

Samuel Judy (Tschudi), a Swiss immigrant, was the first permanent white settler. He bought a crude log cabin from Ephraim Conner in 1801. He planted an orchard and completed the first brick home (opposite West Main Street) in 1808.

The area was called the Goshen Settlement. It grew rapidly as new land owners came and settled. The Goshen name was changed to Peters Station about 1840, deriving its name from the William Peters family.

One of the earliest schools in Madison County was taught by Elisha Alexander in the yard of Samuel Judy's home. A log schoolhouse was built between the homes of Judy and William B. Whiteside in 1814. Another log school house was built (circa 1845) and was called the first Peters School. In 1913, William Smola erected a brick schoolhouse on Rt. 157 north of West Main Street.

In June 1844, a record breaking flood from the Mississippi and Missouri rivers swept over the American Bottom. The water stretched from Alton to Kaskaskia. Steamboats were able to navigate from St. Louis to the bluffs for rescue work. Small wonder the settlers established their Pioneer Cemetery high into the bluffs. Sam Judy was buried there in 1838.

Some familiar names appearing in reference to the Peters area were: Barnsback, Brockmeier, Dickman, Franek, Gerbig, Holtz, Keller, Lee, Martin, Munzert, Nix, Smola, and Stallings.

Peters Station reached a peak in 1911 as the center of shipping for the area with buyers from Chicago and St. Louis bidding against one another for goods. Peters Station shipped out 10 to 15 carloads of potatoes every day. Farmers were very industrious, but also made time for fun. A favorite pastime was organizing and betting on horse races. The Peters Station Nine baseball team often played against the Sand Prairie Nine team. Frequent fish fries and picnics were held at Long Lake.



Samuel Judy (Tschudi), first brick house built in Madison County, 1808 (photo courtesy Madison County Historical Society)



John Helfer's threshing machine, John Yanda on tractor seat, circa 1916



Smola School, 1924



Grain elevator built by Valier & Spies stood until 2018 (Photo courtesy Eugene Gamble, taken in 1985)

