

MT. VERNON, ILLINOIS



A Children's Coloring Book of Local History

By Thomas A. Puckett

Mount Vernon, Illinois
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Acknowledgements

&

Special Thanks

To

Mayor Mark Terry

Dr. Ferrell Puckett

Sharon Nichols and the Second Grade Class of 2001

Horace Mann School

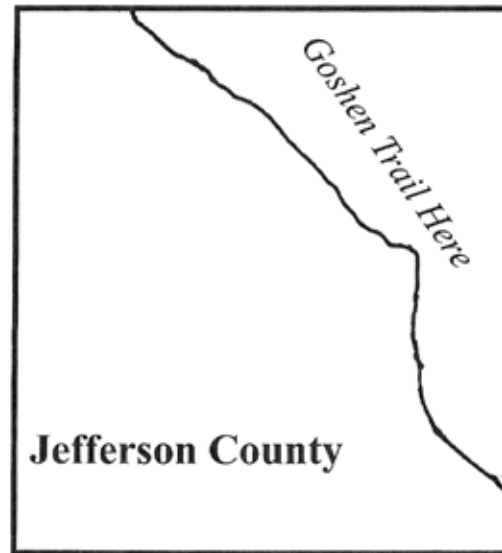
Map of Illinois

Illinois became the 21st state in the Union in 1818. A north central state, the Mississippi, Ohio and Wabash Rivers form its western, southern and eastern borders.



* MT. VERNON (POP. 17,000)

□ JEFFERSON COUNTY
(POP. 40,050)



GOSHEN TRAIL

The Goshen Trail was made by the Indians from the St. Louis area going to Shawneetown to get salt. This trail provided access to our area. It passed four miles east of Mt. Vernon making it necessary to create a branch into town. This branch then went north to rejoin the original trail. Later called the Goshen Road, this trail became the major migration route into Mt. Vernon. In some parts of the county it is still used.

The notches shown on the tree indicated the kind of trail to expect as the pioneers traveled. One notch indicated the trail was wide enough for a walking path. Two notches indicated to travelers it was wide enough for travel by horseback. Three notches indicated it was large enough for a horse and wagon to travel.

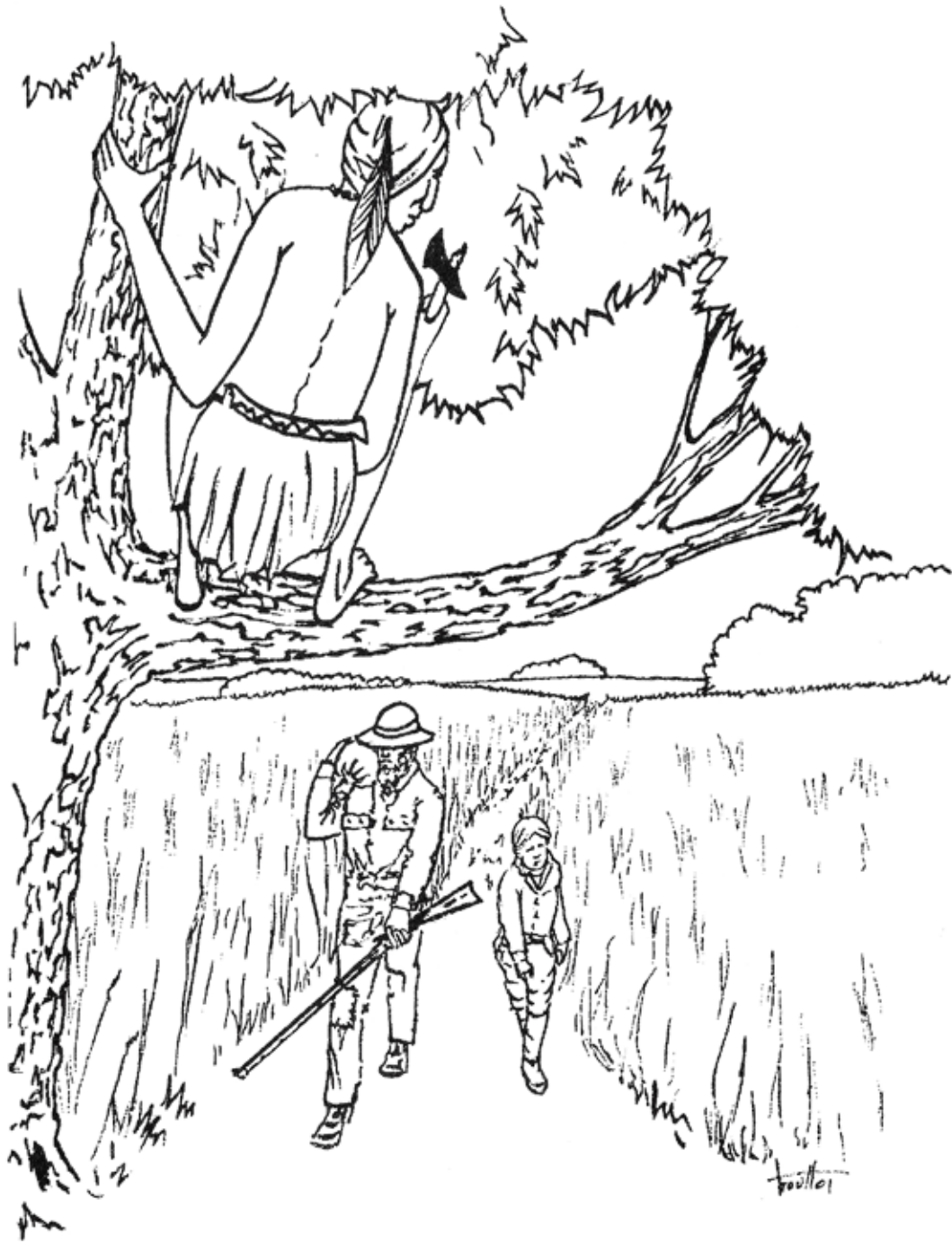


GOSHEN TRAIL

Andrew Moore

The first settlers, Andrew and Peggy Moore and their three children arrived in this area around 1810. They built a crude two-room cabin and cleared a small patch of land to raise corn. They ate wild animals, plants, and honey from bee trees.

One day Andrew and his son, who was about ten years old, walked to a nearby mill south of their homestead to have bags of corn ground into meal. Because they never returned home from their trip, it is assumed Indians killed them.



Zadok Casey

“Diamond in the Rough”

Zadok Casey arrived in 1817 traveling the Goshen Trail. He and his family settled three miles northwest of Mt. Vernon. They built a crude lean-to-shelter to live in. Zadok’s wife Rachel was quoted as saying. “These were the happiest years of my life.”

Rachel taught Zadok to read and write. He further educated himself by reading the Bible. He was one of the first preachers in the area.

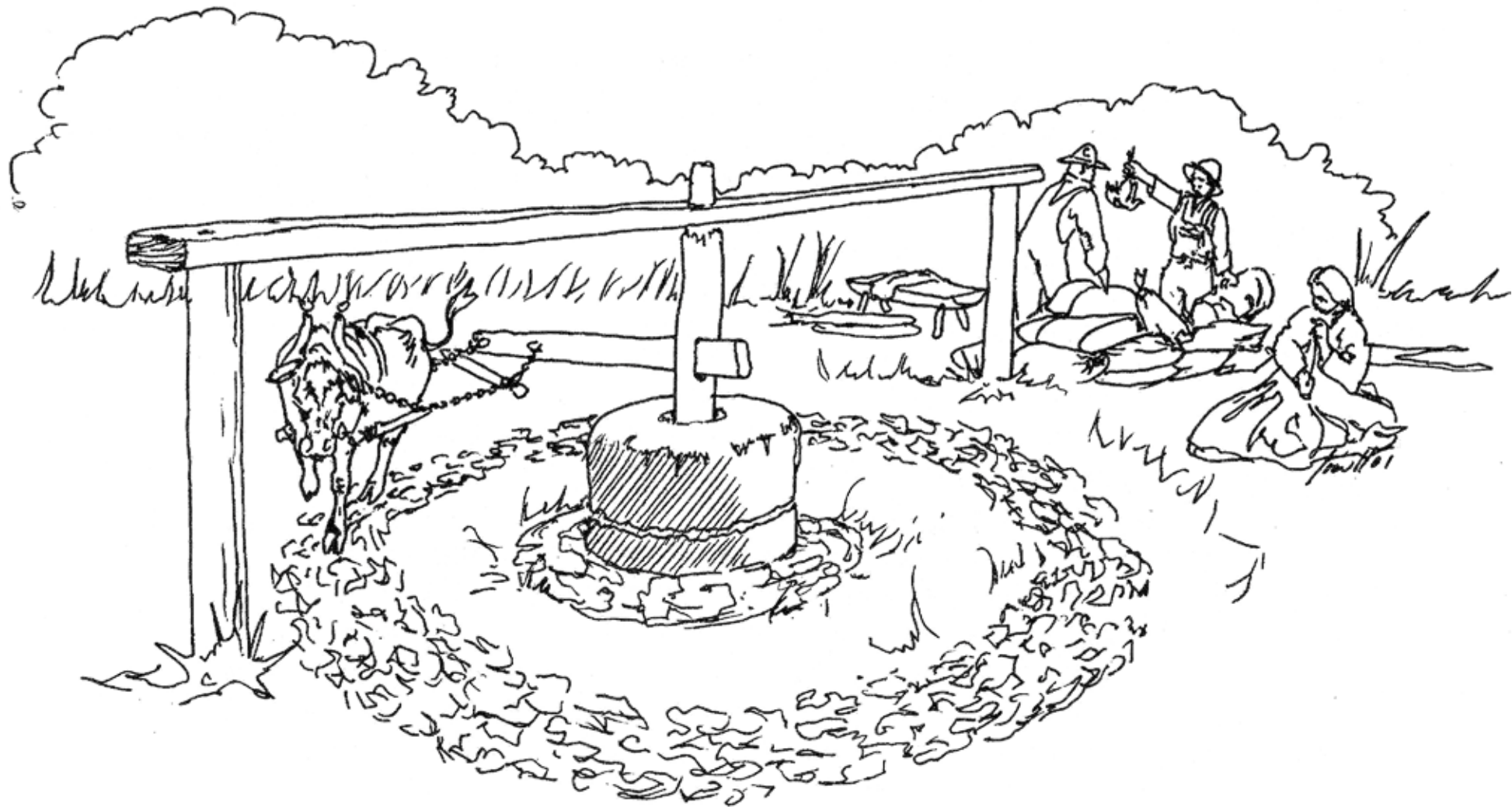
Zadok also spent 29 years in public office. When he died he was buried in Old Union Cemetery. You may visit it today and see the family graves enclosed with a beautiful iron fence. Zadok Casey Junior High School was built in 1937 on the site of his last home at 1829 Broadway.



LEAN-TO-SHELTER

Lewis Johnson

Lewis Johnson arrived in Mt. Vernon in 1817 and built a crude mill on the property adjoining Zadok Casey's homestead. The roughly constructed mill ground corn and wheat for the early settlers. The millstones are on display at the south end of the Puckett General Store at the Jefferson County Historical Village.



CRUDE MILL

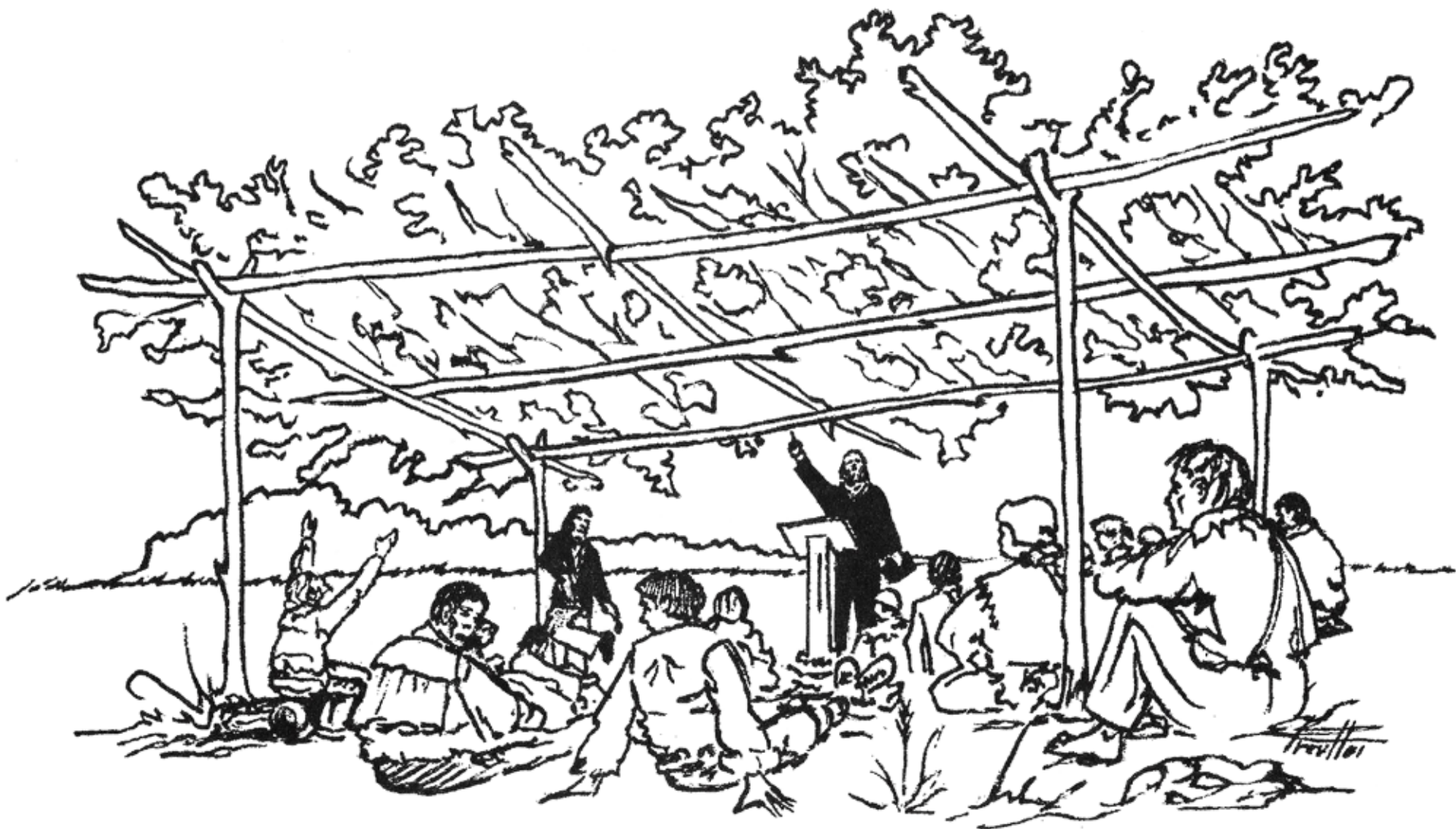
Reverend John Johnson

Since there were very few church buildings at this time, a brush arbor like the one in the picture was used for special church services. Reverend John Johnson, a Methodist circuit-riding preacher from Tennessee, arrived in Mt. Vernon in 1834. He brought his wife Susannah and all their belongings in two wagons pulled by oxen. John and Susannah had ten children. Because it was so difficult to raise a large family Susannah said, "To make my lot still worse, I had not a sufficiency to eat." They ate cabbage, turnips, and paid in advance for meal to make bread. They had one shoulder of ham to last six months. Flour and coffee were luxuries.

Prices for food in 1820

Three chickens, 25 cents
Four pounds of butter 50 cents
Ten pounds of flour, 25 cents
It took \$4.87 to feed a family of 7 for 3 months.

Reverend Johnson preached in Mt. Vernon until his death in 1858. His grave is located at Old Union Cemetery.



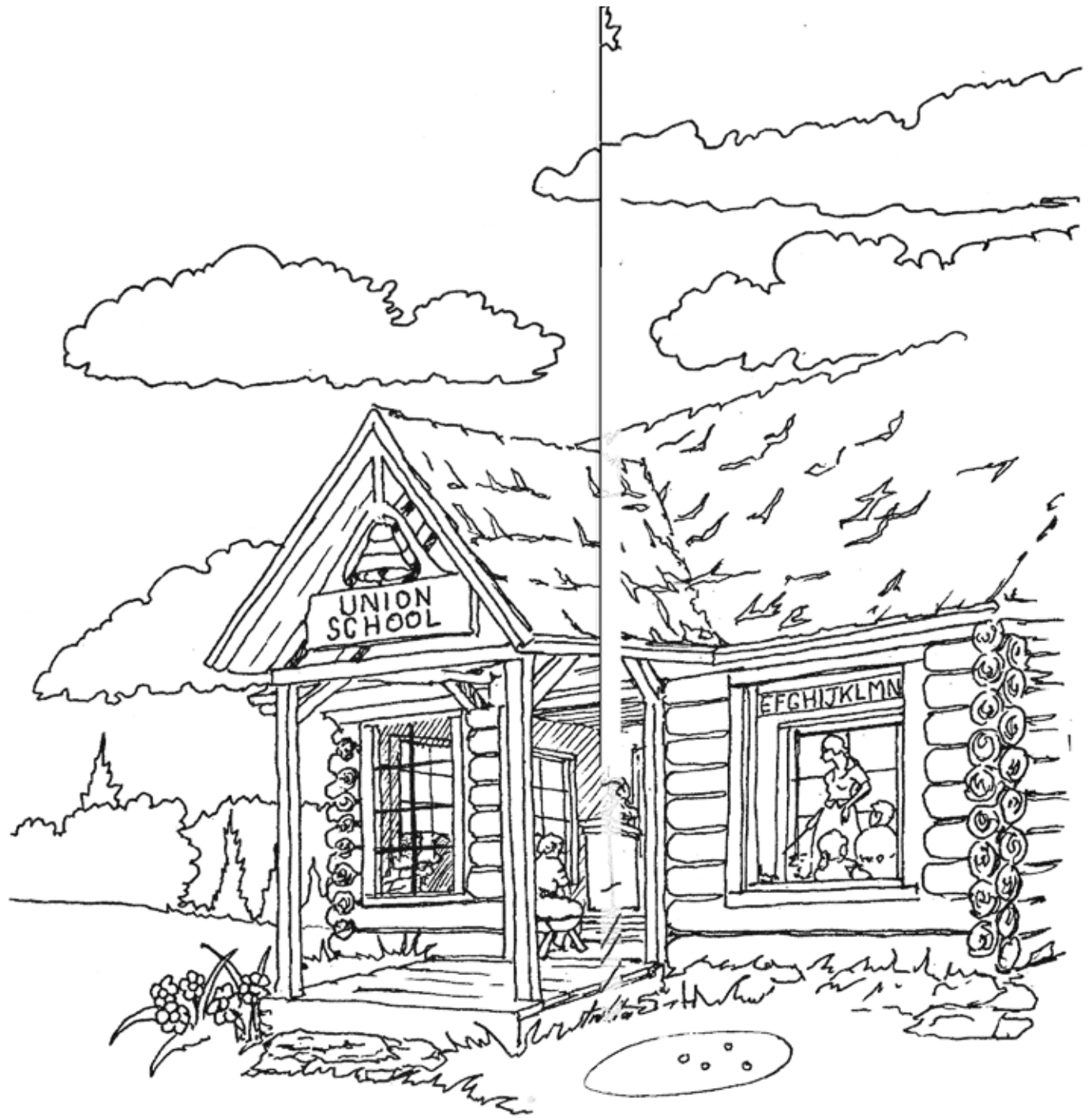
BRUSH ARBOR MEETING

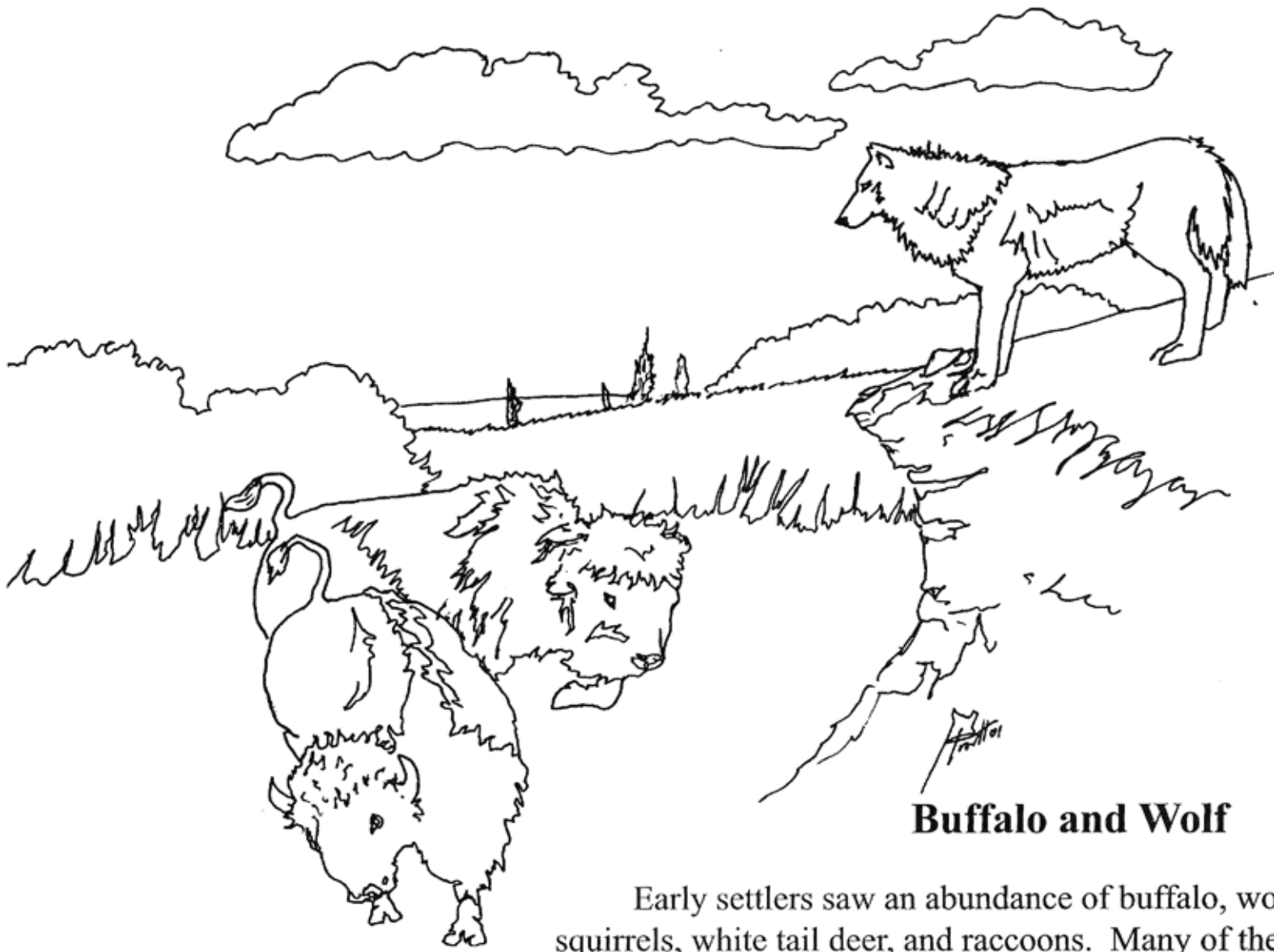
Crude Log School

The typical early school of 1820 had crude puncheon *desks and benches. Students ate a cold biscuit and sausage sandwich for lunch brought to school in an empty lard bucket. They also ate wild fruit and berries the family had picked. Recess games consisted of marbles, Andy or Annie over, mumble peg and hide and go seek.

Snakes were common in the classroom. The snakes came out of their dens in the springtime. The men would meet for a “Snake Killin” and as many as five hundred snakes were killed. Over three hundred were rattlesnakes.

* Puncheon – a split log with a flat top and round bottom with four legs attached.



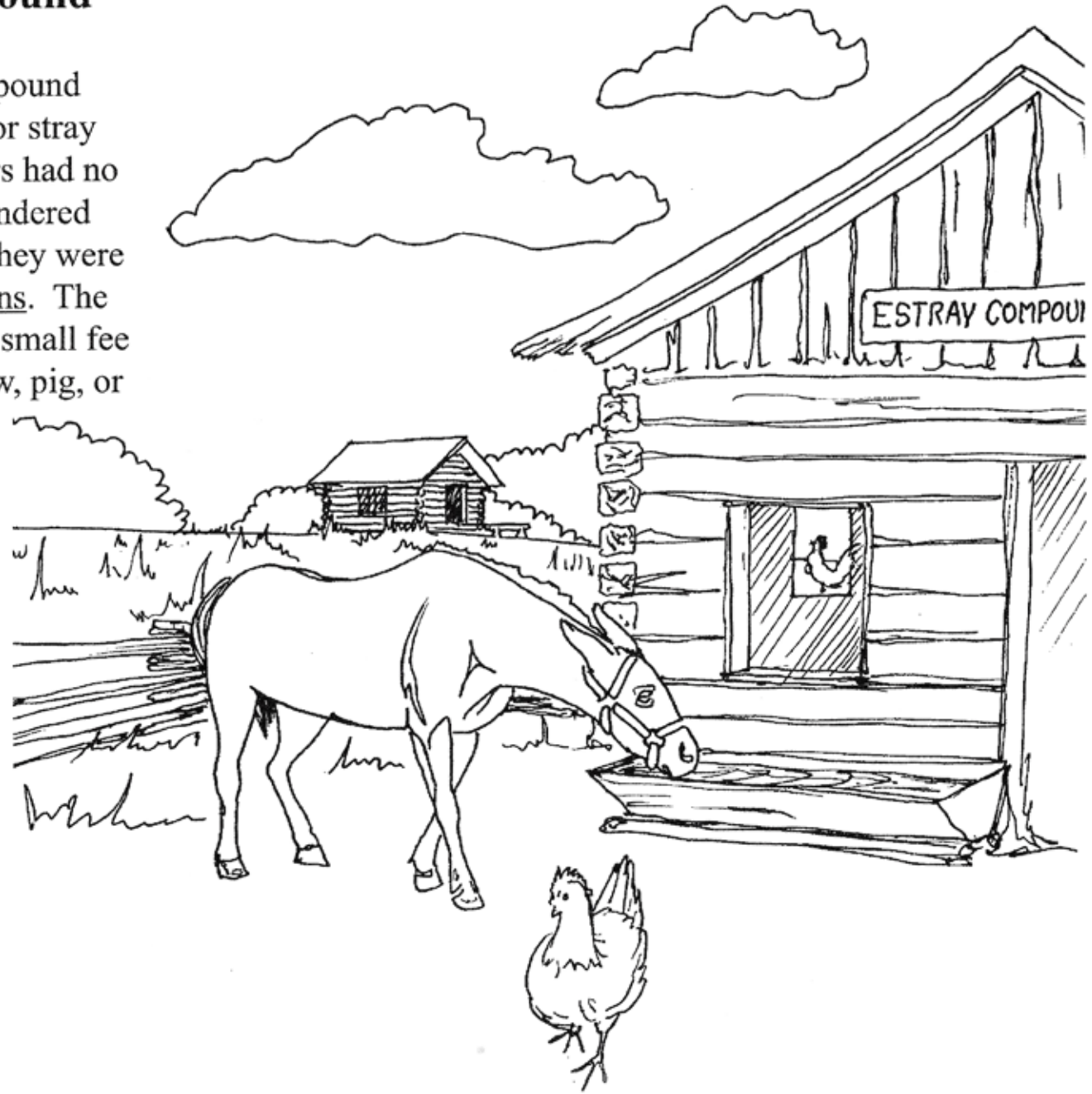


Buffalo and Wolf

Early settlers saw an abundance of buffalo, wolves, rabbits, squirrels, white tail deer, and raccoons. Many of the animals were used for food to feed their families. Animal hides, which were known as pelt were used for clothing and exchanged for food at the trading post. Great skill was required in hunting the animals.

Estray Compound

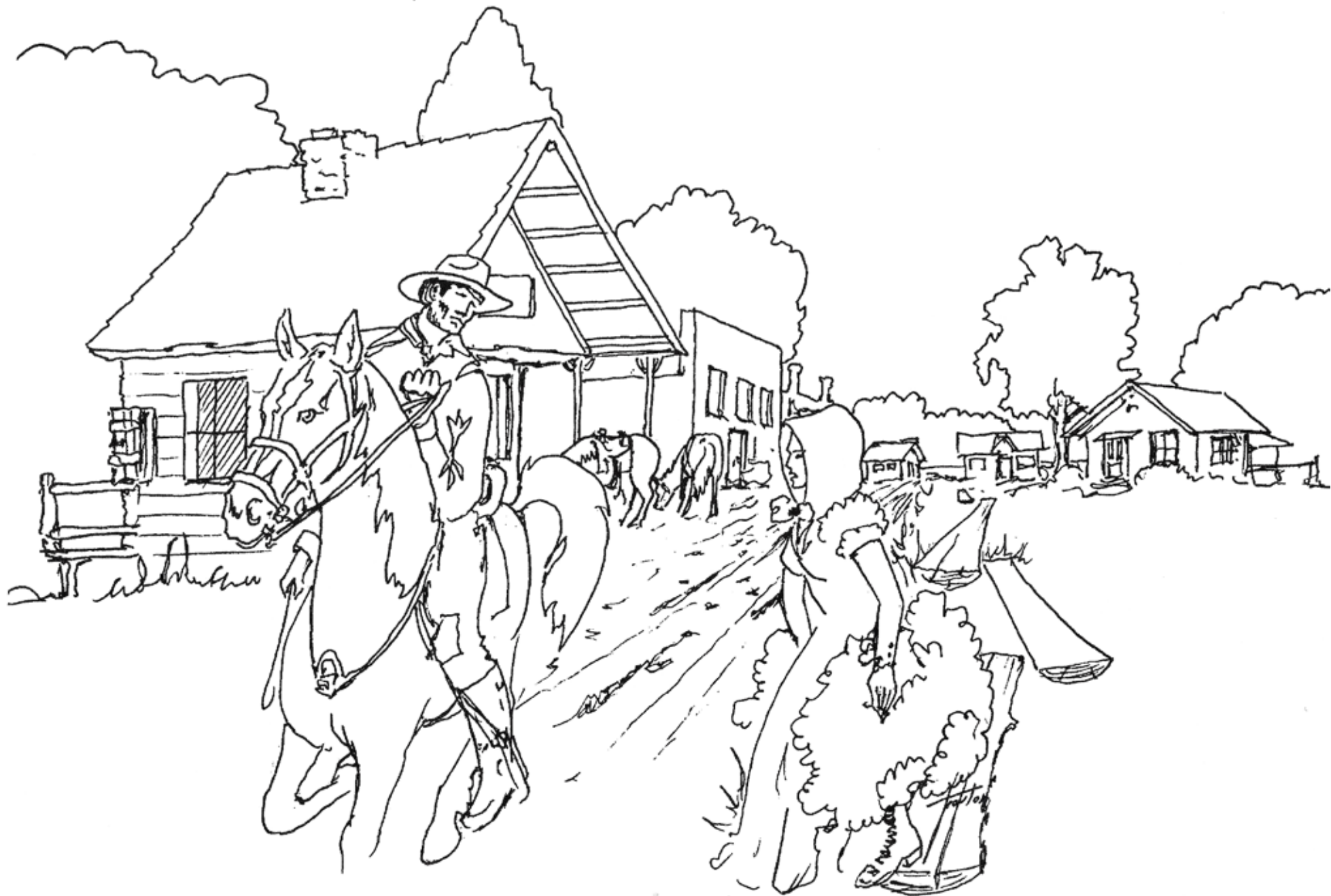
The estray compound was a home for lost or stray animals. The pioneers had no fences so animals wandered freely. When found they were taken to the estrays pens. The owner was charged a small fee to recover his lost cow, pig, or other animal.



Early Homes

Mt. Vernon began when homes and stores were built on 20 acres donated by William Casey. Around 1823 Henry Maxey built a log cabin. Later Harvey and Nancy Pace built a home nearby.

The roads were either mud or dust. This made traveling difficult. A lady is shown walking on a puncheon sidewalk rather than walking in the mud.



Early Business

The Pace General Store was located on the corner of 10th * and Main Streets (southwest corner) and was operated by Harvey Pace.

Dr. James H. Watson was Jefferson County's first physician. He came to Mt. Vernon as a squatter and later built a hickory wood log cabin.

The Herdman family owned the first blacksmith shop. They lived at 117 North 10th Street. It was in the yard of this home that Abraham Lincoln spoke in 1840.

*10th Street was first known as Union Street.



Lincoln

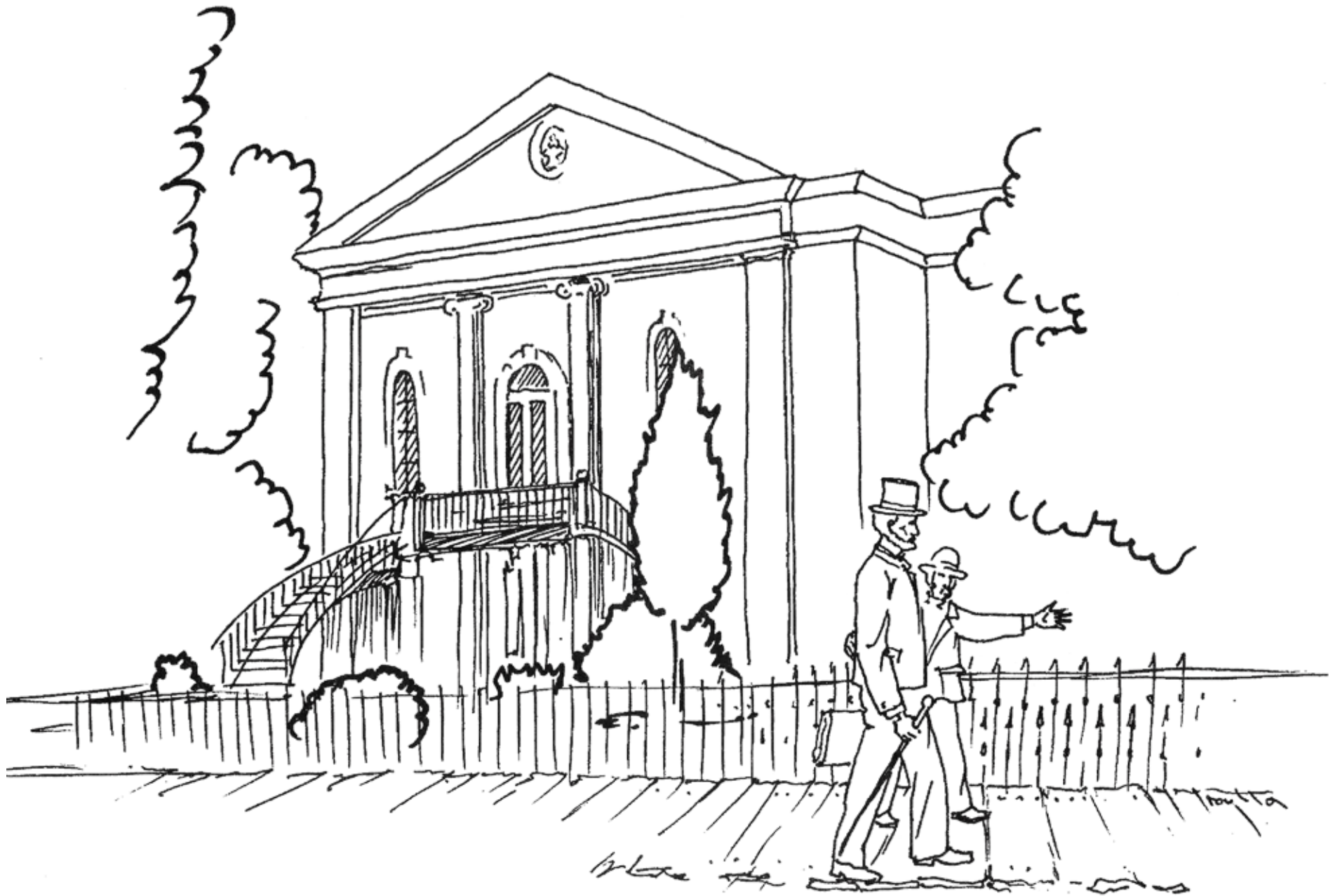
Abraham Lincoln grew up in New Salem, Illinois. As a young attorney he made his first trip to Mt. Vernon on August 27, 1840 to speak in favor of the whig Party candidate for president, William Henry Harrison. He debated against John A. McClernand.

In 1850 Lincoln returned to Mt. Vernon with George B. McClellan to argue and win a case for the Illinois Central Railroad. The case was heard in the Supreme Court building which is now the Appellate Courthouse located at Fourteenth and Main Streets. Mr. McClellan as vice-president of the railroad at this time.

Lincoln stayed overnight at the Mt. Vernon Inn. It was located at the northeast corner of 12th Street and Main Street.

Lincoln became President of the United States in 1861 and George B. McClellan and John A. McClernand became Union Generals during the Civil War.

APPELLATE COURTHOUSE

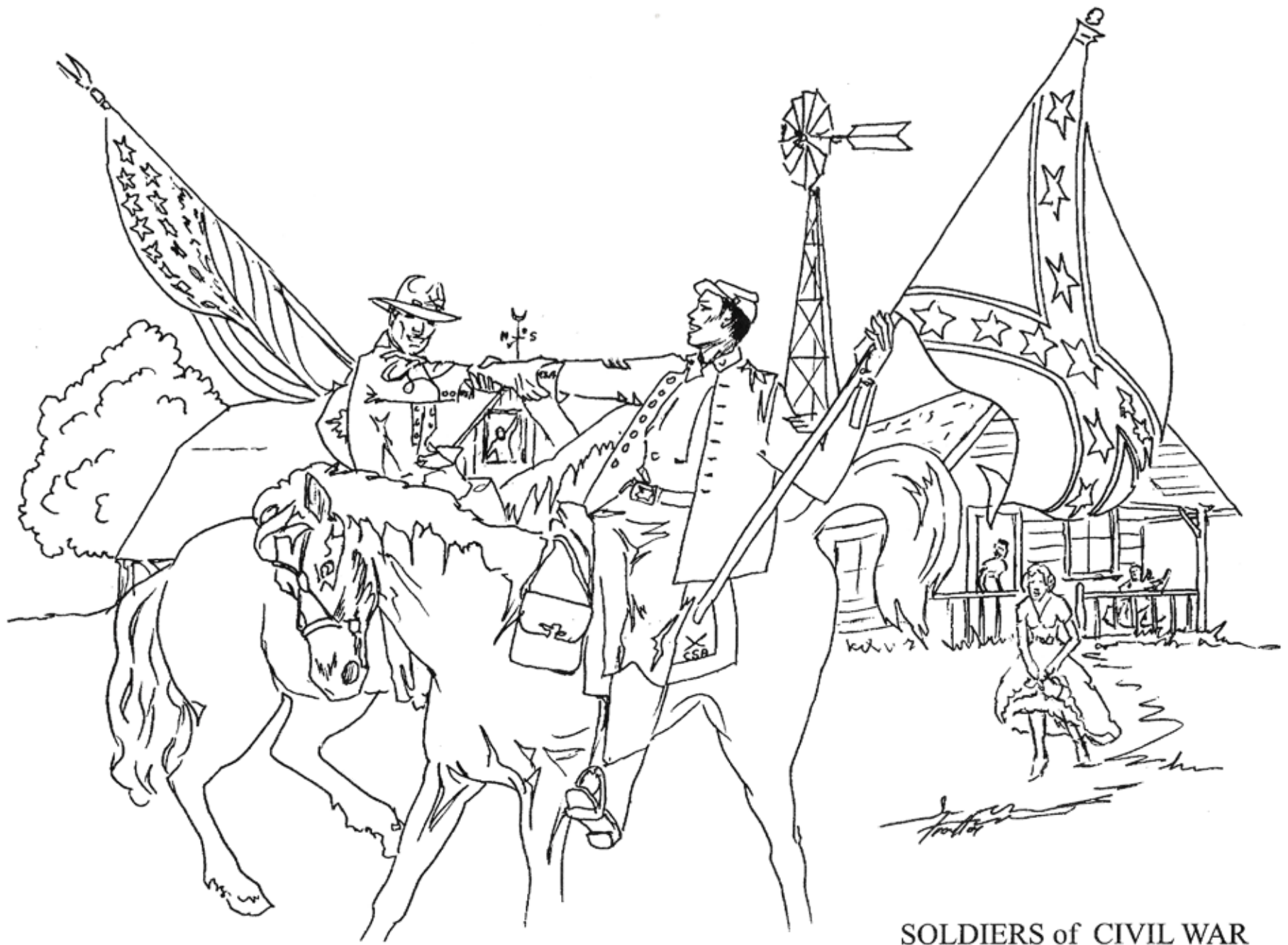


Civil War

The residents of Jefferson county were evenly divided on the issue of slavery. They had recently arrived from the southern states and many of their relatives were Confederates. The Confederates believed the country should still have slaves and the Federals thought slavery should be abolished.

The Confederate soldier in the forefront wore a uniform of gray. The southern soldier carried a flag with eleven stars. Their flag was red, white and blue.

The Federal soldier (Yankee) in the background wore a uniform of blue. The northern soldier carried a flag with thirty-three stars and the color was red, white and blue.



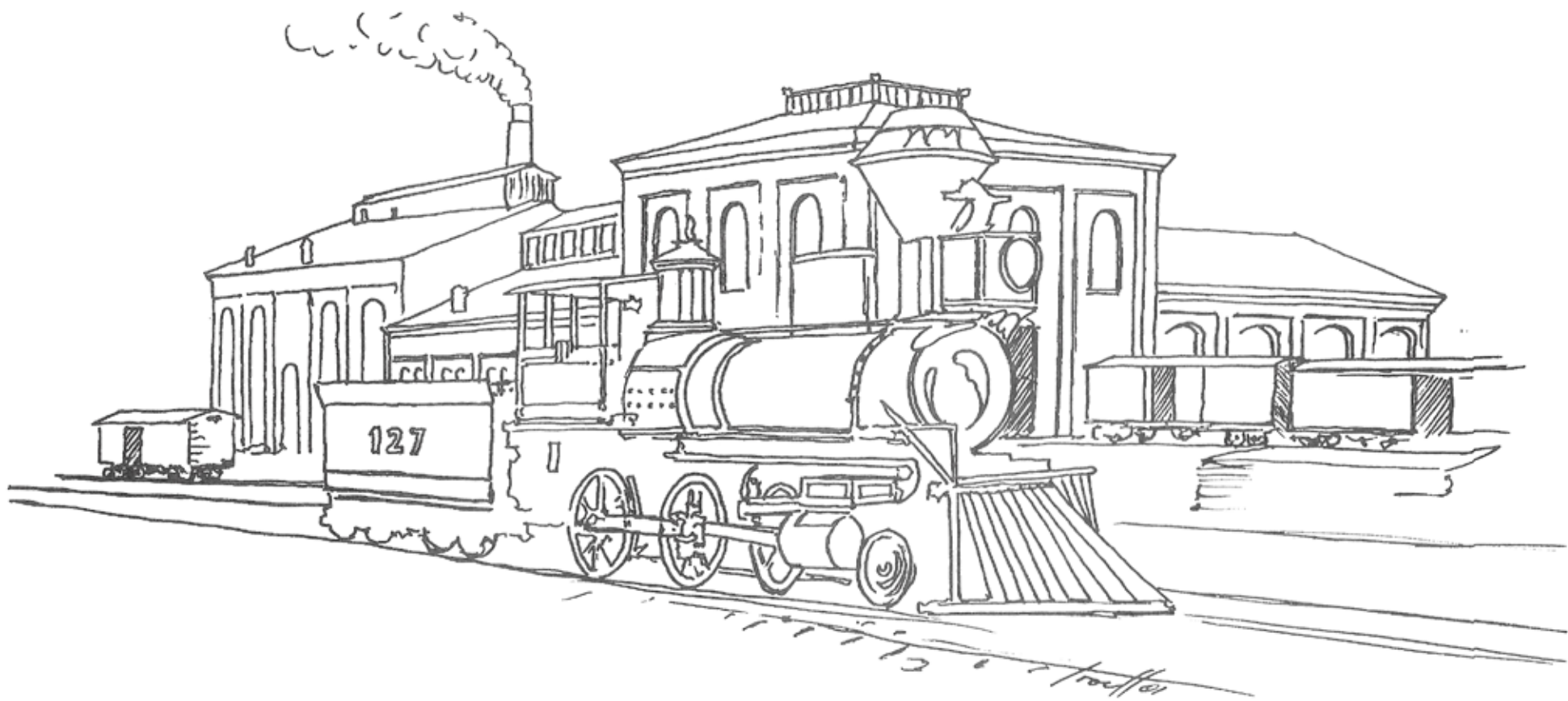
SOLDIERS of CIVIL WAR

Railroads

Railroads were an important part of Mt. Vernon history. The Louisville & Nashville Railroad began in 1870; the Southern Railroad in 1883 and the Chicago & Eastern Railroad began in 1901. The Wabash, Chester, & Western line ran between Mt. Vernon and Chester, Illinois, beginning 1889. The W C & W was purchased by the Missouri Pacific and still operates in Mt. Vernon today.

David O. Settlemyre of Litchfield, Illinois purchased the L & N repair shops in 1890 and began the manufacture of freight cars. His Mt. Vernon Car Manufacturing Company was in existence for 64 years and employed more than 2,300 people during World War II. It was a major industry in Mt. Vernon and consisted of seventy-two acres of land adjoining the L & N railroad tracks.

A longtime president of the “car shops” was the late W.C. Arthurs. His large and beautiful home may be seen at 800 North Street.



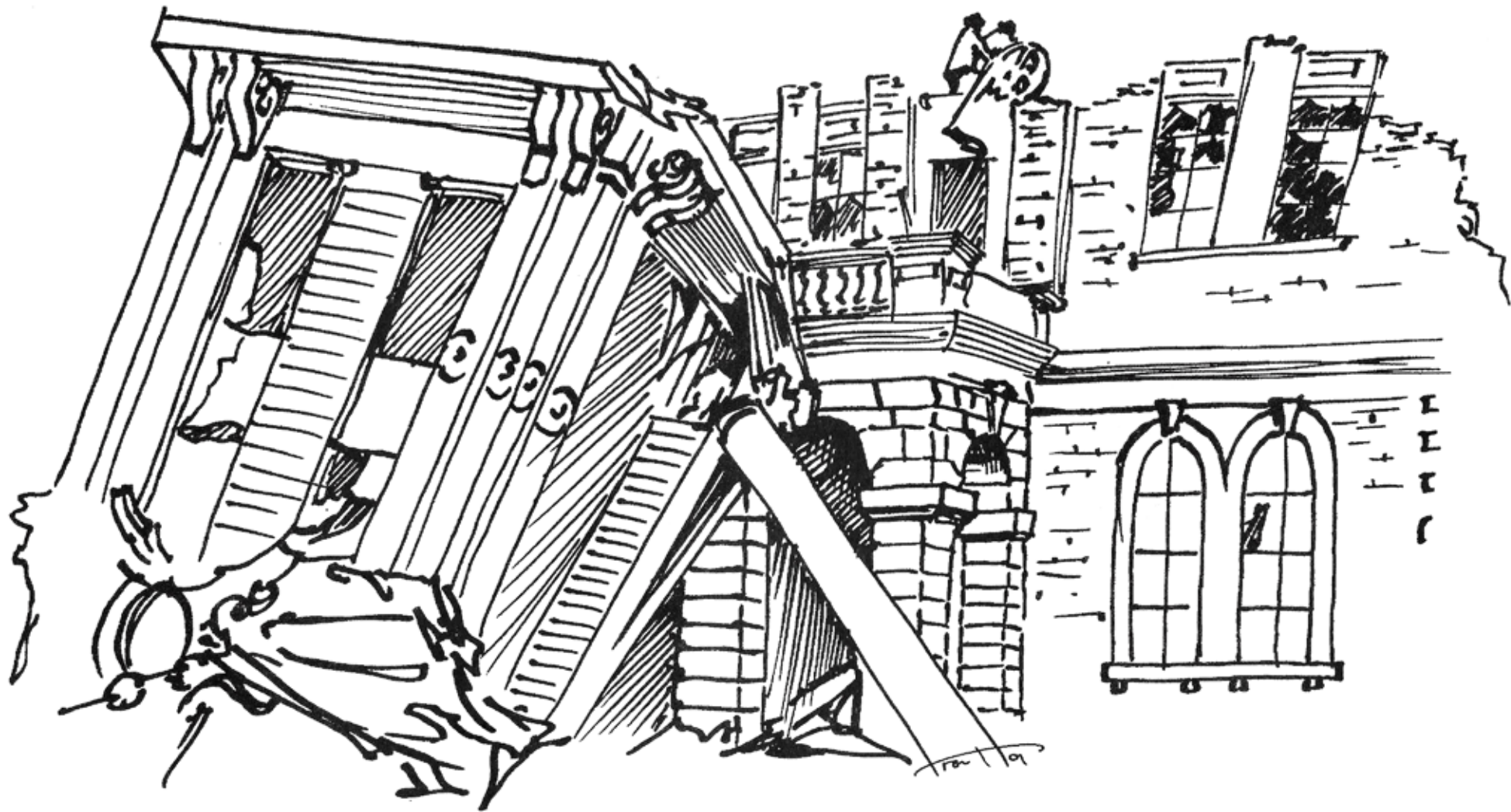
MT. VERNON RAILROAD CAR SHOPS

The Great Cyclone of 1888

Thirty people were killed in the great cyclone of 1888. Around 518 buildings were damaged or destroyed. The huge cyclone (generally called tornadoes) left 329 people homeless.

Among the buildings destroyed were the two public schools (Field and Franklin), the courthouse which was located on the public square, three churches, and many other places of business.

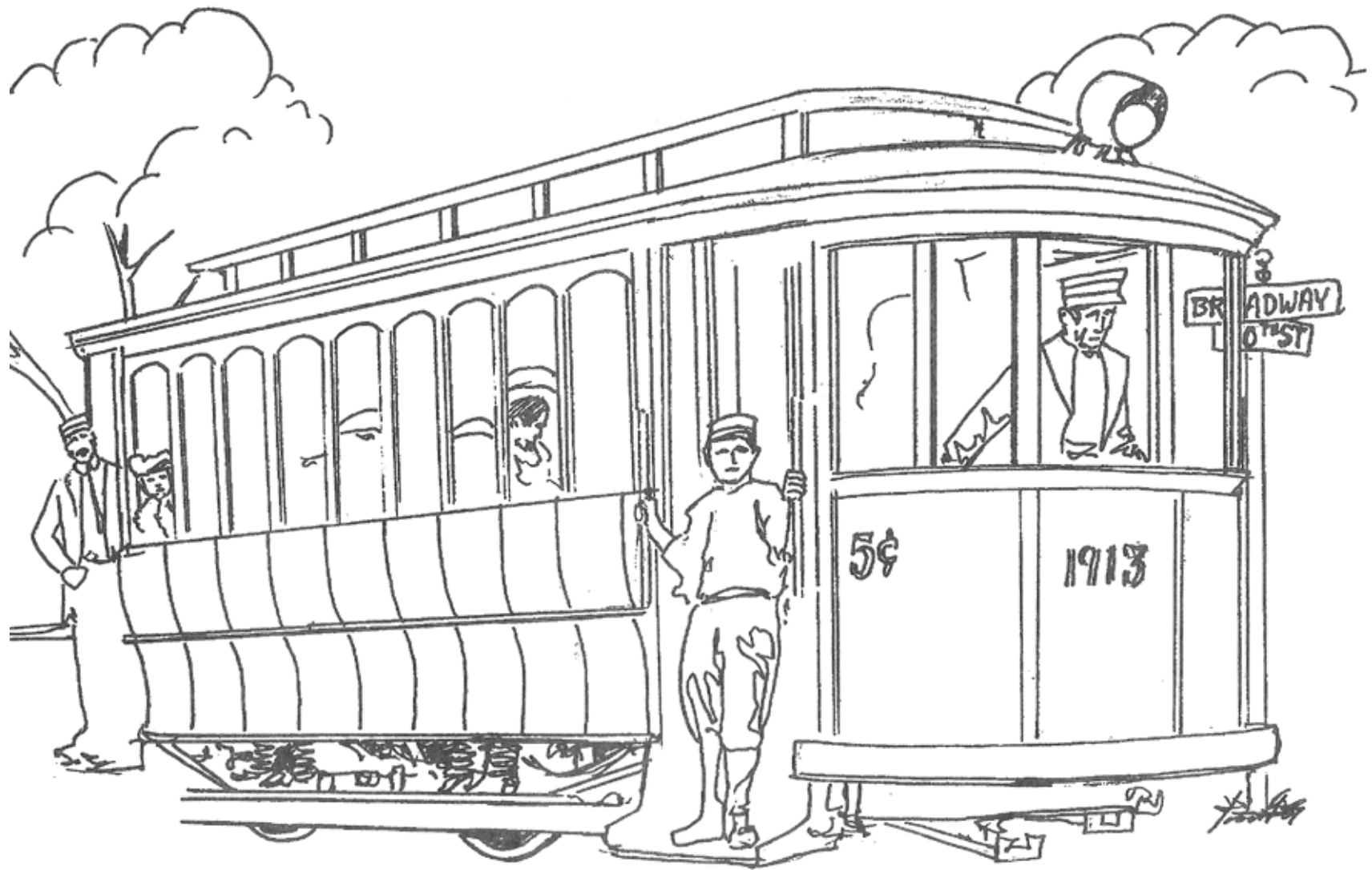
The injured people were taken to the Appellate Court House. It was used as an emergency hospital. The founder of the Red Cross, Clara Barton, came to Mt. Vernon to lead the relief effort.



JEFFERSON COUNTY
COURTHOUSE

The Streetcar

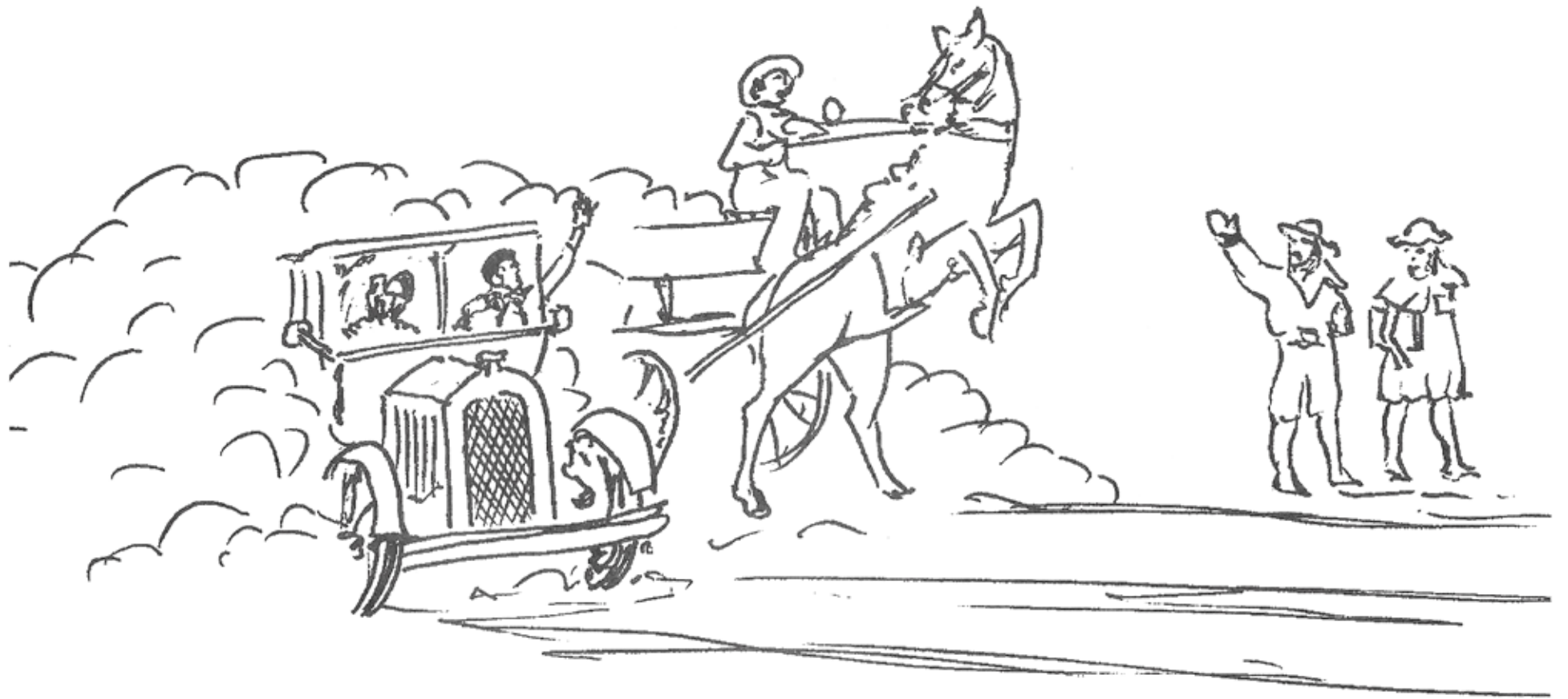
Louis Pavey was president of the Mt. Vernon Traction and Power Company. He started the construction of this system in 1913. The first route ran from east Broadway and west to the city park. The second route ran from 9th Street and Broadway, north to Oakland Avenue and then west to 12th and Isabella Avenue. It cost only five-cents to ride the streetcar. Sadly, the Streetcar Line was closed after two years.



STREETCAR of 1913

Transportation

The first type of travel was by horses pulling a wagon or buggy. Children walked to school no matter what the weather may have been. All roads were either mud or dust until about 1920 when cobblestone came into use. During this time people who could afford to purchase a Model T Ford car for the price of \$500.00 drove them as a way of travel. Hard roads (roads made of concrete) were used in the mid 1920's. Today we use Mt. Vernon's three interstate highways for traveling.

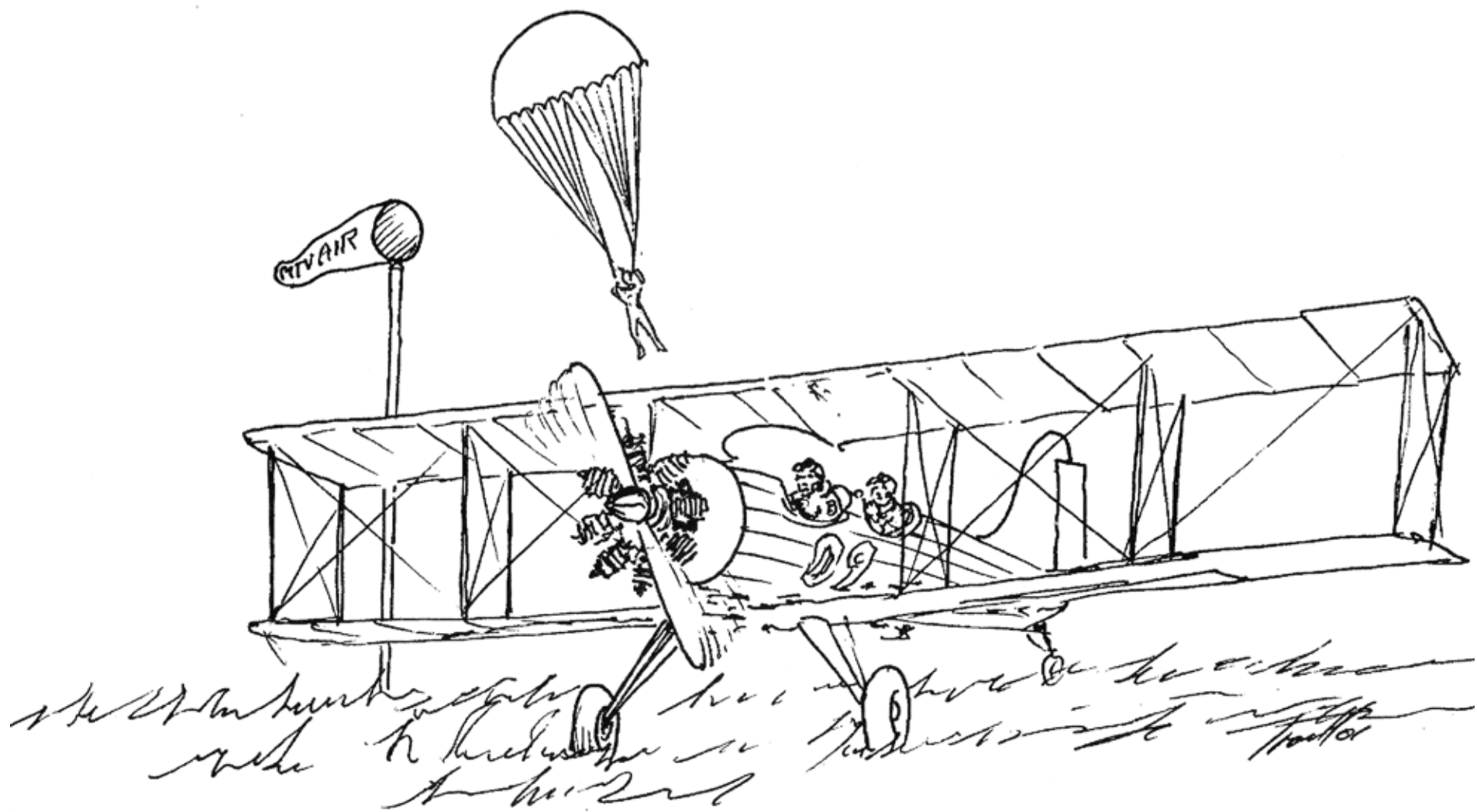


MODEL "T" FORD CAR

Airports

Early fliers used grass landing strips near Mt. Vernon. Improved fields were built in the 1930's. A tragic accident occurred in 1930 when Mt. Vernon parachutist, Ray Mahan, was performing before a large crowd at the local fairgrounds and his parachute failed to open.

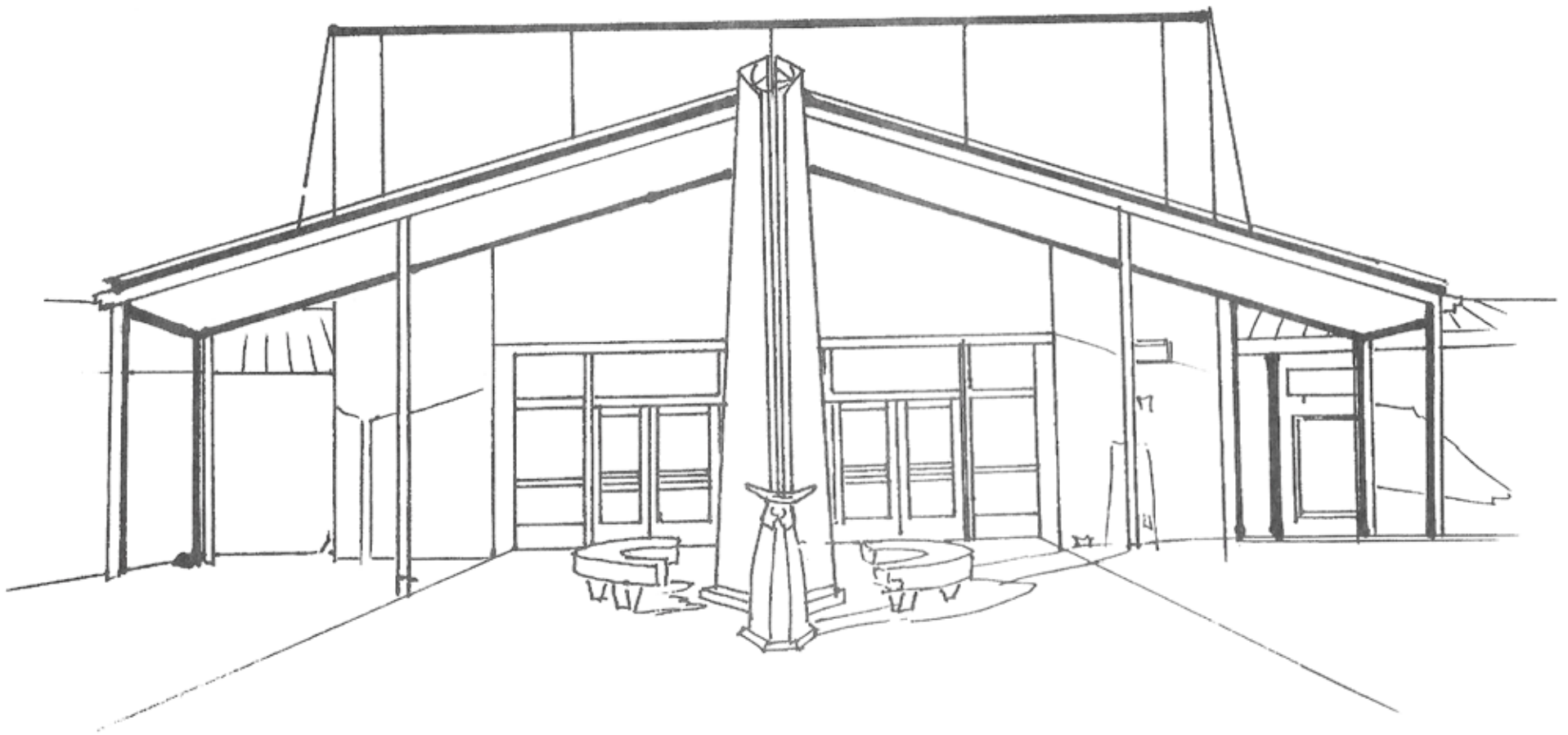
The present modern airport has a 6,500-foot runway, which will accommodate most large aircraft. Ozark Airlines served Mt. Vernon for 17 years starting in the 1960's.



EARLY MT. VERNON AIRPORT

Schools

The Mount Vernon City Schools brings us into the 21st century. It is the responsibility of our young people to carry on the fine tradition of the schools in Jefferson County.



Children who learn of the past have a greater understanding of today and what lies ahead of them in the future.

Please Match

- Governor of Illinois
Louis L. Emmerson
was inaugurated in 1920. His beautiful home (now owned by Central Christian Church) is located at 333 N. 10th Street.



A.

- **Ray Blades**
was a professional baseball player as well as manager of the St. Louis Cardinals. In 1925 he helped the team win the World Series.
He lived at 3007 Broadway.



B.

- **Admiral Archie R. Clemens**
was born at 812b S 22nd St. and grew up attending Horace Mann School. He is the highest ranking military officer from this county. Clemens was responsible for over 193,000 sailors and marines covering one hundred million square miles of ocean. He served as Admiral of the entire Pacific Fleet from 1996 until his retirement in 1999.



C.

4. – **Jean Jordan Kirkpatrick**
 was the most famous graduate
 (1944) of Mt. Vernon Township
 High School. She served as the
 United States Ambassador to the
 United Nations from 1981-1985.
5. – **Dr. Andy Hall**
 moved to Mt. Vernon after
 graduating from medical school.
 In 1940 he was chosen
 “Outstanding General Practitioner
 in the United States. His home was
 located 1802 West Broadway.
6. – Under the leadership of
Dr. Nick Osborne,
 Superintendent of Schools District
 80, our system was restructured.
 He is quoted as saying, “The
 restructuring of District 80 schools
 has been a cooperative venture
 with the school board, staff,
 parents, students, and community”.
 This was done beginning the 2001-
 2002 school year.



Other books available on local history:

“Mt. Vernon, Illinois A Pictorial History”

by

Thomas A. Puckett

&

“Mt. Vernon Remembers”

by

Thomas A Puckett

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Peacock Printing, Inc., Mt. Vernon, Illinois