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# Limaburg Community

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# Limaburg Community Flourishes In Early Days

Only the oldtimers know anything about Limaburg, and how it was when The Boone County Recorder was in its infancy. Had it not been for a talk given October 21, 1950 by Mrs. J. P. Brothers, former President of the Boone County Historical Society in Florence, we could not write this story.

Limaburg formerly flourished at the junction of the old Burlington and Hebron-Limaburg Pikes, now the location of the farm implement outlet of Calvin Cress and Sons, where the traffic lights are. Mrs. Brothers' late husband, J. P. (Prock) Brothers, ran a general store there for many, many years. It indeed was a gathering place for friends and neighbors, who converged on the store, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights, not only to purchase supplies, but to exchange neighborhood news.

And Mr. Brothers acquired much fame over the years over the sale of genuine hickory smoked country hams, which he cured and smoked in a building behind the frame store. It was a sad day when the store burned to the ground.

There was a mill, too. The Brothers general store was on one side of the narrow bridge crossing Gunpowder Creek, a branch that originated up Limaburg Creek Road for about two miles.

The combination grist mill and saw mill stood on the opposite bank of the creek.

At first, according to Mrs. Brothers' account, it was a grist mill, operated by Jeremiah Beemon, who built it about 1849. It was water-powered, that is, the waters of the creek were used through a system of gears, to turn the stones which ground the meal.

At about the time of the Civil War, a sawmill was added to the grist mill and a partnership was formed between Mr. Beemon and Israel and Robert Rouse for the operation of the two projects. One of the considerations of this transaction was that Mr. Beemon was to receive two loads of sawdust each year, and the grist mill must operate each Tuesday.

And the writer of this piece heard several times from the late John W. Ryle how he used to ride horseback from what is now the Camp Ernst area and down the creek to take corn and wheat to the mill to be ground into meal and flour.

According to Mrs. Brothers' account, the mill had changed hands only three times since the time of its inception, the last owner to operate the mill was the late William (Bill) Waters. When Mr. Waters operated the mill, it was run by steam power. But it furnished a lot of lumber, sawed from locally grown trees, to build the many tobacco barns in the county.

One of the local inhabitants was John Welsh, who came from Ireland with his family and lived on the creek near the mill. He built a house which lasted until 1916. Mr. Welsh had a reputation, among his neighbors of being "the kindest man who ever lived."

And there was a blacksmith shop on the northeast bank of Gunpowder Creek, diagonally across from the store, operated by George Baker.

There was a toll-house, too, to collect tolls used to pay for the development of the Burlington-Florence Pike. The tollhouse was first occupied by Mrs. and Mrs. Morgan C. Crigler, and lastly, by Mr. and Mrs. Waters.

The general store was the first operated by Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Rouse. Dr. W. O. Rouse and Mrs. Ora Tanner were their children.

This next item is one that few persons have any knowledge. It was the schoolhouse, and was located on a hill overlooking the tiny settlement. It served as school, church, and meeting place for any community gathering. A short distance from the school house was the last resting place of those who died of cholera when that disease threatened to destroy the village in 1849.

During the Civil War the town suffered the fate of so many of the borderline communities and the residents were divided in their sympathies. But it survived

and in 1870, to the extent that a larger store was needed. A two story building was erected and the general store was operated by J. W. and S. J. Rouse. Both of these men were successful farmers.

Incidentally, the late Dr. Gladys Rouse was born at Limaburg. She practiced medicine in Florence for many, many years. Her husband was the late Robert Rouse, chairman of the board of the Florence Deposit Bank for a number of years.

If you're interested as to how the town or village acquired its name, it was all due to the Post Office Department. In 1884 an application was made for a post office, and when a government representative came to establish the office in the general store, he said that the settlement must have a name.

Well, the name "Needmore" had been used, but most people called the place "Florence Crossroads." Neither name seemed suitable and the settlement was thrown into a dither in an effort to select a name that would satisfy the Post Office Department and the residents. Some suggested Lima, but there was a Lima, Ohio, not too far away, and the similarity would cause confusion. The Postal Representative suggested Limaburg, and on the 17th day of February, 1885, the U. S. Postal Department issued a cancellation stamp and named Silas J. Rouse the first Postmaster of Limaburg.

About this time factory-made articles were becoming popular and many home-made articles were no longer produced. Yard goods, boots, flour, spices, dried fruits, green coffee, sugar, crackers by the barrel, candies, oils turpentine and many other articles were found in the general store. The Rouse family cared for the store themselves and never hired a clerk. Store hours were from sun-up to way after dark. The store was the center of friendly and unfriendly discussions and many weighty problems were aired and decided around the stove of the store. Mr. Brothers became a Dem-

ocratic political leader, because he knew the tenor of the times.

Limaburg had its quota of musicians, and many home-made instruments were tried out with varying degrees of success in the moonlight in front of the general store, as well as in other appropriate places.

In 1891 W. O. Rouse entered medical school in Cincinnati and upon his graduation on April 4, 1895, opened his office in the old store building across the road. After several years he found he could better serve the countryside by moving his office to Burlington. Upon his retirement many years later, he moved to North Carolina.

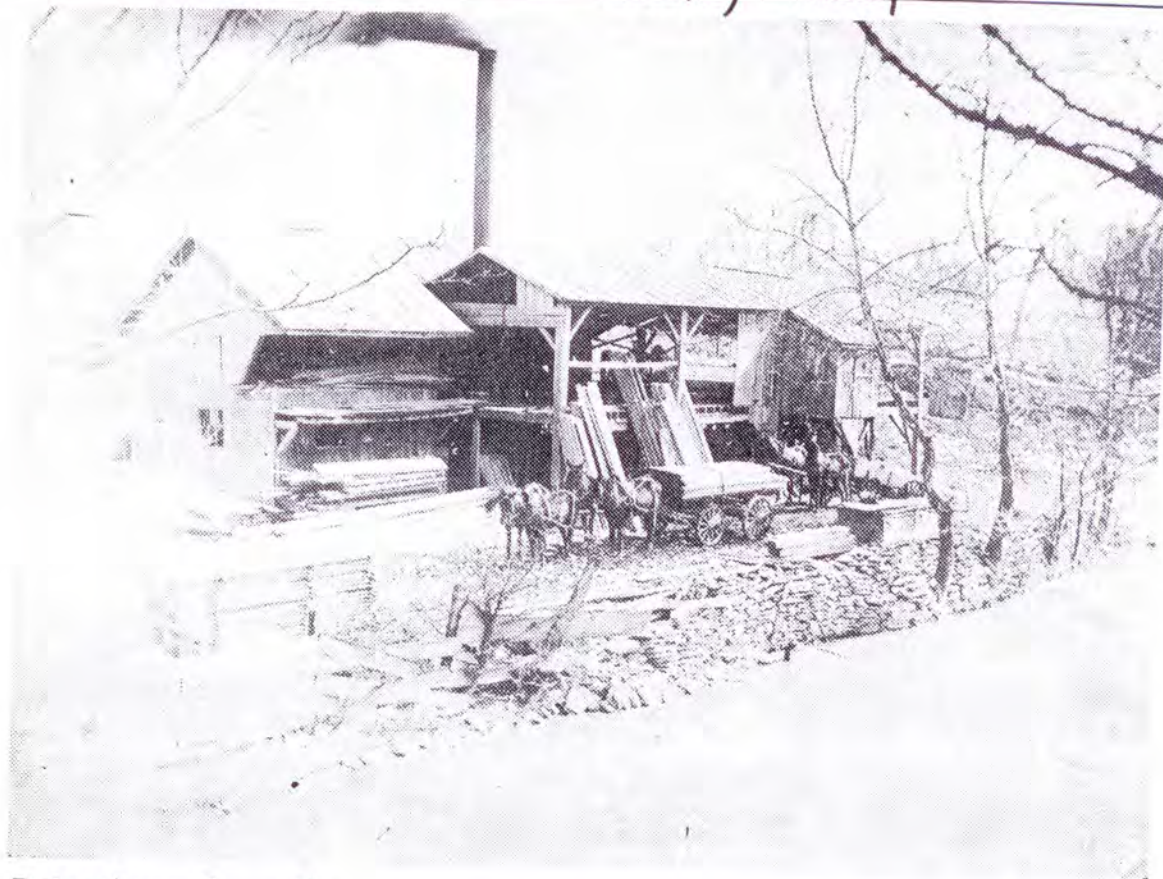
In 1901, Silas Rouse passed away and the following year his partner, J. W. Rouse sold the general store to J. W. Quigley and Clark Beemon. Mr. Rouse then retired to his farm.

The firm of Quigley and Beemon modernized their business by establishing a delivery service offering merchandise to farmers' wives and often bartering for eggs, butter, lard, chickens, and other items the family might wish to exchange for "store-bought" merchandise. Hardware and farming implements were sold by the general store. Calico was 5 cents a yard, outing six to 10 cents. Wire fencing, fertilizer, paint, and feed were sold by the new merchants. Mr. J. W. Quigley had married Miss Eva Beemon, his partner's daughter.

In 1907 the Post Office Department instituted rural free delivery and abolished the Limaburg post office. James P. Tanner was appointed the first rural mail carrier and mail boxes appeared on the roadside. The J. P. Utz gateway boasted a whole colony of boxes for people who lived on side roads. Alongside of the mailbox was the hitching post and horse block. Hitching rails lined both sides of Limaburg's street.

In bad weather the store was the gathering place. It was the social gathering place and people went there to get news as well as to buy needed





Petersburg Sawmill . . .

articles. Every phase of life was discussed there. At Christmas time fresh fruits, fancy candies, toys, bright handkerchiefs, new bolts of yard goods, nuts, and other festive items appeared on the store counters. Miss Ada Aylor introduced home-made ice cream to Limaburg.

The school house was a center for parties, plays, and other forms of entertainment. Debates were popular. One subject debated long and loudly was "Which is the most destructive - fire or water? Supporting one side of this argument was a flood which nearly destroyed the town. The bridge was washed out and the cellar of the store was filled with water. The blacksmith shop owned by Mrs. Mary E. Crigler was washed away and was never rebuilt. George Baker built a new shop on his own land. The mill was washed away. Water covered the floor of the Welsh house in which James Utz was living. At another time snow was so deep that the road through town was impassable. Limaburg was called the coldest place in winter and the coolest one in summer.

In 1918 the log house of Mr.

Utz was torn down and a small frame house was erected on the site by Mr. James Pettit. It was later sold to Mrs. Pettit's uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Utz who were then residing in Erlanger.

The Limaburg school house was originally on land adjoining the store at the top of the hill on the Hebron road. About 1894 it was moved to one acre of land on the S. J. Rouse property. About 1923 it was consolidated with the Burlington School. Wm. L. Aylor, Dr. W. O. Rouse, A. M. Yealey, Miss Sadie Beemon, who became Mrs. Chester L. Tanner were teachers in the Limaburg school.

World War I brought sadness and confusion to Limaburg. High prices, and sadness in homes brought back memories of the dark days in the 1860's. Motor vehicles were replacing horses, and the price of farm lands rose to phenomenal levels. Mr. Quigley passed away and the firm of Quigley and Beemon was dissolved. Shortly after Mr. Beemon died.

In February, 1920 the Limaburg store was purchased by J. Proctor Brothers of Newport, Kentucky and H. R.

Leidy of Ludlow. Mr. Brothers was a veteran of World War I.

During the depression that followed, Mr. Brothers bought out his partner, Mr. Leidey. Mr. Brothers then married and established his home over the store.

Electricity came to Limaburg in 1922 and the Brothers store became agent for Stewart & Warner radio receivers. A smoke house was added to the store and in the years to come it was to be famous for its smoked hams. Automobile tires and accessories were added to the stock and two gasoline pumps appeared out front. Business was good in Limaburg until the depression in 1929. Eggs then sold for eight cents a dozen, jowl bacon for 10 cents a pound, creamery butter for 22 cents, country butter for 20 cents, chickens for four cents a pound, flour was 35 cents for 25 pounds, stock feed 75 cents for 100 pounds.

The years between 1936 and 1941 brought better times. Roads were built, many new homes were constructed, farm machinery and motor cars made life easier and standards of living were raised. During this time the store cured and sold about 750

hams a year. The green meat was rubbed with a mixture of salt, brown sugar, black

pepper, and sat peter. The hams lay in this for 28 days when they were hung and smoked with sweet hickory wood. They then hung for nearly a year.

Meat rationing during World War II interrupted this business. The Limaburg hams have been shipped to many parts of the country, from New York to California, and from Florida to Illinois.

The first tract of land secured for the Boone County Airport was the Scott Walton farm 1 1/2 miles from Limaburg. A total of 835 acres was included in the airport property at that time. The airport, new roads, the prospective bridge all indicated future development of the Limaburg community. Mrs. Brothers related at the time.

But Limaburg, with respect to the old days, has ceased to exist, insofar as the grist mill, the blacksmith shop, the general store and the post office are concerned. Replaced is a modern farm machinery outlet - tractors, hay-making machinery, - you name it - they have it.