

having at that time had a population of about eighty persons. Beaucoup contained only about three sections of prairie lands, hence, we may the more easily account for its being so slow in settling up.

The children of the settlers living west from Hutchings' prairie first attended the school at the Big Rock school-house, in Washington county, and those on the east side went to a school in Mud prairie. The first school-house was built in 1837 on the Edmund Hodges' place, in section 1, and the second at the Truster place, in section 21, in 1850, both being small log buildings. After the introduction of the free school system four school districts were formed, and houses erected in each of them, at a cost of \$1,275.00.

Probably the first mill put up in the county was that built by John Hutchings, about 1829. It was of the hand or tug sweep style, and ground corn only. Hutchings built it for the accommodation of his settlement, quite as much as for profit. It was operated by two horses or a yoke of oxen, and would grind as much as twenty-five bushels of corn in a day. In 1845, William Hutchings, Jr., built a tread grist and saw mill combined, upon the old homestead place, on the bank of Beaucoup. He ground corn and wheat and sawed lumber with it a number of years. **Joseph Todd & Sons** put up a steam circular saw-mill on the

former's farm in 1854, at a cost of \$2000. Hodges' horse-power mill was built in 1857, and was afterwards turned into a steam saw and grist mill. Crass' circular saw mill was built in 1867 or 1868. In the earliest days of our settlement the milling was done at Kaskaskia, Sparta or Murphy's steam mill, on Beaucoup, in Washington county.

St Mary Magdalen's Church was built in 1869—a frame structure, 24 by 40 feet. The congregation was organized by Rev. Thomas Cuissic, in 1859.

The following are the first land entries in the precinct: May 16, 1833, William Hutchings entered the E. half of the N. E. quarter of section 24, 80 acres. March 1, 1837, John Hutchings entered the N. E. quarter of the S. E. quarter of section 24, 40 acres. April 15, 1837, Joshua McRice entered the N. half of the S. W. quarter of section 1, 80 acres. Same date, C. Mason entered the E. half of S. E. quarter, section 2, 80 acres. Jan. 17, 1837, John McKason entered the N. W. of the N. E. quarter of section 22, 33 acres.

Though the precinct possesses a productive soil and an abundance of valuable timber, the future depends upon the rich mines of coal, yet undeveloped, that underly its surface.

