Town of Reedy

Places

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Town of Reedy known as Three Forks, is one of the two incorporated communities in Roane County. Reedy district was settled in 1816 with the pioneer settlers being the Boards, Blossers, Cains, Roaches, Seamans and Stewarts. However, it was not until 1822 and 1823 that we have our first history of Three Forks.

About the year 1823 William Stewart, Robert Blosser, Patrick Board, David Seaman, Thomas Seaman, Charles Stewart, a single brother of William Stewart, all of their wives and children settled in the area. William Stewart spread his land title over four hundred acres on the northwestern side of Three Forks and the Boards, Blossers and Charles Stewart covered the lands to the eastward and up and down the creek.

Three Forks began to grow as all other communities. William Stewart and Thomas Seaman erected a "little water mill" on the bluff on the Right Fork in 1823. Around 1835, Andrew Stewart, son of William, improved the mill to provide the ingredients for white and corn bread for the community for nearly seventy-five years. Andrew learned the wagon makers and cabinetmakers trade and installed lathes operated by water power.

Alfred Stewart, brother of Andrew, became the community shoemaker and the Blossers became the village blacksmiths.

These business enterprises were the foundation on which the Town was built.

First merchant, Phillip Cox, came to town as a "peddler", set up his own store offering the public the necessities, plus any items only offered in larger centers.

In 1891 came the first steam flouring mill, constructed for Silas Seaman and John Blosser. Clark Wright purchased his first interest in the business in 1898 and later became sole owner. For more than 65 years the mill served the town and surrounding country. From the earliest days, until the oil and gas boom of the Liverpool field declined, the mill would start early Monday morning and not shut down until late Saturday night except for repairs.

The first post office mentioned at Three Forks was 1852 by Adam Hodam. Due to this, it must be accepted the post office was established before that date. Some early records indicate the town got its first post office in 1835, the town then listed in Jackson County as was the area later to become Roane County. William Stewart, one of the first settlers, was the postmaster.

A letter, dated March 15, 1946, from the Post Office Department stated they had no record of a post office at Three Forks but it showed a post office established at Reedy, Jackson County, January 4, 1855, with William Stewart as postmaster. The list of postmasters furnished are: William Stewart, 1855; Charles Boggs, 1861; Dempsey Flesher, 1865; T. J. Thorn, 1867; A. Collison, 1869; Thomas

Barr, 1869; Charles Boggs, 1870; Andrew Collison, 1871; James Trim, 1874; W. H. Flesher, 1875; Hugh Sayre, 1875, Samuel Roberts, 1889; Enoch Howell, 1893; Alexander Chevount, 1897; Nathaniel Ledsome, 1902, Robert McKinely, 1914; Guy McCutcheon, 1924; Maurice Carpenter, 1935; Lucille Law, Acting, 1959; Emerson McClung, 1961; Dave McCartney, 1983 and Kyle Parks, 1986 and still serving.

In 1869, a covered bridge was built across the main creek, which was an important factor to the growth of the town. In 1901, a big flood washed the bridge down stream some distance. Later it was replaced by an iron bridge. About the year the first bridge was built, the first portable saw mill, owned by Daniel Sayre and Ezekiel Vernon began operation.

The town of Reedy, named by William Beauchamp, an early settler, because of the numerous reeds that grew on the stream at that time, had prospered to the point that a group of citizens became interested in incorporating the town. They met to hold an election for approval of incorporation. The issue was "For Incorporation" or "Against Incorporation.." A tally of he votes cast showed thirty-two voted for and three against. A plat of the town was to be drawn up, showing the exact lines in all directions to be incorporated and amount of acres, being one hundred sixty.

This with the certified election results, plus a petition signed by thirty residents of the community, were presented to the County Court asking that the petition be approved and the area be incorporated. The Court Order, dated March 30, 1894, stated: "that from and after this day, the territory within the boundaries prescribed shall be incorporated municipally by name of "Town of Reedy", and appoint S. B. Seaman, John Bishop and W. P Stewart, commissioners to hold an election for choosing the first mayor and common council of the new town."

The date of the first election is not certain due to records lost in a flood. From information gathered, it is believed the first officers were Charles Cottle, Mayor; Christopher Stewart, Recorder; William Sawyer, Jacob Coon, Allen Cottle, Harmon Huey and William Stewart, members of council.

The Town Hall, Lattimer Street, was formerly the Town Jail with two cells.

In 1955, when the results from the election were tallied, a unique thing happened in Reedy. The results showed Guy Lewellen had been elected Mayor. Others were all women. Reedy was quickly dubbed the "Petticoat" government. Edith Sheppard was elected recorder and council members were Lucille Law, Garnette Camp, Emma May, Freda Craig and Ruby Camp. At that time, Reedy was the only municipality to be operated by women. Garnette Camp and Edith Sheppard were re-elected in 1957.

Other business operations which added to the growth of the town were: 1875, Dick and Allen Cottle opened a general merchandise business, later adding wagon making; Jesse Roach, a hardware store, followed by Lee Matthew and Tom Lattimer, and later, Blake Fletcher; Andrew Alderman operated one of the early "Men's Clothing Store." Harry Cottle took that business over and ran it for several years; Otto McMillan started a general store about the time the railroad was built, with the Rader store later occupying the site; Rev. W. A. Law, who was always on the look-out for something to boom Reedy, an two sons, David and Clyde went into the produce business. This operation was continued for many years down through the family. Others who ran businesses were Amos Law, Ray Law, N. L. Ledsome, Henry Dye, Walter McKinley, Hubert and Freda Craig, Guy Lewellen, Theo Staats, J. M. Daniell, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dalton and Carter Moss.

One of the busiest places was the B & O Railroad Depot. People used the train for transportation, as well as for business. Farmers for miles around used it for shipping their products to market. The out-going mail was delivered to the train and the in-coming returned to the post office by a two wheel cart pushed by a local man.

A. S. Brown was the agent for many years. Homer Knowlton was agent when the depot was closed.

The section hands did the maintenance for the railroad, J. H. Wyant, Jesse Warren, Bailey Fore and Grant Rogers were some of the foremen.

Barber Shops were operated by Dutch Cain, Major Cottle, L. C. Greek , Carl Hylbert and Lonnie Santee. Mr. Cain was a clock repairman and manged the citizen telephone switch board. T. W. Dye, as well as Cottle and Lester operated funeral establishments and furniture stores.

Two banks, the Bank of Reedy (1902), third bank in Roane County and the First National Bank of Reedy (1912), seventh bank in Roane County merged in 1929, using the First National Bank Building to operate from. Later this bank merged with the First National Bank of Spencer in 1945.

Doctors serving the community were Dr. G. W. Carter, Dr. J. D. Summer, Dr. T. J. Casto, Dr. Granville Lance and Dr. U. L. Dearman, who came to Reedy in 1910 and administered to the sick for nearly thirty years. He ran a small hospital in the building where Walton's Store is today.

Dentist for the community was Dr. Carl Vineyard.

In 1903, the first newspaper, called "The Pointer", started in Reedy District by Fred Craig. In 1904 it was moved to Reedy, new equipment was purchased and the paper published regularly under the same name until 1909 when the name was changed to "Reedy News", remaining in business until 1949.

In 1910 the only real normal school in this part of the state began at Reedy under the direction of D. M. McKown. Enrollment, 100 students, tuition seventy-five cents a week. Board was cheap in private homes. Students came from all around.

Daniell Motor had its beginning in 1926 at Reedy as a garage and service station. E. M. Daniell obtained a Chevrolet francise and operated his business here and later moved to Spencer.

Jesse Warren, who had been a mechanic for Daniell Motor, operated the Everyday Garage after Mr. Daniell moved to Spencer.

Albert Huffman ran a gasoline station from 1918 to 1937.

At the present time, Reedy has the Bill Walton Store and Service Station, Howard Hill Grocery, Paul Hall Dozer Service, Miller's Farm Equipment, Tucker's Whirlwind Car Wash, Dietz Printing, Vol. Fire Department, three churches and a consolidated school.

In 1984 a much needed public water system was put into operation.

Present town officials are Ray Dietz, Mayor; Garnette Camp, Recorder; Council Members are Gladys Healey, Jane Ellen Knowlton, Georgia Vannoy, Stephen Phares and Martha Parsons.

This article was written by society member Garnette Warren Camp. The article was first printed in the Roane County West Virginia Family History, 1989 and reprinted in Roane County Journal, Vol. 1 No. 4; Spring 1994