

*The Versailles Statesman*  
Thursday, February 23, 1933

## Martin Hotel In Versailles Is Oldest Hostelry in Missouri Under Same Continuous Management

*(J. T. Williams, 85 year old citizen of Morgan county, came here from Kentucky when four years old and aside from being temporarily out of the county on business and political duty has resided within five miles of Versailles all of his years. Uncle Jack, as he is familiarly known, is a prominent and progressive citizen. He, like Uncle Dock Murray, looks forward always, and seldom reverts to the scenes and incidents of the past. Uncle Jack has been zealous and active in the political affairs of the county in the Legislature two terms and has always played an important part in the history of the county. He is enjoying good health and conducts a large farm northeast of Versailles.)*

Editor Statesman:

My recollection of Versailles dates back to 1851. It was just a small village with not more than 150 citizens. There was not more than one or two stores. The Livingston Bros., James and Sam, were among our first merchants.

The prominent men who lived in and around Versailles in my early days here were James P. Ross, Major Crook, the McClanahans, W. J. Tutt, Thomas Monroe, L. E. Williamson, the McCoys, William Hicks, a harness maker, Cooksy, another harness maker. One of William Hicks' sons is now a member of the State Legislature and is in his second term.

During my service in the Legislature it befell my lot on orders of the House to determine the oldest hotel that had been under the same management from the time of its

establishment. After a lot of investigation I was gratified that my findings led me to my own town of Versailles where I found that the Martin Hotel had been operated under the same name and management twenty years longer than any other hotel in Missouri. "Grandma" Martin's picture hangs in the museum of the Capitol.

Most all the buildings in Versailles were made of logs in the 50's and I have seen them torn down one by one and replaced with modern brick buildings.

Versailles has always been thrifty and progressive. As a rule the businessmen in and around Versailles are high class citizens.

I do not care to tell about some of the bad things that I have witnessed in Versailles but there is one circumstance that I will mention that I will never forget.

Belford Walker was sheriff of the county and he hung a man who had committed a murder. I was a small boy at the time and the hanging affected me considerably. People did so much talking about it. Sheriff Walker was the father of our late R. H. Walker, who was Judge of the Supreme Court. Another sad thing I saw in Versailles was the shooting between Drummond and Stephenson. I expect I was about the closest of anyone that saw the affair except those that were doing the shooting.

Most of the things about Versailles that I like to remember are the good things, the pleasant social gatherings, school days and other good times in the days gone by.

*J. T. Williams, Versailles, Missouri*