

Butler County History *...By Alta Harvey Heiser*

Beaver Tavern Stood At Northeast Corner Of Park Ave., N. D St.; Structure Then Served Rossville; Daniel Beaver Acquired Land, Built Brick Tavern; Indian Jim Among Servants

Now we come to one of the really important taverns, that of Daniel Beaver.

In 1828, he bought a quarter block at present northeast D St. and Park Ave. it was then in Rossville at N. Third and Boudinot Sts.

Previous owners were Robert Winion, Samuel Dick and John Sutherland. Mr. Beaver also secured the quarter block which made his property extend from Boudinot to N. St., or present Wayne Ave.

Facing Boudinot St., he built a large, substantial brick tavern. The tavern stables were around on North St. The courtyard was east of the tavern, extending to the middle of the block. Here were parked the wagons and other vehicles of the tavern guests, the horses being taken to the stables.

On the front of the tavern, an outside stairway led to the "first floor," the ground floor being called the basement. The bar was in this basement, where food was also furnished to travellers. The main dining room was in an adjoining building. The first floor to which the stairway led was entirely taken up by offices and sitting room purposes. Here travellers gathered around the huge fireplace in winter, swapping yarns and experiences, in jovial companionship. The sleeping rooms were on the second and third floors and the fourth floor was one large room, used as a town hall, for balls and school room purposes.

We were grieved when the outside stairway was removed. Now it is worse, with the entire building gone. We like to retain things as they were in the long ago.

The most picturesque and interesting figure about the tavern was Indian Jim, a faithful servant. He wore a beaver hat and carried a cane. He was quite trustworthy except when he took too much fire water. Then he would disappear for days at a time. When he returned, he would tell strange tales of his adventures in the woods where he had a hideout while sobering up. Once he said that some strange animal kept saying, over and over "Make good soap grease". He would not agree that it was an owl hooting.

In 1833 Mr. Beaver bought the lot at the southeast corner of Third and Boudinot, directly across from the tavern. Here he built a substantial brick house for a home. Family life was entirely part from tavern life. In later years, the girls enjoyed the social gatherings at the tavern, especially the balls. They wore steel hoops with their party dresses, and so were afraid of storms. Indian Jim was a good weather prophet, and would warn them in time for them to remove their hoop-skirts.

Mrs. Beaver was Catherine Baldwin, a cousin of Lucky Baldwin, California's famous racehorse king. Mr. Beaver went to California during the gold rush, leaving the tavern to be managed by his wife and Indian Jim. On his second trip out, he struck a rich vein of gold and decided to move there. He started back to wind up his affairs and get his family. This was in 1859. The vessel on which he took passage was shipwrecked in a storm off Cape Horn and he was lost at sea. We are not told what became of his gold mine.

Going back, it is said that Mr. Beaver came to Hamilton in 1797. He was a carpenter and builder. His name is found connected with many early improvements about early Hamilton and Rossville. His neat drawings, which show his design for the mile posts on the Hamilton, Rossville, Oxford, Darrtown and Fairhaven Rd., give a fine example of his workmanship. He and Joseph Lashorn built Hamilton's first

public school building on S. Front St.

Mr. Beaver was sexton for Rossville's old graveyard which was just across North Third, or D St. from the tavern. His records were not turned in to the Greenwood Cemetery office. The only record of burials there is in the Greenwood record of bodies moved there from the old Rossville cemetery. Many were not moved. The stones were laid flat and covered with earth.

James Smith, an early proprietor of Rossville and prominent in many ways, and his wife who was Catherine Kilgore, still lie near the North D St. entrance to Sutherland Park. So rare are these records, that we feel a great urge to dig out the tombstones!

Fred Beaver, a direct descen-

dant of Daniel, lives in Winter Park, Fla. He and his wife and daughters came over to Sarasota to see me. Feeling that there must have been valuable records left by Daniel Beaver, I asked him what he knew about 'his.

He said there were indeed many valuable records and keepsakes left in the office of the old tavern. His brother Pierce found them. He carefully collected them and kept them locked in a safe, or cabinet, in a little building he had for an office. He was quite proud of these valuable records — so valuable that they should have been kept in a fire proof vault.

The office building and all its contents were destroyed by fire!

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