

In the early days a tavern was a prominent factor in a community, and they were interspersed here and there along the roads leading to the Lake. It was a place where every traveler who came along sought rest and refreshments for himself and his tired horse. The taverns were also the stopping places of the freight wagons and the stage coaches, and the arrival and departure of these were great events in the life of the rural communities. These taverns had large fireplaces, which in winter were kept well filled with wood, and they were of sufficient capacity to heat and light the house. There was no market for timber in those days of clearing the forest, and the only cost of fuel was the cutting of the wood. Around these great fireplaces the travelers gathered, and their conversation gave the settlers glimpses of other parts of the country of which they knew little, and at bed-time the weary sojourners would spread their blankets near the blazing fire and retire to rest and sleep. But the tavern with its old-fashioned life has gone with the stage. The Mansfield hotels of today—the Vonhof and the Southern—with their conveniences and fine equipments, are like royal palaces when contrasted with the little log cabin in which Capt. James Cunningham boarded the surveyors who platted the town of Mansfield, in June, 1808.

A century ago, Abraham Baughman and John Davis came to the Blackfork valley. They were the first white settlers there and located near the Indian village of Greentown, which in the first formation of counties was in Richland. My father, Jacob Baughman, then a boy in his teens, would walk to Wooster—a distance of thirty miles—once a month for their mail; that being their nearest postoffice. The first mail brought to Mansfield was by carriers, on foot, once a week, and was distributed from a log in the public square—now our beautiful Central park. At the present, thirty-three mails are received daily at our city postoffice and delivered at the homes of not only the residents of Mansfield, but are carried by the Rural Free Delivery system to the farmers of the county.

The spinning wheels of the pioneer period, what few are yet left, are cherished as heirlooms by their fortunate possessors. There was the large wheel for wool and the small one for flax. Flax was a necessity. A clearing was made in the winter and in the spring the flax seed was sown, which grew and was harvested. It was spread on the ground to receive the autumnal rains and early frost, which was necessary to prepare it for the breaking, the scutching and the hackling. The tow was then separated from the flax and both were in readiness for the spinning. The hum of the spinning wheel and the reel was the piano music of the pioneer home; and, when echoed by the loom with its quick-moving shuttle, furnished the tow cloth and the linen so useful in those early times, when calico was a dollar a yard, and money was very scarce. The wool and the linen and cotton used for clothing had to be colored by the housewife to suit the tastes of the family. The dyes usually used were copperas, butternut, madder and walnut. But the men clad in linsey-woolsey or tow pants and home-made linen shirts laid broad and deep the foundations of social, moral, industrial and religious life, which have been preserved by their descendants as a priceless inheritance.