

"HISTORY OF CAMDEN  
AS READ AT CELEBRATION  
JULY 4, 1932"

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by  
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HISTORY OF CAMDEN AS READ AT CELEBRATION HERE JULY 4  
A brief story of the town started in 1832; bringing it up to 1932

A century has gone into the shadows of history since the original town plat of the village of Camden was laid out. The plan was for one street and a double row of lots on the north and south side of Main street extending from the streets now known as Water street to Church street. Since then, there have been a number of additions platted, sold and improved. By reference to the map it will be observed that Camden occupies a portion of the sixteenth section of Jackson township which was reserved as the property of the schools, the charge of which was intrusted to a School Commissioner. In 1832, this section was sold for less than \$15,000, and sixteen acres were reserved by the Commissioner for the purpose of laying out the town. According to the history of Jackson township written by O. C. Sterling in 1916, the village received its name from the post office which John Snoeberger had at his home a mile west of Camden, and it was through this office the Camden residents received their mail for a few years. When several homes were established, the office was brought to the village.

Camden, as it appeared in 1837, gave few signs of becoming the prosperous town which it came to be in the '70's and '80's. A public road, now known as Main street, was laid out from east to west through the center of the town plat and this road, it is said, was only a wagon road, or rather a mud road, with the brush and undergrowth extending thick on both sides of it. "At that time," says Jacob Plank, "there was but five houses in the village. One of these, a little log cabin, stood on the present site of the deceased Philip Ray's property, and was occupied by a Mr. Woodman, who had a small stock of goods there. The four other houses were dwellings, and all but one were log buildings." The latter statement was taken from the illustrated history of Carroll County printed in 1882.

Just east of town, but now within the corporate limits, stood a double log house, occupied by Jonathan Martin. Mr. Martin was one of the original purchasers of land in this section when it was sold, and also owned several town lots. From the land that he purchased he donated an acre and a half for cemetery and church purposes. The cemetery is still in use with many lots added to it.

Quoting further from the illustrated history of Carroll county the first store in Camden was kept by William Crooks in a little log building on the present site of the property formerly known as the Philip Ray's residence. He remained there but a short time, it is believed. A little later, Cleaver & McCurdy opened a store on the corner, now occupied by Charles Baker's residence. A German by the name of Barth kept a store here also at an early day, but only remained a short time. Mr. Rankin and Andrew McDonald were among the early merchants. In 1846 Matthew Rogers opened a general store at the present site of the Masonic building. Jessie A. Dillon was

a clerk in this store and later carried on this same business for many years at the same location. Dr. James M. Justice was the first physician in Camden. Some years later he sold his practice to Dr. L. Snyder. James R. Liard built a tavern at the west end of Main street soon after the town was laid out. This tavern at the west was popularly known as the Shortridge tavern and was located somewhere on the former Nancy Mullin property and the John Griffey property.

It may be of interest to you to know that I have in my possession at this time an article written on Camden by a former Methodist minister for a 4th of July celebration held here just 75 years ago today. This Celebration was what we would call a Sunday school convention. This article was printed in the Western Christian Advocate, at Cincinnati, Aug. 12, 1857. The paper belonged to Mrs. Caroline Worstall and at her death it fell into the hands of Miss Maud Morrow, of Bainbridge, Ohio who now resides with Mrs. George Julian of Delphi. The following are extracts from this paper: It is a humble though beautiful and flourishing village of some four or five hundred inhabitants, and situated on a high bluff the base of which is washed by the waters of the precipitous and flaunting Deer Creek, whose high bank at this point is some 50 or 60 feet high. The villagers by occupation, are principally mechanics, driving ones. We have a few merchants and grocers, of course, to aid us in supplying our wardrobes and tables; they do a fair business. There are also a few doctors, but the poor fellows have had "dry picking" during the past winter, spring and summer thus far. We have no lawyers; such a thing here would be almost like a fifth wheel on a wagon, entirely unnecessary. ~~Our thing here would be almost like a fifth wheel on a wagon, entirely unnecessary.~~ Our people are generally intelligent, enterprising, and moral. Yes, a majority profess to be religious, but we fear that some of this majority, and many of the minority, are trusting in a mere morality as a sufficient religion. "Doggeries" can not survive here; though introduced occasionally under the frowns and anathemas of an insulted and indignant people, they soon expire. This I presume is attributable, to principally, to the existance and influence of a prosperous "Temple of Honor", which is still maintained here, notwithstanding the falling and crashing of temperance orders all around us.

One of the earliest living settlers to come to Camden was Mrs. Fannie Leslie. She was born March 16, 1854, and came to Camden at the age of two. They lived first on the present Dave Wyatt property, and later moved to the southeast corner of the last block west on Cumberland street. The building was taken away only a few years ago. Among the most outstanding memories of her childhood days are the circuses and county fairs held here in Camden. Circuses were held on the ground near Mrs. Mary Ringer's property and Mrs. Leslie remembers of one circus being held south of town. Camden was the most prosperous town of the county at that time and the fairs were great

attraction.

Mrs. Martha Mills who celebrates her eighty-fourth birthday tomorrow came to Camden in 1858 at the age of ten. When she first arrived the portion of the town east of Water street was mostly in woods and cornfields. Only three houses stood in that part. One was on the present site of the James Sharp property where Thomas Kat now lives. A brown frame house owned by some of the Martins stood on the Zu Bennet property and the third was where Charles Rice now lives. Practically all of the business was on Main street west of Water street, Mrs. Mills says. The streets were still wagon roads and paths were made along the edge of the road where one might walk. She also tells of the Pettit hack line between Rockfield and Camden which served as a passenger line as well as a means of getting mail to Camden. Pettit made two trips daily and the line was in use until the railroad was built through this town.

Will Paden, who now owns a restaurant here in town, says that his first remembrance of Camden was in 1864 when he came to attend the first circus ever held here. The circus was held in the north-west part of town, somewhere near the Koontz saw mill. His home was a mile and a half east of Camden, the former Frank Snoeberger farm. He called my attention to the fact that when he came to town, he waded mud until he reached the old board walk which extended from the railroad tracks to Water street. Many of you older residents can remember these board walks. Mr. Paden says at that time Mr. Buckley lived in a house which stood where U. E. Tesh now lives and had a cane mill back of the present site of the lumber yard. Dr. F. G. Armstrong had erected the stately brick house on what was then known as his farm at the eastern extremity of Camden, but now the - *Edith Patty* Patty residence on Main street. In the fall of 1866, Dr. Armstrong was elected to the State Senate from Carroll county, being the first Republican chosen for that office. Mr. Paden can remember when the first lot being where the residence of Mrs. B. F. Wray now stands. *for long time also* Out in front Leonard had put a sign, "FOR SALE, \$30.00."

Mrs. Laura Breining who now resides in Delphi was born in Camden, July 10, 1855, and although she left the village when only five years old she has a vivid memory of their immediate neighborhood. Her father was W. M. Wilson who with McFarland ran a general store and had the post office at the present site of the hotel, owned by Samuel Lenon for so many years and now owned by J. H. Lesh. *Telephone Patty* Directly back of them lived Shultzs, a son of the family being Dr. J. H. Shultz, of Delphi. Across the street east lived Charles Wood, a cabinet maker and undertaker. Mr. Woll resided on this corner

until Peter Baker took up his business there. Across the street north from Wilson's, Mrs. Breining says, was the Roger's store, as I have already mentioned. Mrs. Breining also says that she can remember her mother winning prizes the third annual county fair held at Camden, Oct. 12 and 13, 1854.

Upon the lot donated by Jonathan Martin, a frame church was erected by the Associate Reformed denomination, a prosperous society until some time during the Civil War, when it became disorganized and has not been since represented by a church in the township. "One of my earliest recollections, says Mrs. Henrietta Dillon, daughter of Dr. F. G. Armstrong, "was a small church in the northeast corner of the old cemetery, and used as a school in summer." It was taught by Miss Nellie McDonald, Mrs. Dillon says, who was a sister of John and Andrew McDonald. John McDonald was a tailor and owned a two-story house set well back in the lawn. This was later known as the Philip Ray property, he says. His brother, Andrew, had a store on the corner of Main street just back of the old town pump. Mr. McDonald lived in the brick house now owned by Mrs. Ella Plank. Across the street was a two-story log cabin on the south end of the lot. A Mr. McDonald lived there, but Mrs. Dillon does not know if he was related to John and Andrew. Another landmark, she says, was the former George Griffey property on Cumberland now owned by Heilands. Aunt Peggie Porter, a maiden lived there and it looked then as it has for years. In 1849 Mrs. Dillon continues, my father, Dr. F. G. Armstrong, bought a house which stood on the present site of the Tesh property on Main street where L. R. Davidson now lives, then known as the James Wallace home. He had his office in the southwest corner at the same time that Dr. Justice had his office in south east corner of the property just east, which he owned.

At an early date a three-story schoolhouse was built to replace the one which stood on the cemetery lot and was located in the north west part of town somewhere between Henry Cree's & Amsey Miller's. The first and second stories were used for school purposes and the third story was the Odd Fellows room and was used for all public meetings and general get-togethers. A few years later a Two-room brick building was erected at the site of the present building. In 1876 two rooms were added on the west. This served for school purposes until 1899 when the present main part of the present building was erected. An addition was made on the rear in 1920.

By 1865 there were five established churches in Camden. The Cumberland Presbyterian church was organized by a Rev. John P. Hay about the year 1830 and their first meeting house was a log cabin erected immediately north of the present Lutheran church. Later

Rosa Scholtz  
(1873)

Rayed (Shell can lot)

Dan Yoder

School

they built on the corner where Ed Johnsons now live and continued their worship until their church was destroyed by fire. The congregation divided and the denomination has never been in Camden since. The Methodist organized a class here about 1846 and occupied a log building on the farm of Jonathan Martin. A plain frame house of worship was erected on a lot donated and later moved to a lot just west of the former Methodist parsonage, now occupied by Tilman Leslie, on Cumberland street. In 1897 the present building was erected.

In 1834, six members of the Baptist denomination met at the tavern in the old town of Tiptonsport, and formed themselves into an organization. Gradually they changed their identity to Camden which had recently been laid out. In 1844 a lot was donated and a frame church was built at the present site of the town post office. In 1881, Dr. F. G. Armstrong donated the lot on which the present church is built. At that time this lot was on the eastern extremity of the town. In 1846 an organization was effected by the Lutherans. They erected their first house of worship on the corner where Frank Snoeberger now lives which they used until they built their present church in 1873.

Camden Lodge No. 151 I. O. O. F. was instituted Dec. 2, 1854. The early meetings were held in the second story of a building on Main street, in the lower room of which Thompson Cline kept a grocery at that time. About the year 1858, a third story was added to the school building in which they had their lodge room until 1875. In that year they erected a large two-story frame building, just back of the present site of Judy's bakery, in the second story of which they held their regular meetings. In 1857, a Masonic lodge was chartered in Camden with James M. Justice, worshipful master, George Kuns, senior warden, and Samuel G. Jatterson, junior warden. The writer was not able to learn where the first meetings were held but in a few years after organization their lodge room was on the second story of a frame building at the present site of the Farmer's Co-operative store.

Mr. M. W. Dillon in co-operation with C. E. Baker, C. H. Guard, and John Griffey described the business district of Camden as he can first remember it. Mr. Dillon, son of Jesse A. Dillon was born in Camden in 1866 and has spent his entire life in this town. Mr. Baker was also born here in town. The other two men have been residents here the greater part of their lives. Beginning at the north-west part of Camden, Mr. Dillon says, was the saw mill owned by Koontz & Shedron, afterwards Koontz & Son. It then sold to J. W.

Back of  
Clarence Arnold's

(Dr. Kirkhove 1846)  
(1973)

(Patterson)

Dr. Shell vacated lot.  
Kirkhove

Armstrong who moved it away later. At the west end of Main street on the north side John Zook had his wagon shop. Across the street was a two-story building, the first story of which was the Evans & Leslie carpenter shop. On the second story was the Groninger hall. This hall was used for all community gatherings after the old school house was destroyed. On the east side of the alley where Abner Sieber now lives was the John Groninger home and blacksmith shop. *more floor work*  
 On the corner where Archie Hughes now lives, P. M. Shanks lived and made ice cream. Next to the east was Joe Peck's house and hotel. A part of this same hotel is still standing and is the home of William Bowdle. One the corner of this lot and next to the street Mr. Dyke had a small lunch room. East of the alley was the Heichert building and store room where J. F. Taylor had a general store and back of it Mr. Heichert made wood pumps. *(where Delvey Edging lives)*

Across the street from the hotel Ed Zook had his tin shop and lived on the second floor of the same building. Next east was the Shortridge hotel, of which I have spoken before. On the corner was Scott's meat market. Across the street east on the corner was Huston's harness shop. Mr. Sidney Sterling who was born in 1859 on the farm one mile south of Camden, now owned by O. C. Sterling, tells of the stoning of one saloon which stood on the corner of Huston's lot. *[617] correct Sprinkle 1971-15 Cumberland*  
 Huston had hired an out-of-town man to run the saloon. The different Women's Temperance societies which were active at that time objected to such a place and consequently stoned the man out of business, forcing him out of town.

Across the street south from Huston's was Fearnot's grocery store. He also had the post office at that time. Mrs. Fearnot had her millinery shop in the east part of the building which she had moved from her location in the vacant double house on Cumberland street. *(Mrs. Shepherd)*  
 Next east was Budd's wagon shop, then Peck's blacksmith shop, now C. H. Guard's, then Joe Bryant's taylor shop and Jerry Dixon's barber shop, and back of them was Earl Stewart's livery stable, later William Bowdle's. This whole row of buildings together with the Cumberland Presbyterian church burned in the Fearnot fire October 30, 1897. *24*  
 Across the street on the lot where Miles Robeson now lives, formerly the John Bowman home, was William Eskart's shoe shop. Here he made pegged or hand-sewed shoes, boots or plow shoes. It was in this shop that Keller Schenck learned the shoe trade. Next east was Dillon's corner, where J. A. Dillon and brother had a general store for 26 years, now known as the Masonic building. Across the street was Crook's grocery store and on the corner was the Pioneer hotel owned by Samuel Lenon, of which I have already spoken.

On the corner to the east of the Pioneer hotel was Baker's corner where Peter Baker, father of Charles E. Baker, lived and had

his undertaking and furniture room. Next east was the Camden State Bank which was founded in 1867 by A. J. Thomas and E. C. Rice. After the death of Mr. Thomas in 1875 the business was conducted by Mr. Rice for about a year, when Philip Ray succeeded Mr. Thomas in the firm. Across the street north was Ray and Rice implement store. Later it was turned into the hands of Charles Appleton then to Cripe and Robinson and now the Center Garage is located there. East of this building J. M. Wallace operated a tin shop and hardware and across the street South was George Kingery's hardware which later became his brother David's hardware store. Above this store Dr. Carter made his proprietary mediciner. Next east was Klepinger's drug store where the Farmer's State Bank building now stands. On the corner east where Paden's cafe is was Kingery's grocery and ice cream parlor. Down under the hill just south of the Truedale's greenhouse was Davy Kuns tanning yard. On the corner where Judy's is was a twostory building, the first floor of this building was occupied by Brown's drug store, later the second floor of this building was utilized by Dr. Carter who first started the Camden Expositor, the first number of which was issued Jan. 8, 1880. He ran it about four months at which time he sold it to Zopher Hunt. Where the Farmer's store is located was another two-story building, the first was occupied by Snyder & McKenney's drug store. The second floor of this building was the Masonic hall. On the south the lot west of the K. of P. building was Mr. Transu's store where he made grain cradles.

There was no other buildings east until after the completion of the rail road through Camden with the exception of a monument shop owned by Sanderson's and situated on the Hance property now occupied by Russell Rockhill. When Dillon and Lenon erected a warehouse near the railroad. In 1872 a warehouse was erected by A. J. Thomas. Both houses were subsequently destroyed by fire and in 1875 the grain business of the town were consolidated by the purchase of the trade of both firms by Ray & Rice. Mr. Dillon states in conclusion that north of the William Musselman residence was the Mills blacksmith shop and east was Dan Mills turning lath and carpenter shop. On the lot where M. W. Dillon now lives was Samuel Bunker's copper shop, and on the northwest corner of the school lot was Joe Zinn's carpenter shop.

Since 1900 there have been some notable changes on the face of the community which have characterized it as a progressive town, trying in a measure at least to keep abreast of the common growth of the country. Automobiles have become so numerous and the vehicles such as you have seen in the parade this afternoon have almost entirely dis-appeared. The town has been constantly taking on a new appearance in the way of new houses as well as making changes in its

*Community Building*

*Paden's  
is Post  
office*

*now  
Gladys  
Caldwell  
(1973) etc*

so-called skyline.

This growth has been steady yet substantial so that at the present time we can boast that all our improved business rooms are occupied and property investments have not become such bad investments after all. Let us notice some of the changes which have occurred in the past years, even within the recollection of the most of the middle aged folks. The Dillon corner has given way to the Masonic Temple which all our citizens are justly proud. Going toward the east on the same side of the street we find the old frame building which formerly housed the implement business of the town displaced by the modern Center Garage built in 1928. On the next corner a well equipped filling station has been erected taking the place of the former Schenck residence. *Shell Service*

Going on the south side of the street (Main street) which was paved in the summer of 1908 we find the Old Camden bank building replaced by one of the most stately bank buildings in the state for a town no larger than Camden. This building was erected in 1912.

*Never one built of Bedford Stone erected in 195?*

On the corner where once stood a two story building you older folks remember as being occupied by Browns drug store, and in the second Dr. Carter had his office and in which the Camden Expositor was born we now have a two story brick building covering this entire lot. On the next lot east where once stood the remains of the first Baptist church we have another two story building known as the K. of P. hall. These old buildings which stood on the lots in the early days were burned in December, 1911 and rebuilt the following year. In the winter of 1924 the K. of P. building burned and the following year the present building was erected. During the second fire the I. O. O. F. building standing on the corner was saved and is the building now standing. On the lot immediately east of the K. of P. building Dr. H. M. Hall had erected a beautiful residence and office building. This residence and office building was also burned in 1911 and were never rebuilt and the lot has remained empty to this day. This was possibly the most disastrous fire in the history of the town yet, thanks to the Fraternal orders of the town the block was rebuilt and remains a credit to their memory. Going further east on Main street beyond the present Baptist church, Asa Cline built a garage which is now the Camden Auto Company. The Camden Lumber Co. established about 1900 by O. W. Wyatt & Co. Mr. Wyatt previous to this was associated with his father, Mr. D. T. Wyatt in the Saw Mill and lumber business immediately east of the railroad. At the railroad we have the elevators as has been indicated Chester Joyce. The Ray & Rice mill has been changed to the coal and seed business started by Frank Porter and J. M. Miller later coming into

*Say  
said*

*Center Garage  
is located*

the Standard Oil Co. and the Farm Bureau have each established oil - distributing stations on railroad ground.

Thus a resume of the early happenings and program of the town as reported by its oldest inhabitants as well as by extracts from the history of Carroll county. before with the addition of The Farmers Grain & Supply Co. since changed into the hands of the Urnston Grain hands of F. S. Snoeberger who now operates the Camden Coal Co. The Camden Cement Tile Co. was organized in Company. This elevator was built about 1908. The Ray & Rice elevator has since become the Soy Seed Company composed of Roy Caldwell and 1911 by M. A. Cline and Jesse Martin, incorporated in 1913 and has been since that date under its present management.

The last train carrying mail through Camden was December 24, 1949. (according to Claude Linn Postmaster (1968) Cyko Sheatae was were Action Reatty is now. (1979)