

# WEST JEFFERSON IN DAYS GONE BY

By Charlie Miller

Series 28

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:** The following articles appeared in the *Madison Chronicle*, London, Ohio.

1860- We are informed that the London & Jefferson Pike bridge over Deer Creek, fell while Esq. Simpson of Lafayette was crossing with a loaded team. (Ohio Rt. 142)

April 1860- Since the death of the proprietor B. M. Mantle, of the Mantle House in West Jefferson, it has passed into the hands of E. R. Hill whom we are informed has refilled the premises and keeps an excellent house of entertainment. Persons having an occasion to stop in "Jeff" will find good accommodation at the Mantle House. (Mr. Mantle was quite prominent in West Jefferson, his son, Charles, built the house on the corner of Frey Ave and Lilly Chapel Rd. in 1855)

November 1860- A colored man, name unknown, a fugitive from Kentucky, threw himself on the railroad tracks in front of a freight train on Tuesday last. The train passed completely severing his head from his body. Cause—disappointment in love.

November 1860 - The First Universalist Church, 4 miles north of Jefferson, will be dedicated on Saturday next. Service by W. W. Norton at 10 a.m., November 29th. (This was Alder Chapel which was later torn down, by Mr. Domby who owned the land. It stood just beside the Alder Cemetery on the Plain City-Georgesville Rd.)

We now come to the end of the era between the founding of West Jefferson and the beginning of the Civil War, in 1861. Only 30 years prior there had been nothing in this area except a few widely scattered settlers. The land was untamed, uncultivated, and unsettled. Forests abounded, and nothing could be seen for miles but the trees and the rolling hills. The animals were wild and at night nothing could be heard but the rustling of the leaves and the occasional noises made by the animals. There were no lights at night as we see now but just the moon and the stars overhead. Most of all there would have been the awareness of the loneliness in such a vast untouched land.

In a few short years, this area saw the greatest change in its landscape and in its way of life that may ever come in such a short period of time. In 1822 the first town was formed, there had already been a road built through here a few years earlier but now people were clustered together in a small area. Civilization had come! In a short time, they had a church, a cemetery, and even a few stores. At night people could see the lanterns burning in their neighbor's houses. By 1850 and with the coming of the railroad prosperity was well on its way. By the time that the Civil War came many farms had been cleared and cultivated. Many people had settled in and the town's business had flourished. People could travel by railroad, could reach the groceries within walking distance, could have fresh meat, and flour from the mills, and could get weekly news from the newspapers in London and the latest news via telegraph. Things pertaining to everyday life had really changed since 1821!

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