

# Brown County Journal

May 15, 2013

## Events:

Brown County Historical  
Society meeting  
June 3

Brown County Genealogical  
Society meeting  
June 11

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## A Definition of Community

Community is a usually small, social unit of any size that shares common interests. In human communities, a number of conditions may be present and common, affecting the identity of the members and their degree of closeness. These common interests may be for protection, trade, share experiences, social interaction, share news of the outside world, and/or to conduct business. Prior to the internet, communities were limited by the constraints of available communication and transportation. Most definitions of community do not convey the richness, diversity and complexity of human communities. Coming together to form a community is vital for humans.

A community is a group of people living near one another such as a neighborhood or village who interact socially. Family and kinship are the primary reason to begin a community, but other shared characteristics, such as location or belief, could also help to bind people together which prove to make a tighter and more cohesive community

If community exists, both freedom and security exist as well. The community then takes on a life of its own, as people become free enough to share and secure enough to get along. Everyone feels a sense of connectedness to each other.

There are a number of ways to categorize types of community. The one most familiar to us is the local community such as a neighborhood or a village. Another type of community that might occur is one that is formed to share ideals or common values such as religion, culture, ethnic interests, or even politics.  
(from Community at Wikipedia.com)



**Typical Early Brown Countians - Dave & Liza Harden**

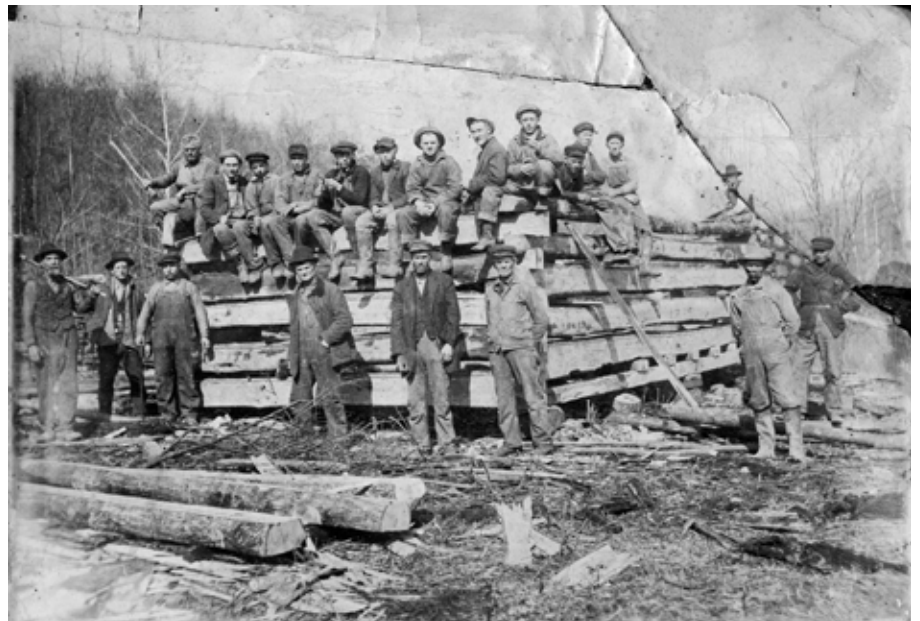
It is important for all of us to understand why communities form. Those of us who are the eternal student of history or genealogy it is important to learn this. There is always one question that comes up in the study of the history of our county or the study of our ancestors in genealogy. Why did this particular group of people settle in our county? Why did they all seem to come from the same area in Ohio? Why did my ancestor move here and which family or neighbors came with him? What values and religious beliefs did they bring with them?

Did they bring their 'sense of community'

with them when they moved to Brown County? Of course they did, their old community was a part of them, the way they lived at this other place, the way they grew up, and the way they intended to start their new life here in Brown County.

## History of Communities in Brown County

When Brown County was being settled in the beginnings of our county in 1837 a great influx of people came to find a new home. "The pioneers who settled in what became Brown County were part and parcel of the thousands of people who came to Indiana during the pioneer era that lasted from 1800 to 1850, which was one of the greatest migrations in the history of the world. The primary motive for this migration was the need to buy cheap, fertile land to own, to live on, to farm, and to pass on to their children. Pioneers were willing to undergo hardship, privation,



**An advantage of a community - A Barn Raising in 1905 on Jackson Creek**



### **A County-wide community event - the 44th Annual Bean Dinner**

these hardy folk arrived with family and friends in tow from their former homes in Kentucky, Tennessee, or other parts south of the great Ohio River. With them they brought their own ideas of what should form a community from their old home or their families that they left behind.

One or more of the new community members would bring forth a talent or craft that would enhance the community. There would almost always be someone that would offer their services as a blacksmith, or a healer, or a religious leader, or a teacher, etc. All of these and more were needed to help build the new community. The new community would need a local place of trade such as a country store or someone to perform a service. A church would almost always spring up to bring enlightenment to the community as well as social functions for the locals to attend. The community would produce community leaders which would help build the new school or produce someone to represent them in the new government. The community center would be a place to trade items or

loneliness, and danger in order to acquire property.” (from History and Families, Brown County, Indiana 1836-1990)

They arrived to find a great wilderness with deep valleys cut into tall hills covered with dense stands of very old forest. The only passable ways through the county were from old Indian trails which had, incidentally, followed deer and buffalo trails. One could also take a boat and cruise the rivers and creeks. To cut a home out of this wilderness people had to come together for the common good to help each other cut a home and farm out of the wilderness. These people coming together for their mutual benefit was the start of the new community. Of course, many of



### **Helping neighbors in a time of need - storm damage in Nashville**





**Elkinsville Church gathering**

ideas or experiences. One could hear news from back East. How was the war going? Who was running for President this year?

The earliest area of settlement in Brown County was in the Elkinsville area by a man named William Elkins. From that time on, the county was quickly settled. Frederick Goss, Levi Noblet, and Thomas A. Brown entered land in Van Buren Township. Moses Williams, Edward David, Robert Henderson, and John Allcorn settled in Washington Township. Jacob Walker, James Taggart Sr. and Job Hamblen settled in Hamblen Township which was named

for Job Hamblen. John Richards, William Snider, and George Grove settled in Jackson Township. Probably not all remained in Brown County and wanted to move on to see what was further west, but they are remembered as our first settlers. Georgetown, now Bean Blossom, was named for George Grove who did finally move on to seek out new places. All these areas formed communities almost immediately around each of these early settlers.

## Later Migration into Brown County

Brown County is unusual in that it has remained a mostly agrarian county, that means primarily farmland. In part it may be because most of these early settlers were mountain folk and that's the way they preferred to live. There was a progressive movement early on to form a political and central gathering point for Brown County residents in the form of the town of Nashville, formerly known as Jacksonburg. That became



**Load of Tanbark in front of the Courthouse  
abt. 1900 - barn in the background**



### **Fox's Corner 1977**

our center of government, trade, and business. The county residents even those who chose to live in town still considered themselves to be countryfolk. You can read one story in our Archives from our early county history of how the county government brought up the idea of fencing in the courthouse to keep the community's livestock from wandering into the courtyard. Nashville was mainly a small farm town for most of the county's history.

The next wave of migration came in the 1860s and 1870s from the hilly country of eastern Ohio and West Virginia. These were people of

the same mind set, they wanted to find a new home similar to the one they left. It was familiar to their lifestyle and they knew how to make it a go here. Families from these Ohio counties that found a home here were the Pittmans, Roberts, Carmichaels, Clarks, Greathouses, and others.

In a Chicago newspaper in August of 1900 an article appeared extolling the scenic beauty of Brown County and the virtues of the stalwart hill people that lived there. From that came another migration of artists and tourists who wanted to see and experience this secluded utopia. Certainly the influx of these new soon to be residents also came a new sense of their own community. The Art Colony was soon founded; a new community which brought new ideas and a different type of community based on a common culture.

## **Communities Now**

This was great. It brought something new to the old culture of the hill people and it has made a lasting impression on our community now. Overall that old countryfolk feeling still remains the prevalent culture. Take a drive out to our countryside some weekend. You will still find the old community centers still exist. These communities that began in our county's early history still remain. Bean Blossom still exists and some still know it



**McDonald's Store with young Jack McDonald**

as Georgetown. Elkinsville has past into eternity, but the people and their families have never forgotten it. They still meet annually in an Elkinsville community reunion. Smaller communities have popped up from time to time to fulfill a particular need - a trading post, a post office, a gas station. They have changed over time and some may have moved a mile or two down the road, but basically they are still there. You will still find that descendents of the original pioneers still live here and still come together here in these small community gathering places.

The hill people are still here, they found a permanent home here, and they live and die here. They may leave for a while, but most return to bring forth a new generation of descendents from these first pioneers. They are a proud folk and they come from a 170+ year inheritance. Ask them about the Art Colony? You might hear the reply, "Oh, are they still here? I guess they're alright."

In Van Buren Township the menfolk still gather at Crouch's Market every morning for coffee and to share their experiences from the past week. They may ask for advice on how to fix a motor or what fish are biting now. "Who in the neighborhood may be able to weld a piece on my plow? Where does he live?" So another connection to this community is formed. Stop in for a while and sit down to get to know them. They are the friendliest folk you'll ever get to know. Buy a soda from the storekeeper and help keep this vital part of a community alive.

Wouldn't this be a great way to spend a Saturday? I hear that the Gatesville Country Store has a great weekend breakfast buffet. Sit out on their front porch a while and watch the neighbors go by. I'm sure you'll get many a wave from them. Or stop in at Brownies Restaurant in Bean Blossom and have a cup of coffee at the locals' table. You'll hear many a good story about the good old days.



**Liar's Bench 1934 - a community exchange portal**