

Hoadley emigrated from England

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In the 1830's, a young boy who was to help shape the future of Monroe County was thousands of miles away across the Atlantic Ocean.

In those days a John Hoadley was trudging to his grammar school in Barnsley, England, where he did his sums and grammar by rote. He may have daydreamed about his future, but his dreams couldn't have included five ocean crossings, ship fever, wild animals, steamboats, and founding a business dynasty.

When John's schooling was over and he was 14, his parents decided to pack their belongings and emigrate to America. Risking the odds of ship fever, John, his parents, older brother, William, and two sisters, crossed the Atlantic and landed at New York. - Dreaded* by all emigrants, the fever killed thousands of hopeful emigrants before they set foot here and were hastily buried at sea.

Six years after the Hoadleys' arrival, the Putnam, Ohio, *Western Recorder* reported that: "The ship fever is raging at

quarantine on Staten Island to a fearful extent. Nearly a thousand immigrants and seamen are inmates of the institutions, and a large portion of them are down with the fever. It is very fatal—so much so that a large number of the physicians and nurses have died of the disease. Some now are dangerously ill."

Having escaped the fever, the Hoadleys followed some of their fellow immigrants west on the Old National Road across Pennsylvania and Ohio by stagecoach and settled in the Milwaukee area. There John and his brother, William, got the mental job of stoking lime kilns around the clock. They also kept other fires going to keep the wild animals away at night.

The next few years found them apprenticed to a machine shop owner who housed them in an anteroom above his shop. Wages the first year were room and board only, but the second they earned a few pennies a day.

The late Erskine Hoadley of Gosport, grandson of William, said that after their apprenticeship, the two brothers temporarily turned

industrial spies. Buckets and barrels had been painstakingly made by hand and were expensive until an enterprising American, William Trapp, invented machinery to make them.

A classified ad in the *Indianapolis Daily Journal* of June 28, 1854, proudly describes the equipment and lists the names of local residents who had seen one in operation there, and testified that it worked as advertised. John and William saw a bucket factory in operation somewhere in the Midwest and decided to bypass the patent laws in their newly adopted country.

According to a family story, they put on old clothes and strolled through the factory, making mental note of what they saw until a suspicious foreman ran them out of the place. They ran down the road, jumped in a ditch, pulled paper and pencils out of their pockets, and drew schematic diagrams of the machinery they saw.

After building their own version of the bucket making equipment, the whole family re-crossed the ocean and set up their own factory in Leeds, England. But their

countrymen had a built-in prejudice against "new-fangled" American inventions, and the brothers couldn't get to the break-even point in their new business. They did, luckily, find a buyer, who took it off their hands, spent some money on advertising, and later made a fortune out of it.

Having failed at their first business venture, the family came back to America and trekked west again on the Old National Road. This time they weren't so lucky. Ship fever claimed their father at Zanesville, Ohio, and he was buried there.

Hearing that machinists were needed in the shipyards at New Albany and Jeffersonville, the family headed there. Both towns were bustling with stores, saloons, churches, river traffic, and the shopyards where the new steamboats were being built to carry goods and passengers east to Pittsburgh and south to New Orleans.

After seven years of engine building for shipyard owners, the Hoadley brothers heard about a sawmill and grist mill on Bean Blossom Creek at Mt.

Tabor in Monroe County. William came north on the new New Albany and Salem Railroad to look them over. He also spotted a pretty girl, Phebe Staley, and talked her into marrying him.

Meanwhile, back in New Albany, John was courting Mary Elizabeth York, the dark-haired, brown-eyed daughter of a Thomas York, who had left his family parked there while he was trying to get a general store going in Ellettsville.

In 1856, William married Phebe at Gosport and John married Mary Elizabeth at New Albany a day apart and they set up housekeeping near their newly-acquired mills at Mt. Tabor. John operated the saw mill, and William ground the grain for local farmers. By the 1870's both brothers could see that Mt. Tabor was dying as a business community. When the New Albany and Salem Railroad had bypassed it in the 1850's, the town began to die.

John and William parted company in a couple of ways. William moved to Gosport and voted Democratic. John bought all the land from the creek to (Back page, Col. 4, this sec.)