

## LIFE ON THE OHIO

# Patriot An Industrial Center

### HISTORIC PATRIOT

By Dan Back

In a previous article I discussed the thriving retail business in Patriot. Patriot also had numerous industries employing local residents.

**Distilling** - Patriot was home to several Distilleries. Coffin Brothers built a steam flour mill in 1834 with a capacity of 25 barrels per day. It was purchased in the early 1840's by Eliphalet Case who added to it a distillery producing 600 gallons per day.

In 1852 Case, with Sylvanus Howe erected a much larger distillery near the site of the first one and it reached its zenith during the Civil War. It first had a capacity of 2700 gallons per day and was built at the cost of \$20,000.00.

In 1868, the U.S. Government notified the distillers of the country that a revenue of \$1.10 per gallon would be demanded of them at a near future date but gave them permission to manufacture, tax free, until the stated date. Naturally all that could be made up to the time of taxing automatically increased in value by the amount of the tax, or more than \$50 per barrel. The plant was operated night and day and was never allowed to cool down. The bonded warehouses were filled to capacity as was all available space in the company's buildings and yards and even the streets of the town were piled high with barrels of spirits under the watchful eyes of guards.

In 1878 Silas Q. Howe sold the distillery to a business man in Cincinnati, who closed it and placed it in the pool. This distillery always did a good business and for one period of six years was never allowed to cool. During that period the November revenue of one year amounted to a quarter of a million dollars. The output was about 700,000 gallons annually and furnished an excellent market for corn raisers for many miles around.

A photo on this distillery will be on display in the Patriot town hall as a part of the Historic Patriot exhibit.

**Wine Growing** - Like much of Switzerland County, Patriot had its share of wine growers. As previously stated in the article on Patriot merchants, E. Case was the original wine grower of the area. His wine press was on upper Third Street next to the Methodist church. He was successful in obtaining permission from the Methodist church to store his wine in the church basement.

John David Mottier, a Frenchman and one of the famous Marquis de LaFayette family started a vineyard on his farm at the edge of town and for many years made a good grade of wine that found a ready market in Cincinnati.

**Silk Culture** - A Mr. Huxley introduced what was an entirely new; venture in the state and possibly in the United States, that of silk culture. In the year 1838 Henry Huxley built a building on the corner of Sixth and Plum streets with the intention of engaging in the manufacture of silk. Mr. Huxley had previously planted mulberry trees for the raising of silk worms on what was know as Milges hill. The industry thrived for a number of years, but his partner absconded with the money, thus putting an end to the business. Many of the mulberry trees can still be found on the hillsides.

**Milling** - Mills operated in conjunction with the two distilleries making mostly corn meal. In 1881 North Brothers built a large three-story flour mill on Main Street with a capacity of 100 barrels a day and a year later the roller process was adopted.

**Brick** - Much of the brick used in building Patriot was made in town. Bela Herrick operated the first brick yard in the early 1830's and manufactured the brick used in the construction of the Universalist church. Later yards were operated by Samuel Fisk and Squire Fletcher, one of which was on Main Street.

**Cooperage** - Because of the types of industry in Patriot several enterprising individuals opened cooperages to manufacture barrels. These containers were manufactured here in three varieties - whiskey, flour and pork barrels.

Adam Brixner was the first whiskey barrel cooper. For years Andrew Schafer ran a large shop making some kind of barrels at First and Plum and operated a steam stave bucker making his own staves and heading.

There was a flour barrel cooper shop at First and Main in a shop, one at Second and Plum and one at on Third between Main and Plum.

Wm. Wegner was the early pork barrel cooper and from his Main Street shop came the barrels that took many hogs in the form of pork to meet the beans in the kitchens of myriads of southern plantations.

One of the barrels manufactured by the Patriot Cooper's will be included in the Historic Patriot exhibit.

**Cattle Feeding and Pork Packing** - In conjunction with the distilling interests large cattle yards and pens were maintained on upper Main Street. These pens flanked both sides of the street starting a short distance east of First Street and running nearly to the east corporation line, also extending along Wade's Run toward the river. Boatloads of longhorn Texas cattle were brought up river to these yards to be fed on the slop and mash after the alcohol had been distilled off and quite frequently either in loading or unloading these steers they would become unmanageable and as they ran amuck the streets of the town were left to them undisputed until they were corralled. Many hogs were also fed here and while most of them were shipped to city markets after fattening some were used for local packing. Pork packing was carried on to some extent in the earlier days before

the large centralized plants came into existence and practically all of it was sent south in flat boats.

**Saw Mills** - For many years quite a busy saw mill was operated on the river front above the corporation line on the property of William Gockel by Harvey Elliot. Later Perry Warner ran a saw mill.

**Creamery** - In the early 90's Henry Schroder, who for many years had been in the butter egg and poultry business and at one time also operated a general store, built a modern creamery on Third Street between Plum and Columbia and manufactured a high quality of butter. Unfortunately the plant was destroyed by fire shortly after being put in operation and was not rebuilt.

**Boots and Shoes** - Hosea Herrick, and Petit Baxter, brother-in-law, made by hand the footwear for the town and country for miles around and both were artists at their trade. As factory-made footwear came into vogue this business degenerated into repair work.

**Furniture and Baskets** - John D. Mottier introduced the growing basket willows into this vicinity. Wm. Rea, supplied Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and St. Louis markets with many styles of baskets for many years, among which is a type not usually thought of - dead baskets - for the use of morgues and ambulances. Mr. Rea, with his son Clarence, under the firm name of Wm. Rea & Son, operated their establishment at Main and Second Streets, and beside making baskets they manufactured all types of reed and willow porch and sun-room furniture.

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" and "HISTORIC TOWN OF PATRIOT", Switzerland Democrat - June 6th 1907