



# Brown County Journal

Sept. 15, 2015

## Events:

Old Settlers Reunion  
September 26  
Family Heritage Day  
October 3  
Brown County Historical  
Society Dinner  
October 5  
Brown County  
Genealogical Society  
Fieldtrip  
October 8  
Quilt Show  
October 9 -11  
Abe Martin Bazaar  
November 14

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## Who and What Shaped Brown County?

I'm sure there have been many historical events and human influences that helped to shape Brown County into an entity. It's not just an abstract rectangular shape drawn out on a map by human hand. There were some important people and lofty ideals that helped to form it and its people into a collective whole. Before Indiana became a state and even before it became Indiana territory there were very early influences that helped to form in the pioneers' minds how they wanted their future home to be. One of the earliest influences came from an long forgotten war and one of its generals, Major General Jacob Brown of the War of 1812. With the memory of the war relatively fresh in the memories of the early settlers the war and the heroes of this war had a big influence on their ideals.

### **Major General Jacob Jennings Brown**

The story of Major General Jacob Brown bears telling. Our official Brown County description doesn't do a very good job of telling his story. It describes him as a minor military person, a New York Militia General, who wins a minor battle at Sacketts Harbor, New York in 1813. Why did our founders pick him instead of Monroe or Jackson? Or were they more clever by not picking a politician, but a great leader as a mentor. Born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1775 Jacob Jennings Brown was the son of Samuel and Abi (White) Brown. His middle name was given to him in honor of his paternal grandmother who was a descendant of Samuel Jennings.

Raised a Quaker, Brown graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1790. He taught school and, in 1798, moved to upstate New York. There he was a pioneer settler and landowner in the Black River country and helped open the area up for



further settlement. He married Pamela Williams and became magistrate and militia captain. He became a Republican to support Governor Daniel Tompkins who promoted Brown to militia general in 1811. He and his extended family established mills and a store, laid out roads and improved navigation on the lower Black River. In 1807, as one of the leading citizens of his county, Brown was commissioned as a captain in the 108th regiment of the New York Militia. Two years later, he was promoted to colonel. His initial commission was the result of regional political connections. However, his promotion to higher rank appears to have resulted from his aversion to frequent and expensive military parades in times of peace. On the frontier, it was time-consuming and expensive for scattered members of the militia to assemble for drill or other activities when they had farming and other occupations that demanded their time. (from Wikipedia.com)

Brown's victory at Sacketts Harbor brought him to the attention of leaders who realized 'old potash' Brown had potential to succeed in the defense of the critical area of upstate New York. General Brown used the technique of another teamster General Dan Morgan. Morgan had beat the British at Cowpens, South Carolina by the clever use of militia and regulars (regular army). The battle at Cowpens, SC was the key to setting up a win at Yorktown in 1781. Brown decided to use the same plan. You let the militia fire and then run. Then the regulars go in and hold the position until General Brown rallied the militia to go back and give the Brits a big surprise. They could also execute a counter attack in their flank and rear, either way it turned out it was a big surprise. That was General Brown's secret weapon - and it worked! After Sacketts Harbor, Brown was made a Regular Brigadier General.

By early 1814 Brown was promoted to Major General Jacob Brown. It is an interesting note that one of the reasons for a US defeat before this battle was attributed to the British 49th Foot because they were wearing grey overcoats and our American boys thought them only as militia and not a well-trained army. The tables were turned though when General Winfield Scott's Regulars had been dressed in grey. At the battle of Chippewa the British made the same mistake and under-estimated them.

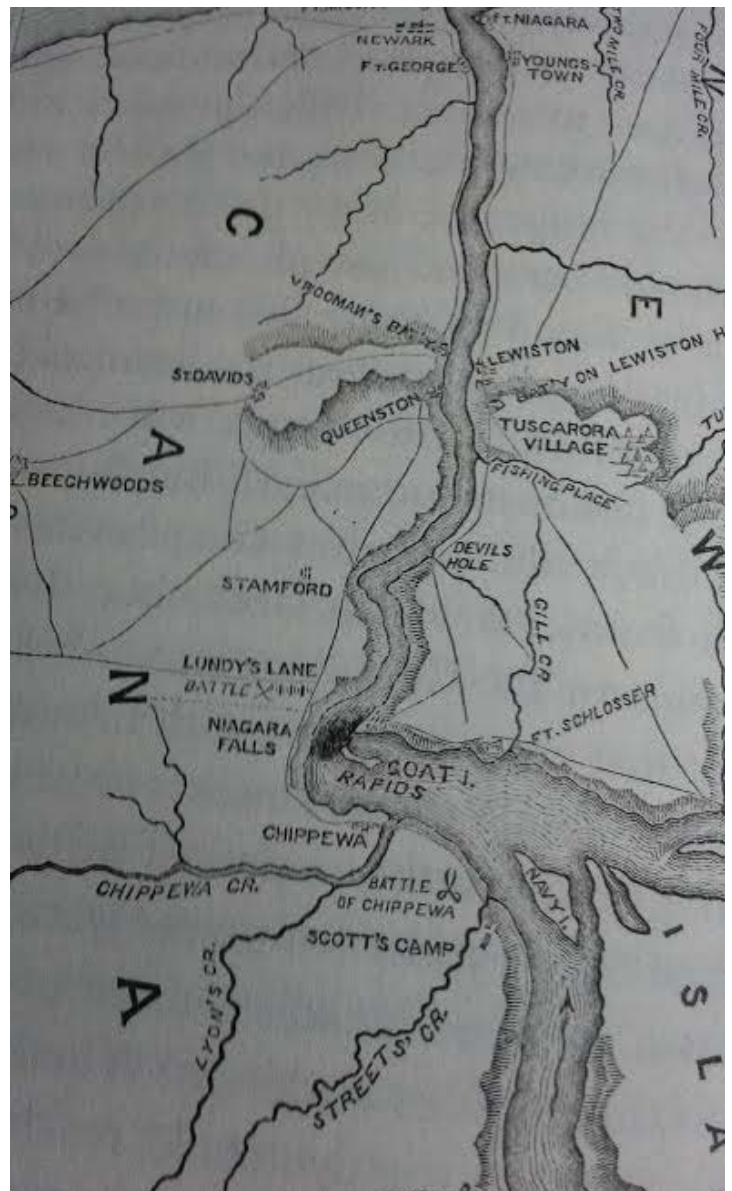
After a victory by the British in another battle, they moved their regiments to Fort Niagara to fortify that

position. Major Brown wisely ignored Fort Niagara and landed his army above the Falls and at Fort Erie which promptly surrendered. With the battle still raging the battle line goes back and forth and the battle continues into the night. With General Brown, wounded, still holding Fort Erie he makes one final push to assault the British siege guns and it works. The War of 1812 ends with a treaty signed at Ghent Belgium.

The British were trying to buy time for their victories to strengthen their position. When General Brown denied them victory, the Indians were abandoned by the British. Indiana would become a new state in 1816 and Brown County's early pioneers would recognize the contribution of the best U. S. General their country had ever seen. He had won more battles than any other war general. Major General Jacob Brown along with Brigadier General Winfield Scott continued to have influence and helped to create West Point, who adopted their grey uniform. Several presidents were opposed to the creation of 'Regulars', but by the Mexican War their 'Regular Army' and its West Point trained officers were ready for the Battle of Palo Alto, Texas. (from Bill Boyle's H. S. Presentation)

The founding of Indiana in 1816 at this crucial time was influenced by the heroes of this war. It was still fresh in the memories of our earliest citizens even though Brown County wasn't even an idea at this time. Major General Jacob Brown was the namesake for our county. Our founders believed he was a good role model for our county. On 24 February 1828, General Brown died and was buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

General Brown was so well respected that when he died, and his casket was carried down Pennsylvania Avenue on the shoulders of a detachment of U.S. Marines, the entire government shut down for the funeral. His mile-long funeral procession was composed of family, military detachments and government officials. Then President John Quincy Adams said of him:





'General Brown was one of the eminent men of this age and nation. Though bred a Quaker, he was a man of lofty and martial spirit, and in the late war contributed perhaps more than any man to redeem and establish the military character of his country.'

### **Brown County Is Born**

Land which now comprises Brown County was obtained from the Indians by the Treaty of Fort Wayne, or Harrison's Purchase, in 1809 and the Treaty of St. Mary's, or the New Purchase, in 1818. William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Indiana Territory, carved from the Northwest Territory in 1800 a chunk of land north of the Ohio River where pioneers could homestead. The northern boundary of Harrison's Purchase which was named the Ten O'Clock Line

crossed the southwestern corner of what is now Brown County. There is an historical marker in Story, Indiana that designates where this event took place and sits on a portion of the Ten O'Clock Line. The Line was chosen by the Chiefs who didn't trust the white man's surveying methods. The line was set by a shadow that was cast at 10 o'clock on the morning of September 30, 1809.

By 1816 Indiana territory had reached a population of 60,000. This was the required number for Indiana to become a state. By 1818 land north of the Ten O'Clock Line had been acquired from the Indians by the Treaty of St. Mary's. Following this new purchase the area that is now Brown County was split up and became parts of Bartholomew, Monroe, and Jackson Counties. They did not welcome the inclusion of this undesirable, unusable, hilly country to be included in their new borders. It was also seen as a place that harbored horse thieves and bandits.

However, the great majority of our early settlers, who apparently welcomed the possibility of a new county, were certainly law-abiding and hard-working citizens. They first petitioned to be a county in 1834 but that didn't pass the Senate. In 1835 a second bill was presented and passed with it being approved on Feb. 4, 1836. There were ten sections of the Act creating Brown County that can be found in a rare copy at the Indiana State Library.

The boundaries and operation of Brown County as a governing unit were spelled out in Chapter XIX. Section 1: That from and after the first day of April next, all that tract of land included in the following



### **Banner Brummet Cabin, Nashville**

boundary lines, shall form and constitute a new county, to be known and designated by the name of Brown (in honor of the late Major General Jacob Brown). Section 3: That James Alexander and Aquilla Rogers of Monroe County; and David Deitz and Hiram Wilson of Bartholomew County; and Stephen Sparks of Jackson County be, and are hereby appointed commissioners. The commissioners aforesaid shall meet, on the second Monday in August next at the house of James Dawson, in the said county of Brown, and shall proceed to perform their duties required by them by law.

Section 4. Elections are to be held

as near to the center of the county as convenient until a public building can be erected. Section 5. An agent is to be appointed for the sale of land and 10 % is to be held back from the sale for the use of a county library. Section 9: Apply a standing act providing the mode of opening and repairing public roads. (The rest of these Sections can be read in Brown County History and Families, 1990)

The first election was held June of 1836 of which John Floyd was elected Clerk and Recorder, James Taggart and Lewis F. Raper were Judges, Daniel Hedrick, William Jackson, and James Davidson were elected County Commissioners. James Dawson was commissioned Sheriff by Governor Noah Noble. Thomas Henson was appointed Treasurer. One old settler described the scene as the establishment of the county seat was unfolding. His description comes from an old copy of the Brown County newspaper, The Index of 1869. 'He and a friend Simon Taylor wanted to go up to see the deliberations that was going on. They had come into Georgetown and asked for directions. William Murphy told them that three different locations were being considered for the county seat - Georgetown, Hedgesville, and the place they were now meeting at James Dawson's a few miles south. The left for Dawson's and on their way they found no sort of road and travel was treacherous, going across ravines and up and down steep hills. At long last they came to Banner Brummett's cabin. Josh Brummett came out and escorted them the rest of the way to Dawson's. His cabin was on the south side of Salt Creek not too far from the Brummetts. The commissioners were financeering to obtain the largest donation for the new location. It was soon decided to be the area just east of Brummett's place. They soon set to work laying off the new town, Jacksonburg into lots. It is theoried that Banner Brummett's fondness for his home state of

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Tennessee pushed to have the name changed to Nashville.’

### **A New Way to Learn History**

A new method of teaching history was presented to us recently that might be better at catching the attention of young people. One of our own, Bill Boyle, recently demonstrated how to re-introduce history in a way that could be more memorable. He has past experience at re-enacting military battles with miniatures. He is a member of a military history miniatures organization called **19 & One**. They’ve taken their games to GENCON in Indianapolis for several years - namely the battles that Jacob Brown fought in. Their following has grown



and this year he said they took about 80 games for several hundred players. “While players might not normally sit through a lecture or read a history book, they will do it as part of a game. They learn about making decisions with imperfect information and then they learn about dealing with the consequences of those decisions. That’s what history is really about.” This year Bill plans to set up a miniatures war game during the Quilt Show. He feels this could potentially be a good learning tool as well as possibly bring a new attraction to the History Center. The Pioneer Women’s Quilt Show is October 9 - 11 at the History Center. In the Hughes Room will be a food court. There will also be the **19 & One** game club’s war game set up for players. Come see what it’s all about.

### **Family Heritage Day**

This year we are having a Family Heritage Day presented by the Genealogical Society with the blessings of the Historical Society - it will be in the Pioneer Village on October 3 from 11:00 to 4:00 p.m. We want to celebrate the heritage of Brown County families. Please come down if you want to learn how to research your family history. The Historical Society Archives is collecting family histories so if you want to share with others that you may be related to please bring us a copy.

**(Photos from the Brown County Historical Society Archives, Rhonda Dunn, and Bill Boyle)**