

Clinton County, Civic Records of John Barner, 1849–1850 and 1883–1889

Natalie Burriss and Ethan Chitty

When John Barner arrived in Frankfort, Indiana, from Indianapolis on May 19, 1832, with his wife and son, the town consisted of “12 homes, no court house and no jail.”¹ However, only two years had passed since the area was established as a separate county of Indiana.² Clinton County, named in gratitude for Dewitt Clinton, a New York governor who had advocated for the invaluable establishment of the Wabash and Erie Canal in central Indiana, had previously been joined together with what is known today as Boone County. Originally called the “Washington Territories,” the area quickly filled with settlers, many of them farmers who craved separate legislative representation. The establishment of both counties was approved by the General Assembly on the same day.³

The city of Frankfort itself was established as the county seat a few months later on May 9, 1830, due to the donation of sixty acres and \$100 by John Pence, who in turn became proprietor of the town.⁴ Over the following years, settlers coming in from the surrounding areas found homes in Frankfort. While starting out small, it quickly began increasing in size. Less than fifty years from its establishment, the town was praised in print for its growing population of three thousand, its booming industry, and its surrounding fertile farmlands.⁵

Among many of the first to arrive in newly created Frankfort was John Barner. Born in North Carolina in 1810 but raised in Tennessee, he made his way at the age of nineteen to Indiana. Working his way north, he settled in Indianapolis for two years, working in various places. During this time, he married another Indianapolis resident. Relocating once again in 1832, Barner moved his wife and young son north to Frankfort, where he took up various civil positions, first as postmaster, then as circuit court clerk, and later as a probate attorney.⁶

The following documents, records kept or signed by John Barner, are part of the Barner–Jones Family Papers in the William Henry Smith Memorial Library at the Indiana Historical Society. The first is a collection of seven marriage certificates signed by Barner while he served

as circuit court clerk. The second set of records comes from an account book, which according to the description on the cover page, is a record of “subscriptions for the payment of Rent of Post office room.” While Barner held the position of postmaster from 1834 to 1849, this particular account book starts on February 1, 1883, leading one to wonder if he still held some responsibilities from his old post.⁷ Since this is an account book, a long-term record of transactions of various individuals, the time span varies from account to account. While all entries begin in either 1883 or 1884, some dates run as late as February 1889.

Notes

1. *History of Clinton County, Indiana, together with Sketches of its Cities, Villages and Towns; Educational, Religious, Civil, Military, and Political History; Portraits of Prominent Persons, and Biographies of Representative Citizens* (Chicago: Inter-state Pub., 1886), 417. This county history discusses the date that John Barner’s family arrived in Frankfort from Indianapolis; *Memorial Services of the Life and Character of John Barner, a Pioneer Citizen of Frankfort, Ind.* (Frankfort, IN: Press of the Times, 1893), 35.
2. *History of Clinton County*, 337, 339–40. On January 29, 1830, a bill was passed in Indiana’s General Assembly to establish Clinton County, and the city of Frankfort was created a few months later as the county seat on May 9, 1830.
3. Clinton County Bicentennial Committee, *Legacy: A Bicentennial Salute to Clinton County, Indiana* (Frankfort, IN: Heritage Lithographs, 1976), 7; *History of Clinton County*, 339; L. M. Crist, *History of Boone County, Indiana, with Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens and Genealogical Records of Old Families* (Indianapolis, IN: A. W. Bowen & Co., [1914?]), 79.
4. *History of Clinton County*, 340.
5. De Witt C. Goodrich and Charles R. Tuttle, *An Illustrated History of the State of Indiana, Being a Full and Authentic Civil and Political History of the State from Its First Exploration to 1875, Including an Account of the Commercial, Agricultural and Educational Growth of Indiana, with Historical Sketches of the Cities, Towns and Villages . . . Together with Biographical Sketches and Portraits of the Prominent Men of*

the Past and Present and a History of Each County Separately (Indianapolis: R. S. Peale & Co., 1875), 516.

6. *History of Clinton County*, 416–17, containing a recounting of Barner’s birth in North Carolina and leaving his Tennessee home and moving to Indianapolis from which he moved to Frankfort with his wife and son. Joseph Claybaugh, *History of Clinton County, Indiana with Historical Sketches of Representative Citizens and Genealogical Records of Many of the Old Families* (Indianapolis: A. W. Bowen & Co., 1913), 377. Claybaugh summarizes Barner’s positions as postmaster, circuit court clerk, and admission to the Clinton County bar along with his career as a probate attorney.
7. Barner–Jones Family Papers, 1828–1971, M 0698, OM 0098, BV 3179-3182, Indiana Historical Society. The marriage certificates are from M 0689, folder 21; the account book is in M 0689, folder 19. Also, Claybaugh, *History of Clinton County*, 377.

Marriage Certificates Signed by John Barner, Circuit Court Clerk, Clinton County

Groom: Hon. Cyrus P. Peirce
Bride: Catharine Kygers
Date: September 20, 1849

Groom: Charles Wills
Bride: Nancy Rice
Date: May 8, 1850

Groom: Mr. Henry H. Franklin
Bride: Eliza Crone
Date: October 8, 1849

Groom: Soloman Shor[k/t]
Bride: Mary Squiers
Date: May 9, 1850

Groom: John B. Robinson
Bride: Margaret Boyles
Date: October 20, 1849

Groom: Thomas Jefferson Taylor
Bride: Mary Catharine Hindman
Date: July 23, 1850

Groom: Daniel Dilman
Bride: Lydia Mi[b/t]z
Date: March 30, 1850

Records in Postmaster Account Book Kept by John Barner, Clinton County

Cover Page	Page 5 Post Office Subscribers in Acct with
John Barner	John Barner
Subscriptions for the payment of Rent of	Allen & James
Post Office Room commencing January 1st	Jon A. Southard
1883 (but the new way to commence	
February 1, 1883)	Page 6
	Cohee
Page 1	D. P. B.
J. A. Southard	Mabel
Coulter V. Dimwiddie	
Coulter V. Hockinson	Page 7
Stom Bros.	Blake & Harn
Cu[shuia?] Bros.	
J. W. Harrison	Page 8
Allen & Jensen	Cohee
J. H. Paris & Co.	D. P. B.
J. A. H[a/e]dgcork	Mabel
Paige & Bay[---]ss	Al
P. Doner	
D. A. & W. H. Coulter	Page 9
W. H. Leoher	[Cornley/Cowley] & Bird
Blake & Harn	N. A. Fletcher
Bird & Cornley	
W. H. Wray	Page 10
T. R. Engart	Cohee
[Meifield/Meifiel?] & Son	
H. Lancaster	Page 11
W. S. Vansickle	Coulter & Dimwiddie
J. H. Paris	
D. W. Pearl	Page 12
S. P. H[e/i]sher	D. P. B.
	Mabel
Page 3	[Alba/Alvin?]
Osborne & Blin	Stom
Coulter Given & Co.	Dim[widdie] settled
Marvin B. & Pn'a	Mr. G[here?]
Lute Heichart	J. B.

Page 13
Coulter [Hockmass/Hockman?] & Co.

Page 14
Cohee
Mabel
Alba
Mr. G[here?]

Page 15
Cushura Bros.
J. B.

Page 16
Cohee
Bird
Mr. G[here?]
J. H. B. H.
J. B.

Page 17
D. A. & W. H. Coulter

Page 18
Cohee
Bird
Mabel
Alba
Mr. G[here?]
W. H. Coulter
Coulter
D. A. & W. H.

Page 19
Coulter & Given & Co.

Page 20
Cohee

Page 21
W. H. Cohee
Parks & Gregg

Page 23
Phillip[s?] [Doerrer/Druer?]

Page 24
Mabel
Alba
Mrs G

Page 25
T. R. Eugart

Page 26
Cohee
Mabel

Page 27
Samuel P. Fisher

Page 28
Cohee

Page 29
J. W. Harrison

Page 30
Cohee
J. Barner

Page 31
J. A. Hedgcock

Page 32
Cohee
Mabel
Hedgcock
J. B.

Page 33
Lute Heichart

Page 34
Mr. Heichart
J. Southard
J. B.

Page 35
L. Frank Lancaster
G. S. Freeman

Page 36
Cohee
Fr. Lancaster
J. B.

Page 37
Marvin Bros. & Price
Eli Marvin & Co.

Page 38
Cohee
J. Barner
D. P. B.
J. Barner

Page 39
Meifield & Son

Page 40
Bird
Mabel
Mr. G[here?]
John Barner

Page 41
Osborne and Bli[mn?]
W. S. Vansickle
O. J. Thompson

Page 42
D. P. B.
Mr. G[here?]

Page 43
W. S. Vansickle

Page 44
Vansickle
Long

Page 45
J. H. Paris & Co.

Page 46
Mabel
J. B.
Mr. Paris
John Barner

Page 47
James H. Paris

Page 48
Mabel
J. B.
Ghere

Page 49
D. [H./W.?] Paul

Page 50
Bird
Mabel
Alba
Paul

Page 51
Paige & Bayless

Page 52

Cohee

Page 53

J. A. Southard

Page 54

Cohee

D. P. B.

Mabel

Alba

Mr. G[here?]

Southard

Page 55

Stoms Bros.

Page 56

Cohee

Mabel

Page 57

W. F. Wray

S. E. Carmichael

Page 58

Cohee

Boots

Alba

Mr. Ghere

Page 63 Collections made by D. P. B. and

Nobel in P.O. matter for John Barner

Norman Booker & Price

Osborne and [Blim/Blinn?]

J. H. Paris

Coulter & Hockinson

Meifield and Son

J. A. Southard

[Black & Harn/Blake and Haw?]

Coulter & Dimwiddie

T. R. Eugart

J. A. Hegecock

D. A. & W. H. Coulter

Stouts Bros.

D. W. Paul

P. [Doerrerr/Dormer/Druer?]

D. P. B. & Noble

J. Barner

Allen & James

Page 66 Subscribers Accounts

Allen & James

Blake & Harn

Cornley & Bird

Coulter & Dimwiddie

Coulter & Hockinson

Cushura Bros.

D. A. & W. H. Coulter

Coulter Givin & Co.

W. H. Cohen

Phillips [Doerrerr/Dorner/Druer?]

T. R. Eugart

S. P. Fisher

J. W. Harrison

J. A. Hedgcock

Lute Heichart

Frank Lancaster

Meifield & Son

Osborne & Blim

W. S. Vansickle (Long)

W. S. Vansickle

J. H. Paris & Co.

J. H. Paris

D. W. Paul
Paige & Bayless
J. A. Southard
Stom Bros.
W. J. Wray

G. S. Freeman
V. A. Fletcher
Parks & Gregg

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