

As I Remember East Enterprise

Thanks to an informative article sent to the Switzerland County Historical Society by member Renny Rieman, an insight into the early business community in East Enterprise reveals another facet of our county's past. "As I Remember East Enterprise" was written by Raleigh E. Whitham, a cousin to Renny's grandmother Bessie Jane Rieman. Let Raleigh's words help you picture East Enterprise's past.

East Enterprise, Indiana was built on a crossroads with a store building on each corner. On the south corner was the post office with Mr. Heath as postmaster. On the north corner was an old store building with a house in the back. Mr. House ran the store and then he had a new store built across the street which he ran for twenty-five years. The store on the southwest corner has a lot of history -- if it could talk. The first store I can remember was run by Mr. Potter. In 1913 a funeral home was where the store was run by Mr. Humphrey. After the funeral home Mr. Buchanan started another store. He then sold it to Joe Marsh. (Note: Joe Marsh was father to Josie Marsh Rieman, Renny's mother. She was born in the house part of this store.) It was then the post office and Mr. Marsh was the postmaster.

On the north side of town was a one-room schoolhouse. There also was a big flour mill and a saw mill owned by William. He ground wheat and had the trade name of The Golden Rule Flour for it. Other stores were a shoe shop run by Mr. Sam Lockwood and Miss Lockwood had ladies hats and exhibits of quilting and weaving. Mr. C. Taylor had the butcher shop in town. The telephone office was called the Farmers Telephone Company. Mr. Frank Heath was the manager and he had three girls working for him that ran the telephones. There were two blacksmith shops -- one owned by Mr. Sedam and Mr. Conner had the other one.

Junior House was the first one to sell gasoline for cars in town. Dr. Hall was one of the first to have a car and it was a Maxwell. Junior House had a Studebaker.

In 1908 the money men of the town started a bank where Junior House's old store had been. There was a big dedication in town in August of 1909 for the bank. Junior House was the first president and James Madison the first cashier.

In 1910 Ernest Heath, one of the storekeepers, put a big light over the street. He had all the boys pay 25 cents so we would throw rocks at the light. He put just enough oil in it so it would go out at 10:00 p.m. The boys and I would go home then.

The first day of the month was a great day for the old Civil War veterans. That was pension day and you sure could hear some big stories around the post office.

One day I looked up the street and saw Adam Holecraft coming. He had on a Civil War cap. Right away I knew he had too much to drink for he was singing, "We Are Tenting Tonight on the Old Campground" and "Many Hearts Are Praying for the War to Cease."

The mail came from Rising Sun and Vevay. Mr. Turner brought the mail from Rising Sun and Mr. Harris from Vevay about noon.

Bell Holecraft weaved rag carpets.

The Woodman Lodge had a hall over Junior House's story. The K.P.F.P. Lodge was over the bank building. There was also a building where the Mason Lodge No. 81 held their meetings.

Mr. John had the first truck in town and it was an International. It had wheels like a wagon. He went to Rising Sun five days a week. He would haul anything and everything. He

took the Golden Rule Flour to all the stores. If you gave him 65 cents he'd bring you a bottle of Little Fred (whiskey).

In the fall of 1916 there was a hot time in the old town of East Enterprise. Everyone said vote for Woodrow Wilson and keep out of the war and keep the boys down on the farm.

Then in April 1917 the war was declared and a dark cloud hung over the town. Posters went up with Uncle Sam's picture at the post office saying "I Want You for the U.S. Army."

The Switzerland County Historical Society is looking for information concerning the important people and businesses throughout the county's six townships from over the years up to present time. If you have pictures or stories to share please let us know. Thank you, Renny, for getting us off to a good start.