

CROSSROADS: BROTHERTON THRIVED BY THE TRACKS

by Megan Trotter
Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN
Thursday, 27 September 2012

PUTNAM COUNTY — In the Putnam County Archives' quest to learn more about the "Almost Forgotten Crossroads" from this area's history, this week staff members have turned their sights on the Brotherton Community, located 4.5 miles east of the Putnam County Courthouse, near the intersection of Buck Mountain Road and Brotherton Road near the railroad track.

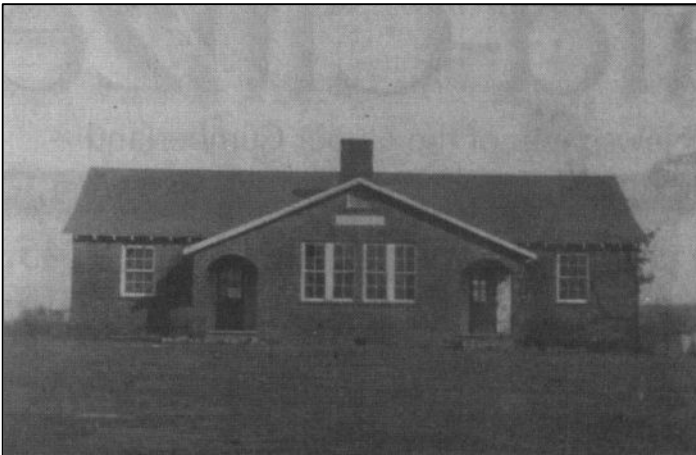


(Pictured: Students gather at the old Brotherton school. The photo is believed to have been taken 1920 and 1925).

The community was named after one of its earliest settlers, Andrew Pharris Brotherton, who was born in Morgan County. He and his wife, Beatrice, owned one of the first homesteads in the area. In 1893, the N&K Railroad was completed and local farmers used the box cars to sell their farm products and timber.

Brotherton worked as a blacksmith and had a shop in

the community when he was a young man. The community also held a store and grist mill owned by Willis Hyder who was also a mail carrier at the Brotherton Post Office, which was open from 1895 until the postal service was moved to Cookeville in 1955. The first post master at Brotherton was Walter Allen. For the last 21 years of its operation, the post office was located in the Huffines Store.



(Pictured: A shot of the old Brotherton School, taken between 1930-1940).

"My wife's family and I own the old Huffines Farm," Freddie Nelson, Putnam County Trustee, said. "Melvin and Flossie Huffines ran the post office and owned the grocery store, plus the depot was also located on this property."

The oldest store in the Brotherton community belonged to Joe Bilbrey, and next oldest is believed to have been owned by Porter Judd. He was

postmaster from 1914 to 1923 and operated the store, while Haskel Harp cut men's hair in the back.

In the book "The Upper Cumberland of Pioneer Times," author Alvin B. Wirt claims that local Cherokee tribesmen permitted white settlers to build four guest houses. The first one, located on Walton Road, was built and operated by William Phillips. The second house was the hotel behind Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Haney's home, and included a small cemetery. The third house was on Paragan Road, owned by a Mr.

Caruthers. The fourth house was owned by Dallas Whiteaker.

The Brotherton School opened in 1924 and closed around 1971.

“It began as a one-room school with one teacher,” Nelson said. “Later, another room was added and it became a two-teacher school. In the 1920s, the school term was lengthened from five to seven months.”

The Putnam County Archives thanks Nelson for purchasing the signs to mark the historic area of the Brotherton community.

The next featured community will be the Burton community. A photo will be taken at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 26. Former or current residents of the Burton community are invited to meet at 8185 Cookeville Boat Dock Road.

Those with any information about the Burton community, any additional information about the Brotherton community, or information about other of the old communities of Putnam County can contact the Putnam County Archives and Veterans Hall at 931-520-0042.

*Read more about the History of Putnam Co., TN and ‘Forgotten Crossroads’ at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>



CELEBRATING BROTHERTON

Celebrating the sign marking the community of Brotherton are, in front, from left, Kim Blaylock, county executive; Catherine Green; Elaine Phillips, holding Helena Phillips; and Jackson Clouse. In back are Glenn Jones, Putnam County archivist; Bill Roberson; Mildred Benson Robusen; Barbara Sweat Bandy; Shelby Sweat McDonald; Evelyn Harp Rockwell; Ethyleen Pharris Morgan; Mildred McNeal Morgan; Burt Sweat; Ruby Bowman; Mary Alice Matheney Williams; Charles Carter; Cathy Reel, county commission district 12; Jimmy Hunter; Frances Carter; Shirlene McNeal Phy; Beatrice Gentry Glover, holding Cora Jo Clouse; Kenneth Phy; Donna Maxwell Sanders; John Gentry; Betty Stark; John Pharris; Carol Bradford; Mike Atwood county commission district 12; and Freddie Nelson, trustee. Photo by Ty Kernea.

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