

# **RECOLLECTIONS OF A PIONEER**

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Recollections of a pioneer by J. W. Gibson

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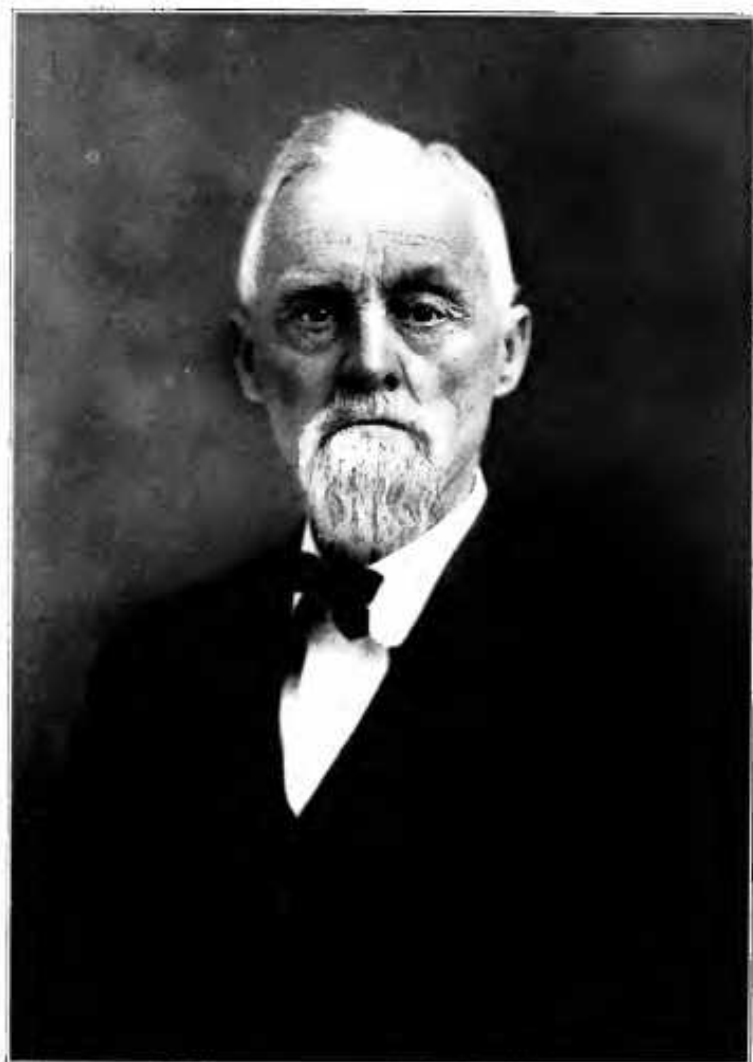
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**J. W. GIBSON**

**RECOLLECTIONS  
OF A PIONEER**





J. W. (WATT) GIBSON.



RECOLLECTIONS  
*of a* PIONEER

*J. Watt* BY  
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## FOREWORD.

The following pages are entirely from memory. I kept no notes or other record of the events I have attempted to relate, but I am sure my memory has not often deceived me. My early responsibilities compelled me to give close attention to the things which transpired about me and thus fixed them permanently in my mind. In fact, most of the experiences which I have attempted to relate were of such personal consequence that I was compelled to be alert and to know what was passing.

I undertook the present task at the solicitation of many friends and acquaintances who urged that my recollections of a period, now fast passing out of personal memory, ought to be preserved. It is probable that I have made a good many errors, especially, in my attempts to locate places and to give distances, but it must be remembered that we had no maps or charts with us on the plains and that but few state lines or other sub-divisions were in existence. The location of the places where events occurred with reference to present geographical lines has been my most difficult task.

J. W. (WATT) GIBSON.

*St. Joseph, Mo., August 15, 1912.*

## CHAPTER I.

### *Early Days in Buchanan County.*

I was born in Bartow County, Georgia, on the 22nd day of January, 1829. Sometime during my infancy, and at a period too early to be remembered, my father and his family moved to East Tennessee, where we lived until I was ten years old. About this time reports concerning the Platte Purchase and its splendid farming land began to reach us. I do not now recall the exact channel through which these reports came, but I think some of our relatives had gone there and had written back urging us to come. My father finally yielded and in the spring of 1839 sold his Tennessee farm and prepared for the long journey overland. I was old enough at the time to take some note of what passed, and I remember that my father received four thousand dollars for his land in Indiana "shin plasters." I recall also the preparations that were made for the journey—the outfitting of the wagons, gathering the stock together, and most important of all, the part assigned to me. I was provided with a pony, saddle and bridle and given charge of a herd of loose cattle and horses. We had a rude camp outfit and carried along with us all the household plunder with which we expected to start life in the new country. As may be well imagined, there was not a great deal of it, although the family was large. In those days the people had to be satisfied with the barest necessities. Some idea of the extent of this part of my father's worldly property may be given by saying that the entire outfit, including camp equipment, was loaded into two wagons.

I shall never forget the morning we started. Everything had been loaded the day before, except the articles necessary to the sojourn over night. We were up bright and early, had breakfast in little better than camp style, and were off before sun up. My father, mother, and the younger children took the first wagon, and one of my brothers and my sisters the second. I was upon my pony and in my glory. The wagons moved forward and I rounded up the cattle and horses and forced them along after the wagons. I was too young to feel any tender sentiment toward the old home or to appreciate the fact that I was leaving it forever, but I remember that my father and mother often looked back, and as we passed over the hill out of sight, I saw them turn and wave a long farewell. Many times since I have thought of that scene and have learned to know full well its meaning to my father and mother.

I cannot recall all the particulars of this toilsome journey, and if I could, they would hardly interest the reader. I remember that I soon lost the enthusiasm of that early morning on which we started and grew very tired and longed for the end of our journey. For a great many days it seemed to me we traveled through a rugged mountain country. The hills were long and toilsome, the streams had no bridges and had to be forded, and I frequently had great difficulty in getting my cattle and horses to follow the wagons. On such occasions, the caravan would stop and the whole family would come to my aid. Of course, there were no fences along the sides of the road and my stock becoming wearied or tempted by the green herbage alongside would wander out into the woods and brush and give me much trouble.