

LIFE ON THE OHIO

Patriot A Major Business Center

HISTORIC PATRIOT

By Dan Back

We have discovered some real treasures in our quest to obtain items for the Historic Patriot displays. Patrick Gregory and Darrell Maines so far contributed the most exciting photographs. These photos, taken at the turn of the century, show a thriving Patriot with tree-lined streets of two and three story brick buildings housing every type of business and service imaginable.

This week I will describe some of the shops and stores that operated in Patriot.

The first documented business in Patriot was a series of mills operated by town founder Elisha Wade in 1812. He began with a hand mill, progressed to a water-powered mill and then operated a horse-powered mill.

From its beginning Patriot was a shipping port as numerous flatboats were built, loaded with produce and floated to New Orleans. Upon arrival in New Orleans the Produce would be sold along with the wood from the flatboat. There may be homes in New Orleans built from wood from the Patriot Hills.

The first store was operated by a Mr. Lodwick in 1827 at Front and Fourth Streets in a log cabin. William Williams built the first storeroom and conducted the first store of consequence in 1828. A second mercantile building was soon erected on Front Street.

In 1836 Sylvanus Howe erected a three, story brick store building at Third and Front Street. In 1853 Eliphalet Case opened a mercantile business and started the wine growing enterprise in this section of the county. He planted eleven acres on the hills back of town.

By the beginning of the Civil War Patriot had a thriving business community.

Beginning at First and Front Streets the plant of W.T. Pate & Co., comprising distillery, flouring mill, bonded warehouses, cattle yards and pens, corn cribs, stables and cooper shop, which extended along First to Main and east to corporation line. The next place of business was at Fourth and Second and was that of Pat Fortune's tin shop. Next-door was Houston's confectionery; adjoining a saloon, and at corner of Third Street was Gazley's dry goods store.

Across Third on Front was the large three-story building of Wells & Co., and next door Hobb's shoe store. Next and abutting was a three-story brick housing Bennett's hotel, in

the front of which was Dr. Watt's book store. Next to the hotel was Monley's tailor shop and adjoining this Olcott's drug store.

At the corner of the alley in a three story brick was Gibson's dry goods establishment with Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges on the third floor. Across the alley still on Front Street was Schilling's bakery, while at Front and Fourth was R.A. Driver's grocery. Directly across Fourth from Driver's in a two story frame building was Beckwith's drug store, where the first soda fountain in town served the boys and girls of the thriving village.

At Main and Second Thomas Hickman ran a wagon shop. In the middle of the same block Wagner's Pork Barrel Cooperage was conducted and at the corner of Third and Main was Ralph Platt's Blacksmith shop. Across Main was a pork packing house and in the same building was Bazley's warehouse.

At the south-east corner of Third and Main was a large, rambling two-story frame store building occupied by Scranton & Dibble's general store. On Third half way between Main and Plum was Milton Watt's Flour Barrel Cooper Shop.

By the 1870's even more business were operating in Patriot. In 1871 William M. Green opened a mercantile store and was succeeded in 1881 by William Gockel. Dr. W.A. Olcott erected a two-story brick building at 3rd and Main in 1875 and moved his drug store to the new building from his Front Street location.

In 1876 Silas H. Van Houten succeeded James Stevenson in the store formerly operated by Scranton & Dibble. Edw. Pfeiffer opened a harness and saddle shop in 1878 and manufactured all products in his line of business.

T.O. Bonnell established a tin and roofing business in 1869 and was succeeded by A.L. North, who later operated the Ohio Valley Roller Mills with his brother Edwin E. North. James W. Abbott succeeded Howe & McNutt in the grocery business and operated a store for some years.

William Coffin operated the leading hotel for many years as "The Coffin House".

The first bank was organized in 1891 as the "Patriot Deposit Bank". The bank opened in a frame building and after a few years purchased and remodeled the building at Third and Main where .a modern steel vault and exceptionally good fixtures for a rural bank were installed.

In the late 1800's the village had 550 inhabitants with 8 dry goods and grocery stores, 1 drug store, 2 saloons, 1 flour mill, 1 distillery, 1 school, 2 churches, 2 tin shops, 2 shoe shops, 1 saddle and harness shop, 3 blacksmiths, 2 wagon shops, 3 carpenters, 2 cooper shops, 2 stone masons, 2 milliners, 2 lawyers, 2 physicians, 3 notaries, 1 justice of the peace, 1 butcher, 1 barber, 2 job printers, and 6 secret societies.

Patriot continued to thrive through the 1920's. In 1924 a fire raged through the business district of town destroying an entire city block. Few of the businesses rebuilt. The flood of 1937 was the final blow for the business district.

The Photographs of Patriots Business District will be on display in the new Historic Patriot exhibit being assembled. If you have photographs, personal correspondence or remembrances, news articles or artifacts associated with Patriot Business please contact me (Dan Back 594-2628) or Pam Hutchinson at the Patriot Town Hall.

Material for this article came from H.F. Emerson's, January 29, 1931, "**HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE TOWN OF PATRIOT**"