

# Big Shoal Cemetery

One but not forgotten. An easy thing to say but as time wears on most people do forget, families are eventually gone and quite simply stated, there is no one left to remember. A part of sharing history is the creation of a picture that people will remember and share with future generations. There are many places that hold history specific to a given area and there are some of those in Gladstone. One location is the Atkins-Johnson Farm, which is now listed on the National Registry of Historic Sites. Close by a person can find one of those places that for some is easily forgotten, the Big Shoal Cemetery.

In June 2009 by order of the Circuit Court of Clay County, the city of Gladstone became the rightful owner and caretaker of Big Shoal Cemetery. The Big Shoal Baptist Church, long gone, but lingering in the memory of a few was the location for many funeral services of early Clay County residents who made their home in Gallatin Township in the area known today as Gladstone. Until the time that the city took ownership, the cemetery land never changed ownership, even after the church ceased to function.

Today, the cemetery is the final resting place for many notable people who helped shape the future of this area. Most of these folks lived close to the cemetery and were active members of the church. Those who lived farther away were still prominent

members of the church and active in church life of the time.

While the history of some of those who rest at Big Shoal is known there is still much that needs to be learned. It is unfortunate that there is a lack of records and recorded historical information making the task more difficult.

The research necessary to share the stories of some of these people is being done as a part of the restoration and preservation process for the cemetery. City staff and members of the Friends of the Atkins-Johnson Farm have already completed some work. After receiving special training in restoration processes for gravestones (markers) a workday was scheduled and a number of markers were leveled, secured and cleaned.

There are 164 people at Big Shoal Cemetery some with names that are familiar to readers might include the following: Jonathan and Mary Atkins. Jonathan Atkins ran a livery and blacksmith shop on his land and was also listed



1753

William Boydston who was born March 24 in Frederick, Maryland. He was a Revolutionary War soldier who served on behalf of the American colonies in the states of Virginia and North Carolina. On June 13, 1833, he received Pension Certificate Number 13751 from the United States of America. During a visit to the area, he became ill and died. He was the first person interred into Faubion Cemetery.

1870

During the American Revolution, when Spain was allied with the Americans, St. Louis came under a combined attack by British-Indian forces May 26, numbering up to 1,200. Spanish Lt. Governor Fernando De Leyba successfully defended the town after it came under siege. About 300 to 400 St. Louis defenders, that included whites and slaves, successfully repulsed the attack with light losses: 20 killed, seven wounded, and anywhere from 26 to 70 were captured.



as a farmer and wool carder on the local census. Along with his son William H., Jonathan operated the firm Atkins & Sons that ran a steam sawmill. Jonathan was a trustee for the Big Shoal Baptist Church and his parents; John and Francis Atkins are listed as charter members. William Atkins was a judge, elected twice to a seat on the bench in Clay County.

John E. Bender came to this area and purchased land north of the cemetery, near where the present Happy Rock Park is located sometime in the 1880's. John Bender's headstone deems him the founder of the Acme Springs. Acme Springs was known to have had a school, general store, a post office and a hotel.

Daniel Hughes came to Clay County in 1824 and entered land in the area of Happy Rock Park on the west side of Antioch Road. Here, he and his wife Elizabeth built a log cabin using wood cut from the land. This cabin was very substantial and was added onto and modernized through three generations of ownership. When the land was sold out of the family, the cabin, encased in the existing home, was moved to Shoal Creek Living History Museum at Hodge Park.

Other people of note resting at Big Shoal Cemetery include Richard Lee Barnes who was born in Culpeper, Virginia in 1791. Richard moved to Woodford County, Kentucky where he married Elizabeth Atkins on October 15, 1818. The day they were married is the same day that Richard's father died at the age of 103. Elizabeth Atkins was born on October 5, 1796 in King and Queen County, Kentucky to John Atkins and Frances Eubanks.

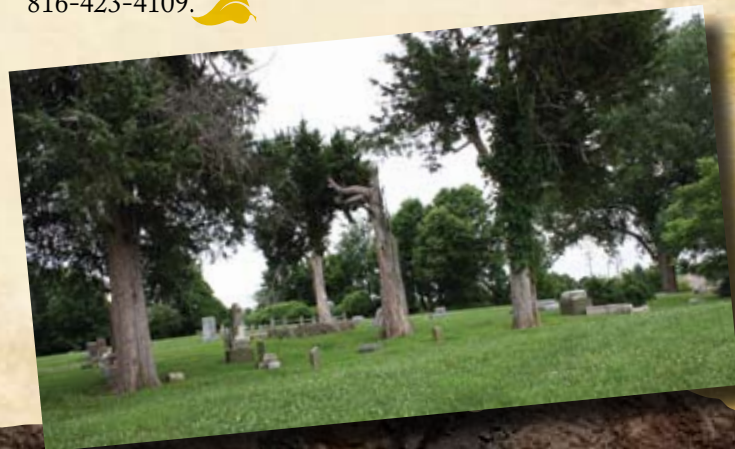
Richard Barnes volunteered in Harrodsburg, Mercer County, Kentucky on August 23, 1812. He served as a private in

Captain Peter Jordan's company, Lieutenant Colonel Joshua Barbee's Seventh Regiment, Kentucky Volunteer Militia. He was discharged on May 1, 1813. However, he again volunteered on August 13, 1813 and served until November 19, 1813 as a private in Captain Robert McAfee's company, Colonel Richard M. Johnson's regiment of Kentucky Mounted Volunteers. Private Barnes was involved in the Battle of the Thames in which the Shawnee War Chief Tecumseh was killed.

Thomas Hamilton and James T. Price both served the Confederacy during the American Civil War. Hamilton was killed during the American Civil War. Clay County was sympathetic to the cause of the confederacy and when one considers the number of disenfranchised men in Clay County following the war there may well be others who served that rest in Big Shoal.

One other person of note is Zachariah Thorp, who was related to Elder William Thorp, founder of Big Shoal Baptist Church. Zachariah fought in the Blackhawk Wars and went on to serve in the U.S. Mounted Rangers during 1832 and 1833.

This cemetery holds a great deal of history in the past lives of those who rest there. As time goes on more will be learned about the people, their lives and the area and it will be shared with the many readers of Coming Home to Gladstone. If you are interested in becoming involved in the preservation of the Big Shoal Cemetery or the Atkins-Johnson Farm you are invited to join the Friends. Information on membership can found at <http://www.atkinsjohnsonfarm.com/> or by calling 816-423-4109.



1800

Entrepreneur Moses Austin made the first sheet lead and cannonballs manufactured in Missouri.

1808

Joseph Charless founded the first newspaper in Missouri, the "Missouri Gazette." The newspaper was produced out of his log cabin home for \$20 a week.



# Big Shoal Church

*Editors Note: This is an article that appeared in the Liberty Advance on Monday, May 2, 1927. The late Rollins Bingham wrote this story after an interview with the late Clarington Fugitt. Ms. Fugitt was a member of the Big Shoal Church and rests today in the Big Shoal Cemetery. Additional information was gleaned from the Missouri Historical Review Volume XIII, published in 1907 by the Missouri State Historical Society.*

When travelers along the main traveled road from Kansas City to Liberty and Excelsior Springs in Clay County, Missouri had surmounted the river bluffs at Randolph and journeyed on some five miles, he cannot help noticing to the left of his way, facing a cross road, a square built brick church crowning the top of a rise in the ground and looking forth calm, solemn, sedate and somewhat austere, from a grove of maples, elms, and honey locusts. The traveler recognizes it at once as an old-time church, and it is. Just such a one as William Wert happened upon when riding along a Virginia country road and made famous by his sketch of "The Blind Preacher."

The old time brick church at the cross road in Clay County is Big Shoal Church, and what St. Peter's is to Rome, St. Mark's is to Venice, St. Paul's to London and Notre Dame is to Paris, Big Shoal meeting house is to it's countryside. From its very first organization of its congregation in the earliest pioneer days of

the county, no church in the county has had a more potential influence morally, socially, and religiously upon its community and far beyond. The mark is plain to this day.

Very soon after Missouri became a state in 1820, the rush of pioneer settlers came to Clay County. Those that came into the section where Big Shoal Church was soon founded were mostly Kentuckians from the same district of the state, with the same manners, customs, habits, politics and religion. That religion was Baptist of the denomination commonly called "Hardshells," a term, by the way, that the good people to whom it is applied do not resent and about which they are in no way sensitive.

The "Hardshells," who came as pioneers into the Big Shoal district, no sooner had selected homesteads and erected cabins for shelters for their families and stock than they made provisions for schools and churches. In about 1825 the church organization, ever since known as Big Shoal was perfected and the first public services were held in a rude, pioneer log schoolhouse near where now stands the brick church. [Editors note: Elder William Thorpe founded The Big Shoal Church in 1823. Elder Thorpe was responsible for the organization of four churches and the founding of the Fishing River Association.] That first congregation comprised nearly every man and woman in the community – "Hardshells" do not believe in admitting children



**1808**

Fort Osage was established on the Missouri River. Under the direction of William Clark as part of the vast federally controlled fur trade system, the fort's mission aided in trade and military alliances with the Indian tribes, and in particular, Sibley is about 14 miles northeast of Independence.

**1818**

On Jan. 8, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives presented the first petition to Congress from Missouri requesting statehood.

to full church membership – and it was a mighty power from its beginning. In 1827 the first exclusive church building, the meetinghouse, was raised on the site where the brick church now stands. The “raising” was an event from which Clay County people gave date to happenings for long after and all the able-bodied men for miles around, church members and non-church members, took part, furnishing all the labor and material. It was a large, better constructed, and more commodious structure than any of its kind in those parts at the time, a sort of physical expression of its importance to its community and the community’s regard and estimation.

The brethren and their friends from near and far met for the house raising. They cut down trees in the dense wood that there grew all round and with axes hewed the felled trees into logs of given dimensions. With the logs mortised and fitted to each other at the ends they put up the main structure, forty-eight feet long and twenty feet wide, with a jutting out offset midway each long side eight feet by six that served in front as an entrance vestibule and in the rear as an alcove for the pulpit and preacher’s platform. The offset gave to the original a form, which caused it to be known far and wide as the church with twelve corners. The hewn frames of the roof were put on and shingled with handmade oak shingles.

Not satisfied with the bare earth as a floor as were most pioneer church builders, a real board floor was laid down, whipsawed from oak logs. More than anything which made the original Big Shoal Church a subject of admiration and wondering remark in its first year was its lathe and plastered ceiling, the lath hand-made of oak and the plaster from the sand of nearby Big Shoal Creek and lime burnt from neighboring rock ledges.

The seats were of logs split in two, flat side up, and with strong pegs well driven into the auger holes to serve as legs. One corner of the audience room was set off for the Negro slaves who came to meetings with their masters. The attendance of these was always large and entirely voluntary.

Among the original charter members of Big Shoal Church were Daniel Hughes, its first clerk, and his wife; Elisha Todd and wife; Richard Barnes and wife; John Atkins and wife; George Crowley and wife; Peter Burnett; Edward Mails and Garrett Arnold. William Thorpe was the pastor and from the earliest time there have been Sunday services at Big Shoal Church twice a month, one on the Sunday following the second Saturday of each month and the other on the next Sunday succeeding.

The church increased in membership and attendance from its beginning and in 1851 the membership was more than two hundred. The log church had become too small to hold the crowds that came to meeting, so it was torn down and the [then present] brick building erected in its place. Like its predecessor, the brick church was of native material, put together and set up by the joint efforts of the entire community. The first pastor of the brick church was John Knight, an ex-Kentuckian, and a veteran of the War of 1812, who served as a soldier under Andrew Jackson at the battle of New Orleans. Big Shoal is now and always has been one of a circuit of churches, to each of which the same pastor attends in turn and the association to which it belongs is known as the “Fishing River Association”.

Those who yet are living have most interesting stories to relate of Big Shoal Church in its prime. One old gentleman who attended, but never became a member,



### 1820

The Missouri statehood controversy became a national issue as the issue of slavery was debated. The “Missouri Compromise” allowed Missouri to enter the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state, thus keeping the balance of slave and free states equal in Congress

### 1822

Clay County was organized Jan. 2, 1822 from Ray County and was named for Henry Clay, a Kentucky congressman.



tells of when as a boy he used to attend Sunday services there.” “Folks came,” he tells from four counties Clay, Platte, Ray and Clinton. I have often seen on meeting Sundays the fences on both sides of the road lined with horses, wagons, buggies, even ox-teams for a full quarter mile both ways from the meeting house. They came early in the morning and stayed all day, attending morning and afternoon preaching. The “Hardshells” held no night meetings in the church. When they did meet at night it was usually in each other’s house for services something like the other churches prayer meetings.

While on a Sunday they came and stayed all day, they brought nothing to eat with them. For the “Hardshells” did not believe in any basket picnic doings in connection with worship. In the morning the pastor would deliver a sermon, a long one and usually a visiting minister would follow with one just as long. Sometimes there was more than one visiting preacher. It was the same way in the afternoon and mighty few folk got home from these meetings until after nightfall. It was a hard, hard day on a hearty growing boy, with his natural appetite. Sitting for hours and hours on those straight-backed benches was a mighty strain, though the grown folks never seemed to mind it and they never minded it in the old log church days when the benches had no backs. Nobody ever dared go to sleep in Big Shoal Church for they kept folks awake and in order there, same as a jury in a jury box.

“Big as the crowds used to be at regular meetings they were nothing to the crowds that came to the big association meetings that began on Saturday and held through Sunday and Monday. These came to big Shoal about once in ten years. I remember one of them where my father at our home took care of more than one hundred persons. They ate at tables in the house and all over the yard. At night the women and the oldest men slept in the house, while the rest went to bed on ‘shakedown’ in the hemp and tobacco barns we had in those days. At those old-time meetings they never passed the plate, ‘Hardshells’ did not believe in that way of giving to the Lord. They usually called the preacher to one side and gave him their gifts in private.” I will close with an extract from Col. D. C. Allen’s paper on “The Bonnet Show at Big Shoal Creek Meeting House, Clay County, Missouri.” Col. Allen is eighty-three years old and lives

at Liberty, Missouri. This paper is recorded in the archives of the Missouri Valley Historical Society.

“The beginnings of Liberty (Clay county) were in 1821 and, until after the building of Weston and Platte City, and even somewhat later, was the center of trade and fashion in all the surrounding country north of the Missouri River. In the county it maintained its pre-eminence in a degree until Kansas City assumed importance and trade was attracted thither. Here was the town, one can see, for a period almost the only town in the county, where ladies could purchase fine goods, fashionable bonnets, etc., in the springtime”.

**“Old Big Shoal has gone down these days, though it stills holds its own yet better than most country churches. Folks don’t go to church nowadays no-where like they used to.”**

“The first settlers in Clay County—far back in 1819 and the early twenties—could have hauled in their wagons but little beyond absolute necessities. Finery could not have been largely considered. The slow and laborious navigation of the Missouri River by keelboats added something, but not much, to the comforts and convenience of the people”.

“But, after Long’s Expedition up the Missouri River in 1819 by steamboat, its navigation by steam began to develop. By 1826 it assumed something like regularity. Allen’s landing three and one-half miles south of Liberty was established in 1825. At once on the beginning of steam navigation of the River, the merchants of Liberty began to purchase for local trade fine goods, bonnets and the like in Philadelphia and their fine groceries in Baltimore. This continued for a number of years. Merchants left Liberty for the east to make their spring and summer purchases early in February. Their purchases began to arrive in Liberty during the latter part of March, or the forepart of April. The stores in Liberty thus became centers of attraction

**1825**

As the United States government parceled out land patents, Simon Hudson and his family owned land that would eventually become Linden.

**1830**

The town of Barry started with log homes covered with walnut clapboard siding. One of the original houses, the Tillery house, has been restored in Heritage Village.

for the ladies, old and young, in Clay and the surrounding country. The spring bonnets! The spring bonnets! It was a race with all the girls for the first pick of the new bonnets”.

“Mr. W. S. Embree (now in his ninety-sixth year) says the annual bonnet show at the Big Shoal Church was in existence prior to 1835. It could not well have had a beginning until fine goods, above all spring bonnets, could be transported up the Missouri River and displayed in the store of Liberty. The origin, then, of the bonnet show was near 1826. Then, and for many years later, there was no church in Clay County which attracted so many persons to its religious service, particularly on the Second Sunday in May, the annual exhibition of the spring bonnet show, as did the Big Shoal Meeting House, the Church of the Primitive Baptists”.

“During all those years it was the fashionable church of Clay county. The second Sunday in May was its pre-eminent day in the year. Nature, commerce, and social life, here in Clay County were in harmony. The second Sunday in May is in the midst of the most flowery and delightful part of the spring. Nothing could be more natural than that the belles and beaux of all the surrounding country should instinctively flock to the Big Shoal Meeting House at the great annual meeting on the second Sunday in May to see and chat with each other. By that time the ladies, young and old, would have secured their new spring bonnets and dresses. The girls could display their youthful charms to the very best advantage. The side of the church allotted to the ladies would be a mass of colors, topped by a gorgeous array of spring bonnets. Some person of happy thought and good taste, some phrasemaker, seeing the gaily-attired mass of femininity, conceived and gave expression to the term “bonnet show.” It took hold firmly in the minds of the people and holds until this day.”

The glory days of the past are a memory found only in books and old newspapers. Those who would have memories of the events described here are gone but not forgotten as long as the story can be told. Maybe someday, someone will recreate some of these events as a way of looking back and honoring the past. 🌸

# The Lore of the Big Shoal Church Bonnet Show

Ye, who blossom forth in spring hats before December snows have flown, consider the fate of pretty Sally Atkinson, Clay County belle of 1835, who couldn't wait for the Big Shoal Creek Bonnet Show.

As legend has it, Sally and Susan Stout were vying for the attention of Lige Stephens, slim, corseted (Lige was a dandy and men's garments were tight-fitting) clerk in the general store at Liberty, Missouri. Both girls had the same ambition – to obtain his escort home “from the Bonnet show at the Big Shoal Creek meetinghouse the second Sunday in May.

As the story goes Sally's uncle from Philadelphia brought her one of the newest bonnets in April of 1835. It was an enormous, wide brimmed bonnet, deep-curtained with veils fastened to the crown. It was dove-colored silk with pink trimmings. Her uncle on seeing her in it no doubt said “and tying her bonnet under her chin, she tied a young man's heart within.”



Unfortunately, Sally wore her bonnet out before the famed Bonnet Show at Big Shoal Creek Church. Lige rode home from the Bonnet Show with Susan Stout, demure in a brown horsehair bonnet with bows. Sally died an old maid. 🌸

1835

On Nov. 30, writer Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) was born in Florida, Missouri.



1836

The town of Barry established a post office. The trading post operated by Peter and Glenn Burnett sat partly in Clay and partly in Indian Territory as Barry sat in the western portion of Clay County before Platte County was a county.

# Elder William T. Thorp

## Founder of Big Shoal Primitive (Hardshell) Baptist Church

*Editors Note: The editorial staff would like to thank Ms. Mary Thorp of Liberty, Missouri for her willingness to share the Thorp family history. William T. Thorp was her father's great, great uncle and the information shared helps to tell the story of the man who founded Big Shoal Church and what his life was like from an early age. Other sources provided by Ms. Thorp include excerpts from the Missouri Baptist Biography, Volume IV and the book "Early Days in The West" by Clay County Judge Joseph Thorp, William T. Thorp's oldest son.*

**E**lder William Thorp founded the Big Shoal Church on May 21, 1823 and seven days later he founded the Little Shoal Church. Both of these churches were members of the Fishing River Association, which included Rush Creek and Fishing River Churches. Elder Thorp founded this association, like he founded the churches listed, in October 1823.

But that is not where Elder Thorp's story begins. Joseph Thorp has told the story of his father, Elder William Thorp, in the book *Early Days in The West*. The book itself is a collection of letters written by Judge Thorp to recall the story of the Thorp Family from their homes in Madison County, Kentucky to their lives in Clay County, Missouri.

William was the youngest of three sons, born in 1772, in Virginia of parents from the Old World. His mother died when he was at an early age leaving him and two older brothers, Dodson and James. Their father had a restless disposition, broke up housekeeping and left his three sons to care for themselves in what was described as a "tempestuous world."

The boys became separated and knew little of each other until they were nearly grown. William fell into the care of aunt who proved to be a tyrannical mistress. He suffered ill treatment at her hands until he "escaped"

with his Uncle Thomas Thorp to Kentucky in 1786, at fourteen years of age. During the time he was with his aunt William was subjected to almost inhuman disciplinary treatment. He was denied a place at the family table was forced to eat with the slaves and of their coarse food. [Coarse food is described, as "The supply of food given out to the slaves was one peck of corn a week, or some equivalent, and nothing besides. They must grind their own corn, after the work of the day was performed, at a mill, which stood on the plantation. We had to eat our coarse bread without meat, or butter, or milk. Severe labor alone gave us an appetite for our scanty and unpalatable fare. Many of the slaves were so hungry after their excessive toil, that they were compelled to steal food in addition to this allowance." Taken from *The Experience of Thomas H. Jones, Who Was A Slave for Forty-three Years*, by Thomas H. Jones. Boston: Bazin and Chandler, 1862.]

It is not at all unlikely he had to work all the long day in the fields with them and he might have had to sleep in their cabins at night. In everything, however, but social equality he was disappointed. Discipline was strict, the work just as hard, and the days just as long as he had known in Virginia. In neither place was he given even so much as a days schooling, young Thorpe was unable to read or write. In that respect however he was not different from most other boys for illiteracy was then the rule and not the exception.

In 1792 at the age of twenty he courted and married Miss Frances Owens, seventeen, of the same neighborhood. Soon thereafter he heard the divine call to preach but fearing for the safety of his young wife during the time he must of necessity be out on the circuit, he did not tell her about it until the burden of disobedience became unbearable. Frances with her strong Baptist background was very supportive of William's call. When he told her of possible calamities that might over take her and the children during his absence (he would be a traveling circuit preacher) she simply said "My dear if the Lord wants you to preach and though He may send you into strange lands and among strange people He will keep you and bring you safely back to us when your work is done." That was real faith. Just how soon he began preaching is not recorded but in November 1809 he moved his family to Missouri Territory and settled on Loutre Island. Loutre Island was a settlement founded in 1807 on an island in the Missouri River. This island was situated at the mouth of Loutre Creek, nearly opposite the mouth of the Gasconade River and not far from Hermann, Missouri, in Montgomery County. It is recorded that it appeared as though they had passed the border of civilization when they passed St. Charles. The French

1837

On March 28, President Martin Van Buren issued a proclamation that completed the annexation of the Platte Purchase area to Missouri, establishing the northwestern border of the state.

1838

Missouri Gov. Lilburn Boggs issued the "Extermination Order" against Mormons living in Missouri, demanding that members of the Mormon church leave the state. Leaders of the Mormon church including Joseph Smith and five others were confined in the Liberty Jail from December 1838 to April 1839.

and Spaniards with a few Americans primarily occupied the area. The next spring he joined a party of settlers' enroute to Booneslick Bottom in Howard County leaving his family in the care of his brother James. Upon arriving he planted and harvested a crop of corn. (There is no record of him preaching during this time). On Christmas Eve 1810 he moved his family to his home, a crude log cabin made of slabs in Booneslick Bottom. This was their home until 1824 when they moved to Clay County. While they were at Booneslick Bottom he established the first Protestant church in western Howard County. This was the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church and the date was April 8, 1812. This fact of course implies his preaching. Glowing stories of the glorious country farther west filtered back but because of the war of 1812 it was unwise to try to get there through intervening Indian country. Even in Howard County it was necessary for the settlers to live in small forts and to farm in bodies as mutual protection against warring Indians. The war and its lethal aftermath lasted four years after which the settlers were again permitted to go west in peace.

Joan Tharp has contributed information that indicates Elder Thorp served in the War of 1812 from 27 August 1814 to 25 October 1814. He served with Captain Sarshell Cooper's Company of Mounted Militia of Missouri Territory, Lt. Colonel Dodge's Command, mustered and discharged at Booneslick. Payroll indicates he was paid \$8 a month; however, since he furnished his own rations, horse, and forage, he was paid a total amount of \$54.74.

In 1820 Elder Thorpe made his first visit to the future Clay County and was surprised to find so many white

people in the territory. (The 1820 Census indicates nearly two hundred white people living in the area). By this time he had given up farming and was devoting his entire time to preaching. From 1820 to 1824 he made semi-annual trips between his home in Howard County and his friends in Clay County, preaching whenever possible. His efforts



Ms. Mary Thorp

to establish churches seems to have borne fruit all at once for during 1823 four churches were organized by him in Clay County alone. In the spring of 1824 he decided to move his family to the newer country and upon arriving they all placed their church membership with Little Shoal where he served as pastor for the next twenty-eight years. Elder Thorp was also chosen as the moderator for the Fishing River Association and continued in that role until he became too ill to attend to the duties of the office. He is reported to have been the first minister of the Gospel who ever preached in Clay County and perhaps the first who ever preached in the counties bordering on the Missouri River west of St. Charles.

An excerpt from Judge Joseph Thorp's letters in *Early Days in The West* states "On March 7, 1853 a welcome death relieved him of further physical torture and his body was laid to rest in the churchyard at Little Shoal Church. It was said that Elder Thorp thought well and preached with energy, directness and effect. In the division of the Baptists of Missouri in 1834, he remained firmly with those who are spoken of as Primitive Baptists and died in what they considered the true Baptist faith. In person he was somewhat above the middle size, symmetrical in figure and was a man of strength and activity."

Chiseled into the marble slab that marks his grave is this fine epitaph still as plain as it was when first carved:

"Elder William Thorpe, minister of the gospel of the Regular Baptist church: the first pioneer who smoothed the rugged paths of the Baptists in the western wilds of Missouri, constituted the first churches and organized the first association in Upper Missouri. Born in Virginia, moved to Kentucky in 1786, to Missouri in 1809, died in Clay County, March 7th, 1853, aged 81 years, 1 month and 10 days; minister of the gospel 57 years. Three excerpts from the Bible and the inscription. Beside him in death as in life sleeps his wife, Frances Thorpe, who died in 1862 at the age of 87 years, 2 months, and 5 days. Elder Thorpe was certainly a man of deep sincerity. His implicit faith in God often led him to tremendous hardship but he found happiness in doing His will at whatever cost. The immediate cause of his death was paralysis from which he suffered intensely for two years. Other early day preachers who preached at Big Shoal and who have perhaps many descendants who will read this little history are Elders James Williams, Eppe Tillery, Howard Everett, and Johanthan Reed, all prior to 1833. Later the names of Elders Burris, Knight, Searcy, and Pence appear but we have no intimate record of any of them at this time."

1838

Organized at the end of 1838, Platte County was established from the Platte Purchase and named for the Platte River.

1849

The Missouri Baptist Convention founded William Jewell College.