DEFIANCE 100 YEARS AGO
Corn Husk Tick Good Hotel Bed; $10 a Month 4 to 6 Hours Sleep; in Timber Jail for Doctor Bill

By Edwin Phelps (1815-87)
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At the close of my last article I was describing the family of Pierce Taylor, and stated that the widow of Jacob Kriss, daughter of Pierce Taylor, married Smith Mead and moved to Wisconsin. I was mistaken in the name; it was Jabez Mead she married, who I understand is still living in Wisconsin, but insane. Smith Mead died near the Junction in Paulding county.

In mentioning F. F. Steven's wife in my last, it reads the sister of Mrs. Mary Thornton, when it should have been mother.

Since my last I have learned that Orville Greer died in California about four years ago. There was another son of William Wells Greer, Joseph by name, who has not been heard from for a great many years; and while I am correcting mistakes I will say that I stated that Dr. John Evans died at Ft. Wayne, which was a mistake. He was here on business and was taken sick, but thought he was able to ride home on horseback and started but was too sick to ride and stopped at Thomas Warren's and grew worse and died there and was taken to Fort Wayne for burial.

First Defiance Hotels

Further up the river, on the corner where Wm. Hoffman's furniture store now is, was the residence of Payne C. Parker who also was selling goods furnished him by John E. Hunt. In 1834 he was building a large addition to be used as a hotel. The building was built with a long ell on Clinton street, facing the river and covering the front of the lot on Front street. When I came the building was under roof, the upper floors laid and the lower floors being laid.

Sylvester Blackman and Samuel Wheeler had just started a saddler and harness shop in the building, and Payne C. Parker was keeping a hotel there as well as the store. One feature of it as, there was one large room upstairs some 40 feet long and 26 or more feet wide in which were 8 or 10 beds. The room was sided up, but not lathed or plastered. A tick filled with corn-husks, a pair of mackinack blankets, colored to save washing, and a comforter was considered a good bed in those days.

To Mr. Parker I hired out for $10 a month to tend store, tend bar, act as hostler, wait on the table and do anything else that was wanting—and there was plenty of it—so that from 4 to 6 hours sleep was all that could be got. His wife was one of those masculine women who could work and did work from...
4 o'clock in the morning until 11 or 12 o'clock at night, and raised a large family of children, only one of whom is now left, their deaths being hastened no doubt by the excessive hard work she did in their infancy.

**One Blacksmith Shop**
West of Clinton Street, near where Mallett's marble shop now is, was a log blacksmith shop, and farther west, between that and where the canal now is was a log cabin, both of which were occupied by Hiram Heath, who was then the only blacksmith in the place.
The brick building now owned and occupied by Henry Hardy was built in 1832. Pierce Evans had the contract, and Robert Wassau and William Semans made the brick and laid them up, both of whom were brick masons by trade. That building was finished off for a court room below and divided into two rooms for the offices above. Horace Sessions did the most of the business in the clerk's and recorder's offices, and William Semans did the work in the Auditor's office at the time I came here.

**To Church in Calico**
The only denomination having regular services here then was the Methodists who had generally two men on this circuit, the one a married man to whom they paid $200 per year, and the other a single man to whom they paid $100 per year; but those were times when if the female members of the church had a clean calico frock with 8 yards in it, and a nicely starched, sunbonnet for Summer and a checked linsey woolsey dress and a quilted hood for Winter they were in condition to go to church and the entire outfit costing in summer about $5 and in winter $10.
On the corner of the public square was a jail made of foot square timber, the floor and top timbers being laid close together, making a room 14 feet square and 10 feet high, with the floor, ceiling and walls all of one thickness—one foot. It was afterwards strengthened by putting on 4-inch plank and another course of timber around the outside, making the walls 2 feet, 4 inches thick. In this the writer was once unfortunate enough to be incarcerated for a doctor’s bill which he could not pay. it then being considered a crime to be poor. There are but a few states now in which this barbarous law has not been repealed.

Dr. Jonas Colby had a small office where J. P. Buffington's drug store now stands, and as he probably did more hard riding than any other man in this county, shall have more to say of him hereafter. I have now described all the buildings in town as near as I can recollect, and in my next I will try and describe the settlement of the country tributary to Defiance at that time.