

THE AUGUSTUS WEST SETTLEMENT

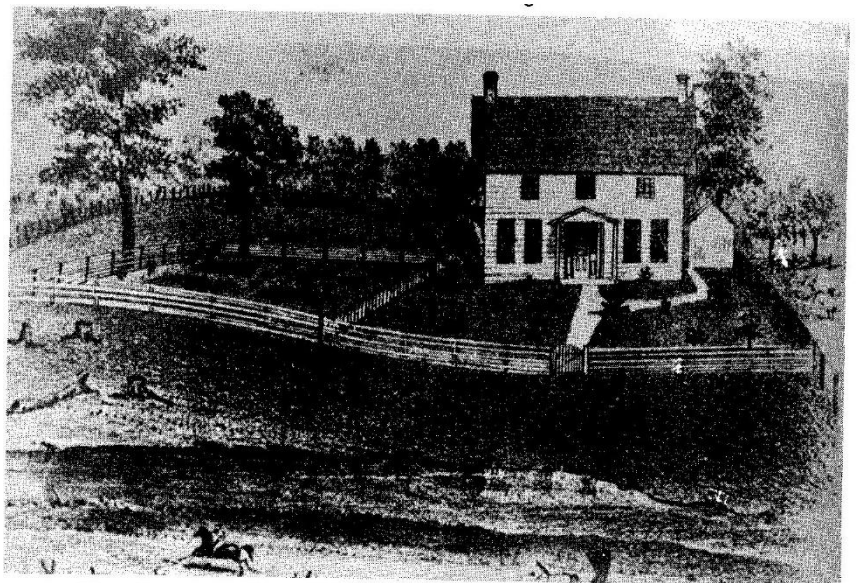
A settlement of later date in Fayette County, just north of Greenfield, following the Civil War, has an unusual history involving Highland County. Augustus West, as reported by R. S. Dills in *History of Fayette County*, was born in Madison County, Virginia, March 20, 1814. His father was a slave. His mother was a free colored woman, Dilcie West, who supported her family by selling cakes and other pastry." Augustus came to Highland County in 1837, living near Hillsboro and then at Fall Creek for a period of years.

Augustus had a deep desire to own a farm. To secure money he went back to the South and had a friend turn him in as a runaway slave collecting a generous bounty, for he was a large man. After a period of a few months he escaped to Ohio. This process of being turned in as a slave was repeated a number of times. He bought fifty acres of land partly in Highland County and partly in Fayette County, May 3, 1846, at a cost of \$700. He sold this land March 16, 1857, receiving a total of \$1750. On March 7, 1863, he purchased 177 acres at a cost of \$6195.59

It was on this 177 acres that Mr. West built a spacious home that became known as "The Mansion." It was made of boards sawed from walnut trees on the land he owned. Long cabins were built for Negroes freed from slavery by the Civil War.

Historian Dills reports that Augustus married Harriet Payton, of Culpepper County, Virginia. They had eleven children. After Harriet's death he married a second wife, Mary Cotes, in 1877.

The abandoned Mansion still stands providing shade for cattle in the field, but the cabins have all been torn down. Some descendants of the Augustus West family and other families of the settlement are now living in Greenfield and Highland County. Among these are the children and grandchildren of the late John Cannon, who was a great grandson of Augustus West, and his wife now Mrs. Florence (Davis) Rickman, of Greenfield.



The Augustus West "Mansion" taken from the Atlas of Fayette County (Philadelphia: L. H. Everets & Co., 1875).