

(Continued from other side)

Marble Hill serves as seat of justice in a county of the Ozark Highland. An area of low, rugged hills and wide valleys, Bollinger County borders south on Missouri's Lowland Region. Near here, where an earth fracture has exposed layers of the geologic past, the first dinosaur bones ever found in Missouri were discovered in 1942. Prehistoric Indian mounds are found in the county, utilized in modern times by Shawnee and Delaware Indians and claimed by the Osage until 1806.

In the Civil War, Maj. Jonas Ravalt with 100 Union troops took 18 prisoners here in Jan., 1862, and in April Col. S. D. Kitchen with 120 Confederates raided the courthouse and town. On nearby Crooked Creek, some 300 Confederates under Col. W. L. Jeffers put to rout about 268 Union troops led by Maj. B. F. Lazear on Aug. 24, 1862. Guerrilla bands ranged the area during the war. The county population rose from 4,481 in 1864, during the war's last year, to 8,013 by 1870.

Marble Hill was the home of noted Will Mayfield (Baptist) Junior College, Founded, 1879, as an academy by Doctors H. J. Smith and W. H. Mayfield, the school closed, 1934.

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"BITS OF HISTORY"

BEGINNING, GROWTH & FOLKLORE
OF BOLLINGER COUNTY, MISSOURI

by

Mary L. Hahn



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"LOVER'S LANE" BETWEEN THE TOWNS



WORKERS BENEATH THE SWINGING BRIDGE

1803, and slave-holders from the south were allowed to come into this part of the country with their slaves. In 1819, Missouri applied for admission to the Union. With the Missouri Compromise of 1820 (which was later abolished) she was admitted as a slave state.

Missouri, at that time as always, was among the most attractive parts of the great continent. Here were to be found all the things to attract settlers, and accordingly, settlements were planted at various places in the southeastern part of the state which included the early settlement at Cape Girardeau. With the transfer of title to the United States from France, many of the territorial restrictions were removed and there poured into the new possession, constantly increasing streams of immigrants from the older sections of the union.

The history of this land is a vivid story of the experiences of man's struggle, up from the savage conditions found here by De Soto about the year of 1540 when he made his first visit to these parts, to the height of civilization as we know it today.

It was more than two hundred and fifty years from the time of DeSoto's adventures until Major George Frederick Bollinger, a man of Swiss descent, came from North Carolina to what later became the state of Missouri, while it was still a part of the Louisiana Territory, about the year of 1796. Later he filled many important offices in Cape Girardeau County, died in 1842 and nine years afterwards, in 1851, Bollinger County was organized and named in his honor. His first settlement was in the northern part of the county on upper Whitewater River, even though there were records of a few locations elsewhere in the county, prior to 1804. Col. Bollinger, for whom Fredericktown was also named, was a large and powerful man of generous disposition and very popular. He also made the second settlement in Bollinger County in 1800, on Castor River, at what was known then as Bollinger's Mill, and later became the town of Zalma. There was formed a dam, and a water-mill was located on the river to furnish power to grind grain.

First among pioneers in the Bollinger County area were Swiss Germans from North Carolina, many of whom had accompanied Col. Bollinger to this part of the country to begin a new life in the "west". To do so, they took up Spanish land grants along the Whitewater and Castor Rivers in the early part of 1800. Col. Bollinger, also termed

a pioneer legislator, had started a big mill near the Burfordville covered bridge in Cape Girardeau County. This bridge is still standing and has now become the site of a Missouri State Park and is under going repairs and the mill is being renovated. Colonel Bollinger died in 1842 and is buried near the mill in a tomb, with his negro slaves buried around him.

Following the acquisition of this territory from France in 1804, a proclamation was passed to divide it into five districts, one of which was Cape Girardeau District. Early settlements there date back as far as 1793. Reliable sources indicate that the early settlers of the lower part of the State of Missouri were those from the East, that is, below the Mason-Dixon Line, and from the regions farther South. Early families in what became Bollinger County seem to support that theory and with the mingling of the various types; the pioneer individual who settled in Bollinger County was, on the whole, a rather sturdy, non-credulous type character. These early settlers sought and obtained a concession of land, and the population included both white and slaves.

In 1805, John Lorance, who was one of those pioneers who had come from North Carolina with Col. Bollinger, married and located on Crooked Creek, where Eli Deck lived in 1888 (according to Goodspeed: History of Southeast Missouri). That was evidently on land between what later became Lutesville and Glen Allen, and possibly not too far from the present location of the new modern school building of our Woodland R-4 School District, in Bollinger County.

About the same time, Daniel Hahn settled on what is now known as Possum Creek (then Hahn Creek) about 1/2 mile west of what is now Lutesville.

First settlements in what later became Wayne County, which were then also a part of Cape Girardeau District, were made in 1802 by families from Kentucky. It was far from any trading point and did not grow very rapidly. As late as 1809 that territory reported to the court that no roads had yet been laid off within it. In 1818, an act of the Territorial Legislature combined the Southwestern part of Cape County and the Eastern part of Lawrence County (formerly in New Madrid District), into a separate and distinct county which was named Wayne, and owing to its great size, it was often spoken of as the "State of Wayne".

Bollinger County, which was then carved from parts of Cape Girardeau, Stoddard and Wayne Counties, contained