

Salt licks led early settlers to the county

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It was, therefore, a pleasant surprise when some of the early settlers discovered that deer and other animals were congregating at several creeks in the eastern part of the county. Once the word got around, hunters had a way of turning up at the "deer licks" to hunt for game for the family table.

(For the benefit of "city-bred" readers, animals need to maintain a certain level of salt in their bodies, the same as humans. In the summertime, their instinct takes them to salty water to replenish their supply.)

According to the *History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties, Indiana* and Pop

Hall's *Historic Treasures*, some enterprising early local settlers, Henry Wampler and Thomas Literal, chose section 12 of what is now Salt Creek Township to engage in salt-making. Apparently there were others who had the same idea, since the histories also mention salt licks belonging to a man by the name of Jackson and to J.O. Howe, who bought land in section 12.

The origin of the brine water may have come from the dissolution of rocks containing deposits of sodium and chlorine, according to John B. Patton, director of the Geological Survey. Furthermore, the liquid formed by a union of

chlorine and sodium comes from a depth of some 400 feet, since the water originating closer to the surface of the ground is fresh water.

The whole process of producing salt from brine was a tedious one. Wampler and Literal were known to have drilled a well to reach the brine and then to have boiled it in large iron kettles suspended over fires to evaporate the liquid part. That left the salty crystals.

Early accounts of their salt works indicate that there was a lot of local demand for their product, and that the two men built crude shanties to house themselves and their workers. It surely must have been uncomfortable to keep the fires going under the kettles in the summertime.

The business prospered so much that Wampler and Literal were said to have produced some 800 bushels of salt in a year. It is also known that the two men and other settlers petitioned the county to build a road for access to the salt works.

In 1825 Salt Creek Township was established, perhaps due in part to having a prosperous business within its boundaries. In addition to the salt works, county histories indicate that there was a brisk sale of land in the township.

Two people injured in Ind. 46 wreck

B-T Report

A three-car accident in front of the Cinema West Drive-In on Ind. 46 West Friday night sent two Gosport residents to Bloomington Hospital with minor injuries.

William F. and Mary Smith were both treated and released.

Robert J. Macbeth, 30, Brazil, told Monroe County police that a vehicle stop-

when she stopped suddenly her car was struck in the rear by the one driven by Smith, 26, causing her to run into Macbeth.

Smith told police that when Lentz stopped suddenly in front of him, he could not avoid the accident.

Motorcycle, van reported