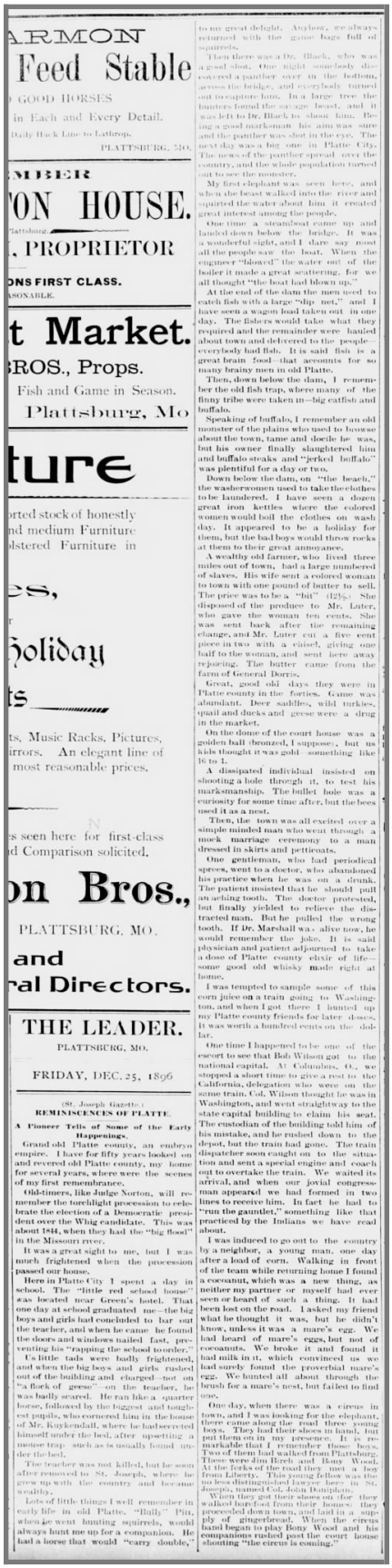
Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/336020761/



ARMON
Feed Stable
GOOD HORSES
in Each and Every Detail.
Daily Hack Line to Lathrop.
PLATTSBURG, MO.
MBER
ON HOUSE.
PROPRIETOR
ONS FIRST CLASS.
ASONABLE.
t Market.
ROS., Props.
Fish and Game in Season.
Plattsburg, Mo
ture
orted stock of honestly
nd medium Furniture
olstered Furniture in
ss,
holiday
ts
ts, Music Racks, Pictures,
irrors. An elegant line of
most reasonable prices.
s seen here for first-class
d Comparison solicited.
on Bros.,
PLATTSBURG, MO.
and
ral Directors.

THE LEADER.
PLATTSBURG, MO.
FRIDAY, DEC. 25, 1896

(St. Joseph Gazette.)

REMINISCENCES OF PLATTE.

A Pioneer Tells of Some of the Early Happenings.

Grand old Platte county, an embryo empire. I have for fifty years looked on and revered old Platte county, my home for several years, where were the scenes of my first remembrance.

Old-timers, like Judge Norton, will remember the torchlight procession to celebrate the election of a Democratic president over the Whig candidate. This was about 1844, when they had the "big flood" in the Missouri river.

It was a great sight to me, but I was much frightened when the procession passed our house.

Here in Platte City I spent a day in school. The "little red school house" was located near Green's hotel. That one day at school graduated me—the big boys and girls had concluded to bar out the teacher, and when he came he found the doors and windows nailed fast, preventing his "rapping the school to order."

Us little tads were badly frightened, and when the big boys and girls rushed out of the building and charged—not on "a flock of geese"—on the teacher, he was badly scared. He ran like a quarter horse, followed by the biggest and toughest pupils, who cornered him in the house of Mr. Ruykendall, where he had secreted himself under the bed, after upsetting a mouse trap such as is usually found under the bed.

The teacher was not killed, but he soon after removed to St. Joseph, where he grew up with the country and became wealthy.

Lots of little things I well remember in early life in old Platte. "Bully" Pitt, when he went hunting squirrels, would always hunt me up for a companion. He had a horse that would "carry double," to my great delight. Anyhow, we always returned with the game bags full of squirrels.

Then there was a Dr. Black, who was a good shot. One night somebody discovered a panther over in the bottom, across the bridge, and everybody turned out to capture him. In a large tree the hunters found the savage beast, and it was left to Dr. Black to shoot him. Being a good marksman his aim was sure and the panther was shot in the eye. The next day was a big one in Platte City. The news of the panther spread over the country, and the whole population turned out to see the monster.

My first elephant was seen here, and when the beast walked into the river and squirted the water about him it created great interest among the people.

One time a steamboat came up and landed down below the bridge. It was a wonderful sight, and I dare say most all the people saw the boat. When the engineer "blowed" the water out of the boiler it made a great scattering, for we all thought "the boat had blown up."

At the end of the dam the men used to catch fish with a large "dip net," and I have seen a wagon load taken out in one day. The fishers would take what they required and the remainder were hauled about town and delivered to the people—everybody had fish. It is said fish is a great brain food—that accounts for so many brainy men in old Platte.

Then, down below the dam, I remember the old fish trap, where many of the finny tribe were taken in—big catfish and buffalo.

Speaking of buffalo, I remember an old monster of the plains who used to browse about the town, tame and docile he was, but his owner finally slaughtered him and buffalo steaks and "jerked buffalo" was plentiful for a day or two.

Down below the dam, on "the beach," the washerwomen used to take the clothes to be laundered. I have seen a dozen great iron kettles where the colored women would boil the clothes on wash day. It appeared to be a holiday for them, but the bad boys would throw rocks at them to their great annoyance.

A wealthy old farmer, who lived three miles out of town, had a large numbered of slaves. His wife sent a colored woman to town with one pound of butter to sell. The price was to be a "bit" (12½). She disposed of the produce to Mr. Later, who gave the woman ten cents. She was sent back after the remaining change, and Mr. Later cut a five cent piece in two with a chisel, giving one half to the woman, and sent here away rejoicing. The butter came from the farm of General Dorris.

Great, good old days they were in Platte county in the forties. Game was abundant. Deer saddles, wild turkies, quail and ducks and geese were a drug in the market.

On the dome of the court house was a golden ball (bronzed, I suppose), but us kids thought it was gold—something like 16 to 1.

A dissipated individual insisted on shooting a hole through it, to test his marksmanship. The bullet hole was a curiosity for some time after, but the bees used it as a nest.

Then, the town was all excited over a simple minded man who went through a mock marriage ceremony to a man dressed in skirts and petticoats.

One gentleman, who had periodical sprees, went to a doctor, who abandoned his practice when he was on a drunk. The patient insisted that he should pull an aching tooth. The doctor protested, but finally yielded to relieve the distracted man. But he pulled the wrong tooth. If Dr. Marshall was alive now, he would remember the joke. It is said physician and patient adjourned to take a dose of Platte county elixir of life—some good old whisky made right at home.

I was tempted to sample some of this corn juice on a train going to Washington, and when I got there I hunted up my Platte county friends for later doses. It was worth a hundred cents on the dollar.

One time I happened to be one of the escort to see that Bob Wilson got to the national capital. At Columbus, O., we stopped a short time to give a rest to the California delegation who were on the same train. Col. Wilson thought he was in Washington, and went straightway to the state capital building to claim his seat. The custodian of the building told him of his mistake, and he rushed down to the depot, but the train had gone. The train dispatcher soon caught on to the situation and sent a special engine and coach out to overtake the train. We waited its arrival, and when our jovial congressman appeared we had formed in two lines to receive him. In fact he had to "run the gauntlet," something like that practiced by the Indians we have read about.

I was induced to go out to the country by a neighbor, a young man, one day after a load of corn. Walking in front of the team while returning home I found a cocoanut, which was a new thing, as neither my partner or myself had ever seen or heard of such a thing. It had been lost on the road. I asked my friend what he thought it was, but he didn't know, unless it was a mare's egg. We had heard of mare's eggs, but not of cocoanuts. We broke it and found it had milk in it, which convinced us we had surely found the proverbial mare's egg. We hunted all about through the brush for a mare's nest, but failed to find one.

One day, when there was a circus in town, and I was looking for the elephant, there came along the road three young boys. They had their shoes in hand, but put them on in my presence. It is remarkable that I remember these boys. Two of them had walked from Plattsburg. These were Jim Reeb and Bony Wood. At the forks of the road they met a boy from Liberty. This young fellow was the no less distinguished lawyer here in St. Joseph, named Col. John Doniphan.

When they got their shoes on (for they walked barefoot from their homes) they proceeded down town, and had to a supply of gingerbread. When the circus band began to play Bony Wood and his companions rushed past the court house shouting "the circus is coming."

Copyright © 2026 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.