

GHOST TOWNS OF HENDRICKS COUNTY

Some of these are ghost towns and some are not. Rather than to take too much time sorting, I decided to start with earliest.

Guide lines for dealing with the topic of ghost towns are the following definitions.

A ghost is a disembodied spirit.

A town is a collection of houses — a distinct place with ~~a population and business center~~ a name.

A town is a population and business center.

A ghost town is either a deserted or semi-deserted town. It is one from which business and population have departed, leaving the place a shadowy semblance of its former state.

Some of these places qualify as ghost towns. Others are mainly "by-gones" or "has-beens". All are a part of our heritage.

The little trading places with their primitive dwellings, general stores, wagon and blacksmith shops, saw and grist mills, lumber and brickyards, tile factories, churches and schools had their way of life unique to a developing frontier.

Roads and improved transportation brought changes. Some villages grew, some disappeared, and with railroads, new towns were platted.

One of our "has been" towns was thoroughly covered by Dorothy Templin in last quarter's HISTORY BULLETIN. Read there what Dorothy wrote about Needmore.

They were practically self-sustaining except for coffee, tea, spices, fancy dress goods and hardware.

Hillsborough

1823

Hillsborough was the first town to be laid out within the confines of present Hendricks County boundaries.

The proprietor was George Matlock. He was from a large and influential family that had previously settled in Morgan County. George came to Hendricks County in 1821 and by 1824 had purchased 724 acres of land.

Deed Record #2 page 137, in a Ballard to Matlock transaction refers to Hillsborough. This was dated November 20, 1831. I did not get to good
an idea of how it
was laid out - map.

An earlier reference to Hillsborough is found in the codicil to William Ballards will dated October 25, 1823, "with the lots remaining unsold in the town of Hillsborough be offered by my executors as a donation to the county, provided the county seat be established at Hillsborough" The location was in Liberty Township in sections 5 and 6 T14N R1E.

Roundtown

Roundtown must truly be a ghost town. It is reported to be a very early settlement in Eel River Township from one to one and a half miles south of North Salem. Possibly in sec 9 It predated North Salem but I have not found records of Roundtown.

Some early settlers in that area were John Fowler 1823, Noah Bateman 1824, Reuben Claypool 1824, Christian Hartman¹⁸²⁴ William Honey 1825, William Jones 1829 and James Trotter 1835 7 men

The cemetery just south of the land of the above named men, is reported to have been connected with Roundtown name of cemetery?

Union 1827

Union was laid out by James Doward and Thomas Irons. The plat was recorded December the 20, 1827. The location by section, township and range was not given. (strange for those men)

Fred L. Pierpont, a history teacher in the Clayton High school, ^{in the nineteen twenties,} said Union was at the spot or near there, where the Cartersburg road joins W. & R. 40.

James Doward and Thomas Irons were adjoining land owners, ~~James~~ Doward in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ sec 5 T14N R1E and ~~Thomas~~ Irons in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ sec 32 T15N R1E.

~~Doward and Irons were prominent settlers. Thomas Irons was a legislator to the National general assembly by~~ ^{convention} Cumberland, the main street in Union, ~~Cumberland~~, was 90 feet wide. ~~the~~ (cross) streets, Salem, High, Knight and Water were 66 feet wide. There were eighty lots 66 x 132' in ten blocks. All the alleys were 10' wide.

Liberty Township's first post office was at Union, established December 20, 1828 and closed November 1, 1831.

William H. Henton, another near by land owner was the post master.

New Williamsburg

1834

Alexander Bryant, proprietor, laid out New Williamsburg on the south side of the Rockville Road (#36). The plat was recorded December 23, 1834, the same day as was the plat for New Winchester, one and three quarters mile to the west.

New Williamsburg was located in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ sec 10 T15N R2W. The town consisted of four blocks making fourteen lots altogether. These lots set back thirty feet from ^{the} section line to the north and were 74 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' x 78 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' ^{note size} excepting block #4 where lot #1 was 8 x 10 poles and lot #2 was 16 x 10 poles. Cross street was 64' wide and the alleys were 8'. ^{narrow!}

Some near by land owners were John Tomlinson, David R. Jones, Robert Ragan, Pemberton L. Dickin, John Bush, Nicholas Yunt, Henry Bland and Jefferson Robards in sec 10. In sec 3 just north were George Peck, Thomas Samuel, John Higgins, Thomas White, Xury Eaton West, and Benjamin Griffith.

The New Winchester Christian Church was organized at New Williamsburg in 1830. "The first church was built at Williamsburg, later called Turner's Inn?" The Christian church was moved to New Winchester in 1846.

For early voters of New Williamsburg see page 92 of Hadley's History of Hendricks County 1914.

West Centerville

1835

West Centerville was laid out December 21, 1835 by Hampton Rennington, Enoch Davis and Stephen ^{Ton} Toney, just a few days after North Salem was platted. West Centerville plat was recorded December 29, 1835. Book #4 page 146.

West Centerville contained 26 lots that were 60' x 120'. All the streets were 60' wide. The town covered 7 acres and 4 poles.

~~Stephenton Tony make his mark ~~on the~~~~
when the town plat ~~was~~ recorded.
~~He~~ was one of
the voters in Eel River Township 8-1-1832.
I mention this about Stephenton Toney because
of the long hard struggle to decipher his
name on the voting records.

West Centerville was located on sections 29 & 32
T17N R2W ^{Ladoga Road} on present Road 236 at road
800 North.

Some lots were sold but there is no
record that any dwelling houses or business
buildings ~~#~~ were erected

If a ghost town is a place from
which business and population has
departed, West Centerville almost missed
even being a ghost town.

Springfield - Springtown

Springfield was laid out by four men John Tincher, Henry D. Goolman, Abadiah Tincher and Alfred Hunt. They witnessed the signing and sealing of the town plat before Nelson Wood, Justice of the peace on June 15 1836.

The plat was recorded June 17, 1836
in Book # 4 pages 313 and 314.

Amiel Hunt had a store in
Springtown in 1837. The day book
he kept lists 302 names of people
who had an account at his store. ^{log?}
This store was on the southwest
corner of the main intersection. The
~~listed~~ ~~purchased~~ are
descriptive of articles used by
the settlers.

The blacksmith shop was
on the southeast corner of the intersection.
He made hinges and window glass for
a brick school house was
early a part of the community
life

Dayton Toney
native son
Ruth Stark

Facsimile with Day Book
copied word for word
asked Nellie Dean to denote
Book historical Society.

Spring Mill H.
was bought

Springfield got a post office December 21, 1843, with James Wright as post master. Others were Hiram D. Jones 4-1-1847 James Wright 6-27-1849 William P. Goolman 12-24-1852 James Stutzman 4-29-1853 Thomas Nichols, Jr. 3-20-1854 Elisha M. Wright 7-20-1854 John C. Gambold 8-23-1854 John L. Welshans 1-8-1856 James G. Ralston 9-10-1861

The name was changed from Springfield to Springtown January 14, 1850. The Springtown post office was closed November 11, 1865, and the mail was handled through the Amo office.

Springtown had a saw mill in the west part of town a water mill on the creek

The original town of Springfield had forty-eight lots. In 1849 twelve more lots were added. From ~~Deed Records in~~ court house ~~Deed Book~~ eighty names of lot owners ~~are given~~ have been found

Springfield was a voting place for the election August 3, 1846. One hundred one men voted. Many of these voters' names were also found in Amiel Hunt's Day Book.

When the railroad missed Springtown, it began to die. Some years later several of the houses in Springtown (one source said two dozen) were moved to Amo, by a Mr. Kersey and son.

A T-road, three houses and a cemetery are reminders of a once thriving pioneer village, in Clay Township at roads 400 south and 475 west.

Georgetown

Georgetown must have been a dream THAT turned INTO nightmare. It was surveyed for George H. Keller on the 26th, 27th and 28th of July 1837. The town was laid out on the National or Cumberland Road, in the W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ and the E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ sec 20 T14N R2W.

This plat of 80 lots and a public square ~~in the 16th sec T14N R2W~~

What happened? ~~on~~ ^{3rd was recorded 8-2-1837}

On September 25th 1837 a bill of sale ^{for goods + chattles} from George H. Keller to William M. Keller was recorded:

- 8 feather beds and all the bed clothing
- 3 fancy bedsteads
- 9 common bedsteads
- 1 bureau (bureau)
- 3 dining tables
- 2 stand tables
- 2 patent mantle clocks
- 1 safe
- 1 cooking stove
- 1 Carroram? Table
- 1 large 4-horse wagon
- 2 yoke of cattle

Georgetown Continued

- ✓ 1 sorrel Mare
 - ✓ 1 brown Mare
 - ✓ 3 milk cows and 3 calves
 - ✓ 9 head of sheep
 - ✓ 1 Rusia sow and 9 pigs
 - ✓ 60 head assorted hogs
 - ✓ 3 pair andirons
 - ✓ 3 dozen plaitts (Plates?)
 - ✓ 3 sets of knives + forks
 - ✓ 8 dishes
 - ✓ 1 Cary plow
 - ✓ 1 patent plow
- All the corn now growing upon my three different fields, ungathered
- ✓ 4 hay stacks
 - ✓ 1 sugar chest
 - ✓ 36 chairs
 - ✓ 2 sets of harness
 - ✓ 2 Grubbing hoes
 - ✓ 1 lock Chain

²
These
were from a hotel
or room or store

James C. Smith } witnesses
Wm. P. Robards }

Mr. Keller was involved in a number of litigations after this but they were settled in his favor.

North Mount Sterling

The town of North Mount Sterling was laid off for William Josephs and John D. Fear in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec 16 T17N R1W. It was 250' + 850' containing 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ acres.

The town had 3 blocks with 8 lots in a block. The lots were 60' x 100'. The town was laid out on the west side of present State Rd 39, on —

~~the town was laid out at 26th of the~~
first month 1850 by Job Hadley,
Hendricks County Surveyor

William Josephs made his mark when the plat and field notes were recorded March 14 1850 Book 13 page 338

This location is about two miles north of Linton.

The 1878 map shows a near by school house. The Burgess Cemetery is across the road and a little to the south of the site of North Mount Sterling

North Belleville

The town plat of North Belleville was laid out for George W. Hammond by Job Hadley, Hendricks County Surveyor, 3rd month 14th, 1851. ^{The} ~~plat~~ ^{was} recorded 8-1-1851.

The town was situated in the NW corner of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec 35 T15N R1W and on the new railroad—the Indianapolis and Terre Haute. It was estimated to contain 5 acres and 29 square poles. It had 16 lots.

North Belleville had a freight loading platform ^{on the R.R. siding}. A considerable quantity of lumber ^{finished} as well as other commodities, was shipped ^{on the railroad from} from Belleville's planing mill at Haywood ^{this town}.

Breedlove was one of the teamsters employed to haul lumber to North Belleville.

The Leonidas Ford family moved to North Belleville about 1910 before the youngest daughter, Dorothy, was born.

Leonidas Ford and wife sold lots 2-14 inclusive to the railroad Oct. 27 1927 for \$ 2150. Book 136 page 161

The Fords learned that the front part of their house was log when they had a telephone installed.

The Archie Taylor house, now in Belleville, was built ^{with} material from a house in North Belleville.

The interurban provided transportation through North Belleville ~~into~~ (over)

Cincinnatus

1850 maybe?

Cincinnatus sounds like an ambitious name. The fifty-seven lots laid out in the town indicate visions of prosperity.

Cincinnatus was laid ^{one of the 8 or 9 R.R. towns out} on the Terre Haute and Indianapolis Rail Road between Amo and Coatesville. It was located in section 33 in Clay township. The [present] spot is at Roads 650 west and 500 south.

The 1865 map of Hendricks County shows Cincinnatus to be about the same size as Pecksburg and the 1878 map includes Cincinnatus but the history of the town is not given.

Cincinnatus post office was established December 10, 1852 with Asa Hadley as first post master. The office closed July 5, 1862.

There must have been some prosperity there for a time for the post office to remain almost ten years.

Post offices were closer together when patrons called for their mail

The 1909 map shows all of Cincinnatus owned by T. B. Adams

The story of the Cincinnatus post office must have been interesting. The list of post masters and dates are

12-10-1852	Asa Hadley	30 $\frac{1}{2}$ mo.
6-23-1855	Abner Snoddy	17 $\frac{1}{2}$ mo.
12-12-1856	Samuel Hackett	3 yrs - 3 mo.
3-10-1860	Arthur G. Soddyke	4 mo.
7-10-1860	Richard M. Sullivan	13 mo.
8-27-1861	Joshua Edwards	1 mo.
9-21-1861	Philip R. Deitrick	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ mo.
7-5-1862	Post office closed	

Pecksburg

11

Pecksburg was a little railroad village named for a Mr. Peck, ^{first} president of the Vandalia R.R. It was surveyed by Eldred Huff for the proprietors John L. Hadley and Job Johnson, 4-26-1853. The plat was recorded May 24, 1853.

There was a Methodist church at Pecksburg for about twenty years and a Lutheran Church about fifty years. Pecksburg had a school house, post office, saw mill, two stores and a blacksmith shop. Doctor House db least on doctor teachers.

John Terrell Albertson had the last store in Pecksburg. It was in a building owned by the Interurban Company. ^{also} Mr. Albertson _{hand operated} sold gasoline from a pump at this sight.

Pecksburg was located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ sec 31 T15N R1W at the present (1980) intersection of roads 500 S and 250 W.

Pecksburg is the birthplace of Arthur Trester of basket ball fame. See Carrie Trester Hadley's THE LIFE OF ARTHUR TRESTER

Also see HISTORY OF PECKSBURG by Ola Crane Hubbard.

Center Valley

see History Bulletins

Center Valley evidently had a religious rather than a commercial beginning. Homes were established first, but within a very short time a church was the point ^{or center} around which life revolved.

This was a "Regular Baptist Church of Jesus Christ", frequently called "Primitive". This church was constituted on August 18, 1832, at the home of Brother William M. Craven on the waters of McCracking Creek and was to be known as "FRIENDSHIP".

The log church was built in 1834 and replaced with a larger frame edifice in 1856. This was remodeled in 1906 and after membership became very small, about fifty years later, the building was sold and removed.

The post office was established April 30, 1856 and was named Centre Valley. Later the spelling was changed to Center Valley. William M. Craven was the first post master and likely suggested the name.

An early shop ^{or furnished} supplied the blacksmithing for the settlement but the date is unknown. A new black smith shop was built about 1912 or 1913. This was a very busy place for several years but now stands by the road empty and silent, with openings plastered shut

John W. Craven described the store in Center Valley. He stated that it was "erected by W. R. Craven in 1866 on a site about one hundred feet south of the residence. It was moved to the site adjoining the residence in 1868 and moved to its present site in 1889"

This information was given in a paper written in 1913 for the Craven-Barker-Richardson reunion.

Mr. Craven named store owners as follows

Ira & W. R. Craven 1866
son Douglas Rushton ^{March 1887}
Thomas R. Hawkins 4-23-1889

Margaret Mann 9-3-1889

Columbus E. Johnson 8-28-1893

Granville Love 2-5-1904

Ora Morrison 9-8-1906

John W. Craven 10-6-1910

to the present (1913)

I have a copy of the ledger kept by Ira Rushton and Son when they had the Center Valley store in 1887 and 1888. The Rushtons should be named as second owners.

Elijah Smith had the store

a decade or more beginning about 1913. Probably there was another owner before Harley Apley who was Center Valley's merchant in 1928. This store building was torn down in the nineteen-thirties.

Huckster wagons ran regular routes from this store for many years.

The Center Valley school was an important neighborhood institution.

Center Valley can be remembered for some outstanding natives.

The Brill family - Judge George Brill
Etta Craven Hogate - Jenny Craven
Ralston - John W. Craven, Indiana
university registrar for 40 years.-

Oscar Craven long time newspaper man in Bloomington, Arthur Craven, banker, Theodore Craven salesman
Adeline Craven Hayden hospital records work and John M. Pritchard a hardwood lumber specialist.

Children remember some things unnoticed by adults. Some of these are the pond on the east side of the road used for baptismal services; John W. Craven's vacation or summer cottage on the premises near the cemetery; the colorful peacocks in a pen near the house; the unusually large barn with its sloping drive up to the second level; the cemetery that seemed to fit Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard" and the grave stone with the sheaf of wheat on top.

Center Valley was a little place with a big community spirit.

See papers by Clara Reitzel, Rev. John W. Hanger and Walter and Ethel Edmondson, for added material also see Hendricks County Historical Society's History Bulletin for July 1973

Joppa

Joppa is in Guilford Township in the very south west corner at roads 525 east and 875 south.

Joppa was named from the Bible by Josiah N. Townsend, a resident of the neighborhood.

The John Harrison Brill family, natives of Virginia moved from the Cartersburg area to Gales saw mill on McCrackens Creek at Joppa in 1854. The son James H. Brill, wrote that there was a three-room house, a good well of water and ten acres of black bottom land. He also said they made some money with the mill.

The 1878 map of Guilford Township shows a steam saw mill at Joppa on the west side of the road. This must have been an improvement over the mill that could not run when water was low.

Etta Davis Harper (Mrs. Sam) stated that Joppa was a "lively" trading place during Civil War days.

Mrs. Harper named no store nor merchant but said there was no reason to travel to Moorsville. Most items commonly purchased could be bought at Joppa, including dry-goods.

Joppa had the necessary blacksmith shop, a wagon shop, and a furniture finishing shop run by Harbard Fansler. Later it had its own telephone system.

The most prominent house in Joppa was the large two-story brick house - with a fire place in every room. It was owned for years by Joshua Cook a Friends minister and later by the John Baldwins. Mrs. Baldwin was a foster daughter of Joshua Cook.

After the Civil War several members of the earlier Cook family died of spotted fever and the house became known as the "House of Tragedy".

Population of Joppa in 1910 was forty. Now, 1980, thirty people live there.

Rainstown

Rainstown was located in Union Township, between Linton and Pittsboro, with its eastern boundary on the middle - Union Township line. This was in the northeast corner of section 34 T17 R1E. Rainstown was laid out on the "Big Four" Rail Road, now the Penn Central. About 1906 - 1907 the Ben Hur inter-urban line to Crawfordsville from Indianapolis, was constructed through the village.

Rainstown was founded by and named in honor of Hiram Rains who came to Hendricks County in May of 1870. For many years he was extensively engaged in the manufacture of building materials. (At one time he employed as many as thirty workmen in his steam saw mills. He averaged \$50 a day clear money most of the time) and supplied

hundreds of thousands of feet of lumber to Indianapolis and even as far as Terre Haute.

Can you imagine the hustle and bustle of this lumber industry in this little town of a century ago? Rattling chains, breaking of heavy wagons, puffing locomotives and shouts of workmen all added to the din of the mill machinery.

After about fifteen years Hiram Rains moved to a small farm east of Plainfield. Page 719 of the 1885 History of Hendricks County, gives; "Rainstown is a station and post office in the eastern part of the township. The post office and only store is kept by J. D. King." There is no mention of the lumber business.

The post office had been established May 6, 1872 and closed June 15, 1914. Stephen Fowler was the first post master.

Other post masters' names can be found in Baker's Postal History of Indiana.

A few names of patrons are

L. B. Ashby, Marion Dodd, James R. Hale, Jimison Ludlow, David Osborne, James H. Reynolds, Joseph A. Walter, William E. Walter and Noah Wright.

About 1895 a Congregational Christian Church was built in Rainstown. As is often true, this church was a focal point of the community life. Several years ago it was disbanded and in 1961 was dismantled to clear the path for the new highway I-74. Read Jewel Dalis paper on this church to get the view from some one who knew the church, people and surroundings.

About 1900 Rainstown's population was 100 and by 1910 it was 50. Now the site is near the railroad crossing at road 75 east about 800 north.

Chiseltown

Chiseltown is another one of the about twenty unplatted and unrecorded places in Hendricks County. The 1878 Liberty Township map shows quite a cluster of buildings there by 1878.

Chiseltown was in the south west part of Liberty Township in southwest of section thirty-three and south east corner of section thirty-two.

Chiseltown developed markedly when the Greencastle road was constructed from Morrisville to Greencastle. The curve in the road southwest to include Chiseltown was necessitated because of the swampy ground to the north ^{of Chiseltown} and to the west of present Hazelwood.

Industry and business included a saw mill, tile factory, blacksmith shop and stores.

Called Leclair
A post office was established October 11, 1880 with William B. Brown as postmaster. The office was closed May 15, 1902. This was about the time that rural routes began serving the people.

Some very early names were Duncan, Hollingsworth, Brown, Carter, Ward, Hobson and Edmondson soon after.

The John and Annie Laurie Clark Hall family lived in Jacktown around 1905. They lived on the north side of the National Road and on the east side of the township line. The eldest daughter Myrtle was a dependable worker in the Cherry Grove Methodist church and left her membership in that church many years although she was working in the Salem church. While the Hall home was at Jacktown Myrtle married Albert Sheets of Joppa. (Read Hendricks History page 531)

Just west of Jacktown, Bert Greeson operated a paint and wall paper business from his residence. He was a well known and recommended workman and his vehicle was a familiar sight in the area.

The William Lietzman family entertainers must be included. He had the second picture machine (lantern slides) in the state. Lieber Art Supply store in Indianapolis had the first. Mostly in the summer, the family with machine and piano made their "show and tell" trips TRAFIC LIGHT

John Barron owned and operated a general store at Jacktown, on the north west corner of the intersection - north side of the National road and on the west side of the Township line (where Lloyd McClellan lives now, 1980)

Mr. Barron died in an accident in 1917, on a return trip from Indianapolis. He had gone in his buck for supplies to stock his store.

Columbus Johnson had a store at this place at one time. Katie Johnson, daughter of Columbus, married Glenn Barron, son of John.

The Charles and Samantha Coopriider family later lived at this location and had a store.

Hazel Tudor of Stilesville added that Olive Williams Elmore had a milliner shop in her home when they lived in Jacktown.

is no business that will succeed long if it is not done on the square Close your store every Sunday. Let no man enter your store for goods on Sunday except in positive distress".

In this store a post office was established October 23, 1888, and continued until June 20, 1896. Alfred Clawson was the post master and the name was Euphernia for the Ohio birthplace of Emily A Oblinger Clawson. (Mrs. Alfred Clawson)

HUCKSTERS
The Spanish-American War came along & Charles Clawson went into military service. ~~Thus~~ the Clawson family kept informed of maneuvers and progress (See letters in Feb. Bulletin)

Later Charles Clawson and his wife Nancy Terrell Clawson had a store here along with gasoline service and short order lunches.

The store was torn down in 1933 by the son Wayne. The barn was sold to Lowell Franklin and removed to his farm north of the Salem Methodist church.

Jacktown

The date and the source of the name are in question in so far as no legal documents establishes proof of either.

From the 1878 map it appears that a little cross roads trading place was in operation then.

Since in earlier days the name was Jacksonville it is plausible that Jacktown is a derivation of that name and that the family of Jacksons was responsible.

The Cherry Grove Methodist Church had been organized ^{in 1861} and their meeting house built about three quarters of a mile south of the National Road.

The Alfred Clawsons bought property in 1887 and 1888 from the James Crawfords. Alfred was a blacksmith and set up a shop. The Clawsons also opened a store.

Mrs. Clawson's father, ^{William N. Oblinger} wrote to her about this venture. "Go on with whatever business you see fit to do and treat your customers kind and honest, for those

Charles and Eugene Clawson ran huckster ^{store} and ^{produce}
 Wagons three days a week from this ^{ran}
 other days went to Indianapolis with supplies.