

CHAPTER 28

BOONVILLE, LONG A LEADER IN COMMERCE

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(Transcribed by Dorothy Harlan)

Cooper, an Agricultural Empire, Has for Its County Seat the Original Outpost of Civilization in the Boon's Lick, a Busy and Important Port in Steamboat Days, the Eastern Terminus of the Santa Fe Train That Ran "From Civilization to Sundown"--The Railroad Era Brought a Slump in Boonville's Commercial Importance--Highways and Revival of Freight on the Missouri Have Brought a Return of Former Glories in Modern Form--A Comparison of Business With 60 Years Ago--A List of County Licensed Businesses for the Year Ending With June, 1936--Fewer Small Factories Than a Generation Ago.

COOPER COUNTY is an agricultural community, but Boonville's position as a river port made it an important commercial center at an early day. Decline of river traffic during the railroad era caused a serious recession from glories of the period when Boonville was an eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail and one of the most important distributing points for the entire Southwest.

Boonville never fully recovered, but, despite her lost railroad opportunity, she remained strategically located and the Missouri-Kansas-Texas railroad learned early that Franklin, opposite Boonville, was a logical division point. Other division arrangements were tried but the Katy always returned to Franklin.

With the highway-building era and a new traffic bridge across the Missouri, completed at Boonville in 1924, and with revival of freight traffic on the river, a modified return of Boonville's commercial importance brought growth. Trucks supplant covered wagons, busses pass ghosts of stage coaches. Federal barge tows navigate a deep, narrow channel instead of steamboats on a broad, shallow river.

Added to these are hundreds of thousands of pleasure cars traveling U. S. Highway 40 across the river and up Boonville's Main street. Filling stations, tourist camps, cafes and hotels take the place of stage stops and inns of past generations. Businesses incident to this trade have grown rapidly.

BOONVILLE, the county seat and largest town in Cooper County, now has a larger population than ever in its history. A comparison of the institutions in Boonville in 1876, and today is interesting.

In 1876, Boonville had a furniture factory that had employed 50 persons but was not operating then, a cement factory, three potteries going full blast, a tobacco factory putting out both "chews" and "smokes", a woolen mill, a glass factory, three flour mills, a foundry not operating, a machine shop, two gun shops, three breweries, four bakeries, one marble yard, four brickyards, four wagon and two carriage shops, four plow factories, one sawmill, a steam ferry, two title companies, one national and one state bank, ten blacksmith shops and Kemper Family School.

There also were numerous retail stores including several selling shoes, two selling cigars, five clothing, two tin, two jewelry, four drugs, two dry goods, six confections, one agricultural supplies, numerous millineries and dressmaking shops and many handling a combination of groceries and dry goods.

There were ten saloons and seven wine gardens and only two restaurants.

The town had three lumber yards and six carpenter shops.

There were 20 school teachers, six music teachers, 10 physicians, 15 lawyers, 11 ministers, and the United States land office.

Orchards and vineyards flourished on the river hills.

COOPER COUNTY also had several rural mills, usually on streams and operated by water power, Conner's, Jewett's, Rankin's and Gooch's mills live in their communities' names today, although most of their landmarks have disappeared.

In an age of uncertain roads and slow transportation, these neighborhood enterprises were profitable and served a vital need.

In years past, Boonville also had numerous limekilns. Unlimited supplies of raw material are available from stone in river bluffs. Marcus Lohse, now deceased, the father of Fred G. Lohse, Boonville's senior grocer, operated a limekiln in East Boonville for many years. He shipped in wood and shipped out his finished product in large quantities, using steamboats and railroads, besides having much local trade, handled by wagons.

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BOONVILLE'S POPULATION was slightly more than 3,000, its municipal debt was \$69,000, and its tax rate, in 1875, was \$1.20 on \$100 valuation.

Boonville's tax rate now is 68 cents on \$100 and its bonded debt is \$36,000* in each instance an improvement of more than 100 per cent over 60 years ago.

TODAY Boonville has Kemper Military School, one of its most important institutions; the largest corn cob pipe factory in the world, a shoe factory employing up to 600 persons, a large and prosperous flour mill, an extensive chick hatchery shipping to every state in the Union, one poultry packing company.

A large wholesale bakery, serving eight Central Missouri counties, a road construction company that has stood fourth in Missouri in value of annual work, a large electric generating plant with electric and natural-gas distributing systems, a large municipally owned water plant.

One state bank, a sand company capable of taking 8,000 cars of sand from the river a year, one newspaper company publishing a daily and two weeklies, an ice and laundry company, two poultry and cream-buying agencies, one creamery.

Two ice-cream manufacturing concerns and two additional wholesale distributors of ice cream, one soda-water bottling company, a farmers' cooperative elevator, produce and supply house, two motion picture theaters, two railroad systems, a Federal barge line, one union bus depot.

Two rail lines and depots, a Government oil storage station for boats, one wholesale grocery and candy company, two commercial printing plants, one monument manufacturing company and another agency for a monument company.

One harness manufactory, two machine shops, one business school, one lumber millwork and supply house, one studio of dancing and dramatics, a swimming pool owned and operated by the Kiwanis Club, one home bakery, one knife-and-implement sharpening shop.

Two tin shops, one abstract company, two lumber yards, 16 restaurants, one millinery, 13 oil distributing plants, one tire shop, four shoe repair shops, six motor companies handling 10 makes of cars, three taxi companies.

Three plumbing shops, seven beauty shops, three photographers, five garages, two confectioneries, 21 filling stations and 10 more in North Boonville, two popcorn stands, eight barber shops and numerous shine parlors.

One florist, 28 dairies, four mortuaries, seven cleaning and pressing shops, one community auction firm, one recreation parlor for bowling, one billiard hall, four coal merchants, several individual coal truckers, and two battery shops.

Stores include: three handling agricultural implements, 20 for groceries, two hardware, one dealing in musical instruments, two liquor, three handling shoes, three for men's clothing, three ladies' ready-to-wear, four for jewelry, two selling electrical appliances, one handling seeds, two furniture.

Two dealing in second-hand furniture, two in paints, one selling books, six for drugs, three handling variety merchandise, and three selling auto parts.

There also are two auto salvage concerns outside the corporate limits.

County licenses issued up to June 30, 1936:

Boonville--Tubby's Lunch Room, Bantrup's Grocery, Barnhart Sisters, Barnsdall Oil Company, Bechtold Brothers Tin Shop, Berger's Tire Shop, Bieber's Shoe Shop, Blanck's Grocery, Boonville Beverage Company.

Boonville Ice and Laundry, Boonville Motor Company, Boonville Mercantile Company, Boonville Cafe, Boonville Cash Liquor Store, Boonville Mills Company, Bozarth Produce Company, Brownbilt Shoe Store, Brownsberger's, The Annex, Burkhart's Cafe, Butcher's Restaurant.

Carl's Grocery, Cash and Carry, Cassing and Thoma, Checker Taxi, Chilton & Company, Cities Service Oil Company, Cochran's Plumbing and Electric Shop, Cotin's Beauty Shop, Coney Island, Continental Oil Company, Cook's Memorial Studio, Cooper County Cremery, Paul F. Craig, dairy.

*Since this was written, Boonville voted \$75,000 to improve its municipal water system.

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Darby Seed Company, Dascomb-Daniels Lumber Company, Guy E. Davis Electric Company, Dean's Recreation Company, DeLuxe Studio, Dilthey's Store, W. B. Elliott Company, Esser Motor Company, Evans Laundry, Farmers' Elevator Company, Fetter's Bakery, W. O. Flowers, second-hand store; Fowler Metal Products, Fredmeyer Paint Shop.

C. P. Gabriel, grocery; Ada M. Gabriel, grocery; Gantner's Battery Shop, Geiger's Plumbing and Electric Shop, Gerhardt Implement Company, Glover the Clothier, Gmelich & Schmidt, Goodman & Boller, Gray's Grocery, Grigsby Brothers, Ronald K. Stegner's market.

Hallway Hamilton-Brown Shoe Company, Hamlin's Garage, C. J. Harris Lumber Company, Harry's Sales and Service, Heckerman Oil Company, Herman's Beauty Salon, Hirlinger's Confectionery, Hirlinger's Book Store, Hirsch Drug Company, Hoberecht Brothers, Holt's Cafe, Hopkins Grocery, Huber Jewelry Company.

Ice Cream Mart, Jay's Lunch Room, L. D. Johnston, Paints; Jones Motor Company, C. M. Kalb service station, Koontz Grocery, Kroger Grocery and Baking Company, Kemper Military School, L. M. Lacy plumbing; L. & L., beer and lunch; F. G. Lohse, grocery.

Malone & Forbach, Mattingly Brothers Store Company. Mid-Continent Petroleum Company, Midwest Auto Stores Company, Miller's Drug Store, Milton Oil Company, Missouri Beauty Service, Missouri Power & Light Company, Missouri River Sand and Gravel Company, Mont's, Moore's Cash Grocery, C. N. Moser Shop, M. F. A. Oil Company, Meister Funeral Home.

Old Heidelberg Inn, R. D. Patrick, auction, Patterson's Beer and Lunch, Paul's Army Store, J. C. Penney Company, Pete's Candy Shop, Phelps Pharmacy, Phillips Petroleum Company, Phoenix-American Pipe Works, Pieper's Drug Shop, Poole & Creber Grocery, Prigmore Chevrolet Company, Clayton Beauty Clinic.

Rehmeier Studio, Rennison's Cafe, John Ridgeway Store, Ruby Rae Beauty Shop, Safeway Stores Company, Sanders Grocery, Sauter Mercantile Company, Sedalia Coca-cola Company, Wilhelm Schmitt, J. O. Schnuck, Schwitzky-Stegner Funeral Home, Shell Petroleum Company.

Shryack-Givens Wholesale Grocery Company, Shultice Produce Company, Sinclair Refining Company, Skelly Oil Company, Smith's Hatchery, Stammerjohn's flowers; Standard Oil Company, Stock & Thoma, Sunnyday Frocks, N. J. Swift, service station;

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Temple Stephens Grocery Company, Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, Trout's Bakery, James M. Tucker, Unique Cafe, Victor Clothing Company, Viertel's Storage Garage.

Waller's Boot Shop, Walterscheid Drug Company, Walz Jewelry Company, Warnhoff Sales Company, Weber Ice Cream Company, Wenner Brothers, Wiggle Inn, Weyland & Windsor, White's Grocery, W. W. Woolworth Company.

Bunceton--Bess Coffee Shop, Bunceton Ice and Fuel, Farmers Elevator Company, Five Point Inn, Hardy's Garage, Harris Brothers, Hedgepeth Grocery, C. J. Harris Lumber Company, Hickam Service Station, George Huecker, B. F. Hurt, store; W. B. Kerns, drugs.

Missouri Utilities Company, Moore's Pool Hall, L. G. Parker, furniture store, Shultice Produce Company, Sinclair Refining Company, Standard Oil Company, J. A. Wilson, store, C. A. Wooldridge, grocery.

Pilot Grove--Babbitt Produce Company, Bader's Grocery, Deck's Drug Store, I. M. Doyle, Eichelberger Tin Shop, Farmers Produce Exchange, Farmers Elevator Company, Harris Lumber Company, Hayes-Stoecklein, Heinrich Store, L. H. Judy, Grocery, Kempfs Tin Shop.

Guy Long, store, Long's Garage, R. H. Malott, Mellor's Store, Missouri Utilities Company, Oerly Motor Company, Oerly Transfer Company, Oster & Oster, Pilot Grove Service Station.

C. L. Schweitzer, cafe, Simmons Brothers, Standard Oil Company, W. C. Stevens, Tracy's Cafe, Warnhoff Mercantile Company, Woods & Simmons, Zahringer Shop, L. A. Zeller, elevator.

Pilot Grove Township--J. H. Clawson, W. J. Day, S. H. Edson, Standard Oil Company.

Clarks Fork Township--J. E. Haley, store, Lone Elm Store.

Blackwater--Ault's Garage, Blackwater Produce Company, Fielden Brown store, Days's Tap Room, H. L. Day, store, Ervine Department Store, Farmers Exchange, M. R. Huffman Store, Hurst Pharmacy.

Marshall Lumber Company, Milton Oil Company, Missouri Utilities Company, R. Morgan, drugs, McClammer's Grocery, McCorkle Grocery, O'Neal's Garage, O'Neal & Son.

Moniteau Township--Joe Albert, J. A. Dick, W. C. Morris, store.

Otterville--Bottom's Shoe Store, Brisley Store, H. H. Everett, J. E. Golliday, N. B. Kirkpatrick Klein Store, W. H. Meyer, Otterville Elevator, Otterville Lumber Company, Otterville Oil Company.

E. B. Reed, shop; Sanitary Market, Scrivener Store, J. A. Shultz, Nelson Smith, Standard Oil Company, Stephens & Straten, White Eagle Cafe.

Lamine--A. F. Vaughan.

Bell Air--J. J. Day.

Wooldridge--G. H. Dulle Milling Company, Knorp's Store, Porter McClannahan, O. J. Roberts Drugs, C. O. Scheibner Shop, Lawrence Sieckman, Stoff's Place, Woodridge Brothers.

Prairie Home--Cheney Store, J. J. Franken shop; Hall's Store, Hornbeck Store, Kuhn Cash Store, Langkop's Drug Store, Prairie Home Garage, Prairie Home Produce Company, J. P. Rordel, Sell's Garage, F. L. Schilb, store; Standard Oil Company; Stemmons Hardware Store, H. C. Wallenmeyer.

Speed--E. M. Allee, store, Farmers Elevator Company, C. G. Gerhardt, shop, J. M. Schubert, store, Standard Oil Company, W. M. Walje, store, R. H. Wendleton, store.

Pleasant Green--Ewing Hurt, store, Herbert Long, garage, Pleasant Green Elevator, Robert Schupp, store, Mrs. W. B. Woolery, store.

Clifton City--J. H. Potter, store, Lester Stone, William Todd, store.

Saline Township--Overton Cash Store.

New Lebanon--A. Rothgeb.

Billingsville--Hoflander, store, Thomas McDonough.

Boonville Township--Henry Crawford, George W. Drennen, store, Frank B. Getz, B. N. Hackley, R. K. Kueckelhan, Henry Lohse, A. L. Phillips, Service Oil Company, E. J. Poertner, Sunset Lodge, W. F. Whitehorse, Lester Zeigle.

Blackwater Township--Arthur Blew, H. L. Davis, J. R. French, Gilbert's Garage, Lite N. Guyman, Edgar Lawler, A. H. Miller, Standard Oil Company, Judy's Service Station.

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Otterville Township--L. L. Morris

South Howard County; Franklin and New Franklin Townships--W. S. Alsop, grocery; Locke Amick service station; C. W. Amick, service station; H. E. Arnold, auto salvage; K. W. Ashcraft service station; Cliff Barnhart, garage; Bonne Femme Tourist Camp, Emil Bethke, dry goods and grocery.

George Biesemeyer, service station; R. R. Boone, grocery; Della T. Brown, Katy Hotel; P. A. Bryan garage; Dr. Chamberlain; Lewis Miller, garage; Allison Davis, furniture; C. S. Duncan, undertaker; John Faires, Howard Hardware Company.

Felton Grain Company, Leo Felton and Tom Devine proprietors; Fricke Store, Thad Good, cafe; C. J. Harris Lumber Company; Herbert H. Heckerman, oil company; Hourigan & Shemwell, drug store, Missouri Power & Light Company.

A. E. McCall, grocery; Claude McGavock, cafe; New Franklin Produce Company; J. E. Palmer, hotel and restaurant; Frank Roberts, repair shop; Urban Schmidt, grocery; Shell Petroleum Company; C. C. Snoddy, grocery; and Standard, Skelly, Phillips, Fairplay, and Milton oil companies.

MODERN MACHINERY, national advertising, more package goods and standardization of brands have eliminated many small, individually owned factories. On the other hand, there has been growth of specialized businesses answering demands for new services.

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