

THE
COUNTY OF HIGHLAND

A History of Highland County, Ohio, from the Earliest Days, with
Special Chapters on the Bench and Bar, Medical Profession
Educational Development, Industry and Agriculture
and Biographical Sketches

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Andrew Bishir, retired farmer of Dodson township, is not only a descendant of old settlers but may be regarded as one himself, his birth having occurred at an early period in the history of Highland county. When his grandfather, Christopher Bishir, after tarrying a while in 1810 at the mouth of Crawfish river, came to Union township there were comparatively few people there to greet him. In fact, the township had only been organized a year or two when this Pennsylvania pioneer arrived with his wife and children. Even in 1833, when he built his log cabin in Dodson township about one mile south of Lynchburg, the country was still wild and sparsely settled. Aside from the dangers of Indian hostility, which had happily passed, the main features and characteristics of a wilderness were all still present. Neighbors were few and far between, few of the comforts of civilization were to be had and the wolves, still plentiful in the woods, made night hideous with their dismal howlings. Deer, turkey, panthers, bear and other wild game were yet abundant and the main reliance of the settlers for fresh meat. The pioneer alluded to had a son named after himself, Christopher Bishir, who was born in Pennsylvania in 1805, and after he grew to maturity in Ohio was married to Susan Hart, a native of North Carolina. This couple passed away, the mother in 1839 and the father December 24, 1883, after rearing seven children, of whom two sons and two daughters are living. One of the former is Andrew Bishir, the honored subject of this sketch, who was born in Union township, Highland county, Ohio, January 10, 1828. A few years after his birth he was taken by his parents to their new home in Dodson township, where he grew to manhood, and October 23, 1850, was married to Piety Ann Turner. This lady was a daughter of Calvin and Matilda (Wilson) Turner, Virginians who came to Ohio in 1830, and she was born March 5, 1832, during their residence in Preble county. Her parents went to Indiana in 1840, but after remaining there four years returned to Ohio, where they both died, the father in 1872 at Martinsville, when sixty-two years old, and the mother in 1893 at Farmers Station, in the eighty-fifth year of her age. The grandparents of Mrs. Bishir, Meador and Catherine Turner, the former born in Virginia in 1783 and the latter in 1789, also migrated to Ohio in 1830 and both died in Clinton county, he in 1853 and she in 1872. Andrew Bishir, though reared on a farm, learned the cooper's trade and did considerable work in that line, which was also the calling of his father. He obtained the position of foreman in the distillery warehouse at Lynchburg and retained the same for eighteen years. May 2, 1864, Mr. Bishir enlisted in one of the Ohio regiments organized for the hundred days' service and was out with that command four months. February 10, 1865, he enlisted in Company G, One Hundred and Ninety-second regiment Ohio volunteer infantry, under Capt. Joseph

Gayman, and went with this organization to the lower Shenandoah valley in March. Their service was confined to doing guard and garrison duty at Halltown and other places in that portion of Virginia until September 6, 1865, when they were paid and discharged at Columbus, Ohio, Mr. Bishir at the time holding the rank of sergeant. Mr. and Mrs. Bishir have had seven children, of whom Isadora and Lizzie are dead, the living being Alonzo D., James W., Emma C., Mollie and Arthur A. They celebrated their golden wedding October 23, 1900, and the occasion was a memorable one for the large family connection, as well as the many friends of this venerable and highly esteemed couple. All the children were present except James, accompanied by their wives and offspring, the only notable absence being the wife of Arthur A., who was kept away by sickness. Besides these, Samuel Turner, of Sabina, a brother of Mrs. Bishir, was present, also her two sisters, Mary Dimmitt, of Marion, and Jennie Moon of Clinton county, and Mr. Bishir's two sisters, Mrs. Elizabeth Fenner of Marshaltown, Iowa, and Sarah Walker of Vienna, Ohio. Originally a Democrat, Mr. Bishir was converted to Republicanism by the agitation of the questions growing out of the civil war. He and wife are members of the Christian church and are passing the evening of their days in the quiet and retired life which fittingly ends so many years of activity.

Washington Blackburn was born in Chester county, Pennsylvania, October 24, 1829. His parents were Ephraim, born 1788, and died 1836, and Barbara (House) Blackburn. His paternal grandparents were Ephraim and Prudence (Rich) Blackburn. This Ephraim was a commissioned officer in General Washington's army and was the son of Ephraim Blackburn, the Scotch ancestor who emigrated to Pennsylvania about 1728. After serving an apprenticeship of four years at the carpenter's trade, Washington Blackburn worked one season in the Shenandoah valley, and in the spring of 1851 came to Highland county, Ohio. Until 1866 he was a builder of houses and barns that are still a credit to his handicraft. Since that time he has been a farmer. For many years, while his children were growing to man and womanhood, he resided at what is known as the Blackburn homestead in Penn township. Recently he removed to a comfortable home in New Vienna and relinquished the active management of his real estate to a younger generation. February 25, 1858, he was married to Mary Ann, daughter of Charles and Betsey (Moore) Good, the former being member of a family belonging to the Society of Friends in Pennsylvania for generations. Charles Good achieved high reputation in Penn township for his modern and progressive methods in agriculture. He was regarded as one of the best farmers in the county, his life being one of great activity and made notable by his conscientious performance of every duty.

first took up his residence at Chillicothe. But the fever and ague drove him and many others away from that locality to seek health in the hills along the Rocky fork. East and about one-half mile from his cabin was one of the largest and best deer licks in the whole country. He built a blind in easy range of it, and for years after he settled there he furnished many of the neighbors venison almost as regularly as the butcher of today supplies his customers with beef. He would appoint a day when they were to come for deer meat and seldom, if ever, disappointed his venison-loving consumers. This salt lick was visited by vast numbers of deer, and before the time of Kelley's residence by elk and buffalo. Kelley aided in the erection of the first cabin in Hillsboro.

Mr. Samuel Gibson settled with his family some three miles southeast of Hillsboro, on the Rocky fork. In a year or so after his arrival he built a corn cracker, as it was called, and this was the first effort of the kind on the creek, which now, within a distance of fourteen miles of the Gibson site, has three first-class grist mills, Newell's, Spargur's and Barrett's. Humorous stories were told of the Gibson mill. One, illustrating its slowness, was that when the hopper was filled with corn the miller would start the mill and then leave for some other employment, and the ground squirrels would congregate about and steal the corn as it dropped from the hopper to the ground, until the supply was exhausted. It often happened that in the struggle for place upon the shoe, a squirrel would fall into the hole in the stone, and too frequently for the popularity of this mill, some horror-struck housewife would find the remains of a dead squirrel or rat in the meal sifted for mush or johnny cake. The site, now known by the name Bishir, always had a mill until a few years ago when the roof tumbled in, and now the only thing that remains is the big willow tree; the squirrels and the mill are gone.

In the spring of 1803 General Massie's mill at the falls of Paint was destroyed by a great flood. He made no effort to rebuild, but in a little time bought the mill owned by Jacob Smith, who moved away from the settlement. Massie then laid out the town of Bainbridge and named it for Commodore William Bainbridge, an American naval hero. Soon afterward Jacob and John Rockhold, then living at the falls, were called to the new town to build a store house for Massie, of hewn logs, in which he put a stock of goods. The town of Bainbridge and the big store was the doom of New Amsterdam, which went into a rapid decline, and long ago vanished.

In 1803 Job Haigh settled on Brush Creek, near the present site of the town of Belfast. His home became the preaching place for the traveling preacher, and was for years noted as the abode of a generous and genial man, whose hospitality was unbounded and whose earnest effort to advance the moral interests of the community

that the farmers accumulated from the flax that they grew for the home industry of manufacturing linen. The making of spinning wheels to supply this industry was a very important industry from the earliest days. Thomas Patterson established the Hillsboro woolen mills on the Ripley pike as early as 1835, and this institution was the basis of a large and flourishing business of modern times. Nathan Baker and Llewellyn Griffith started wagon making about 1820. Tanyards had been established much earlier, and carried on by John Campton, George Shinn and Joseph Woodrow. R. D. Lilly and Isaac Rhoades were afterward successful in this industry. John White, Robert Stewart, and Armistead Doggett were pioneer harness and saddle makers, at a time when almost all the travel was on horse back, and Jacob Butcher, William Doggett and Jacob Bishir manufactured barrels for the Ripley and Cincinnati markets. The first blacksmith was Belzer, a sturdy German, who had as his helper negro Tom, brought to the land of freedom by his former master, Capt. James Trimble. Joseph Dryden was also a famous village blacksmith at a time when that trade was one of the most conspicuous of industries. Col. William Keys, the first auditor of the county, commander of a regiment in the war of 1812, and a devout Presbyterian elder and radical abolitionist, lived by cabinet making, and Newton Doggett and his sons were experts in the same important village industry. P. and C. C. Arthur were notable builders. John Timberlake and L. L. Daniels established the first carriage factory about 1840. The iron foundry of C. S. Bell was established in 1855, and became the foundation of an industry that is one of the most prominent in the history of Hillsboro. J. F. Bell founded the Highland flouring mills in 1866, and for a few years after 1874 an organ factory was operated by Cluxton and Murphy. Brickmaking, lime burning and lumbering and planing have been important industries at Hillsboro as well as in other parts of the county. The Richards flouring mill, of Hillsboro, is among the most substantial industries of the county, affording a ready market for the wheat and corn of the county and the headquarters for the feed supply of the community.

One of the most important industries of Highland county is quarrying, which is carried on extensively both at Greenfield and Hillsboro. The oldest rock in the county, exposed to view, is along Paint creek. Here is found the Niagara limestone, of the Devonian age of geology. Overlaying this is the Helderberg limestone. This rock was laid down in an ocean of considerable depth. It is a magnesian limestone, and has been quarried from the early days of settlement. The stone is regular in its bedding, and slabs three or four inches thick, with a superficial area of four feet, can be obtained with surfaces as smooth and regular as if sawed. In fact the slabs can be used for doorsteps without dressing. They are in good