



BUFFALO VALLEY – DOUBLE SPRINGS –
SILVER POINT & BOMA, TN
By Walter S. McClain – 1925

The village of Buffalo Valley is situated on the Caney Fork River, in the extreme western end of the county, and takes its name from the large and fertile valley at the mouth of which it nestles. Tradition tells us that long before settlement had been made here that a rank growth of cane covered many square miles and that herds of buffalo would come down from the mountains to graze through the winter, when other pasturage was dead or scarce. An old tradition current among the early settlers is that a huge buffalo was killed in the valley near the old Alcorn place, and from this circumstance the valley gained its name.

The first business conducted here was the general store of Captain James T. Exum opened very soon after the war – probably about 1870. Later Robert Alcorn opened a store. About the same time Samuel Young had a store at his farm, some three miles up Rock Spring Valley. Charles Burton's store on the ridge toward Chestnut Mound, some six miles distant, was the next nearest store for many years, until Alex Burton opened a store about three miles out on the ridge.

The first school and church building, dating from long before the Civil War, was the regulation log structure of that day. It stood about one mile up the valley near the Henry Jones place, Walker Brown was one of the first teachers. Finally a small frame building was put up nearby and used for several years. About thirty-five years ago the coming of the railroad infused new life into the community and a large two-story frame school building was erected – a decided addition to the settlement.

Dr. Syper, (father of the late Dr. Ned Syper, of Baxter), was the earliest physician. Awhile after the Civil War, Dr. W.M. Farmer moved over from Laurel Hill, DeKalb County, and spent a long life in the practice of medicine throughout the western end of the county. Dr. Samuel Denton, the present local physician, has been in active practice here for forty-four years.

The N. & K. railroad was completed to Buffalo Valley in 1890. Up to that time small steamboats made regular trips on the Caney Fork, as far up as Pinhook, carrying out many hundreds of tons of hogs, grain, lumber, etc. Rafts of logs were also common on this little river. The first railroad bridge was made with a turning span to allow the passage of boats, but after this was swept away by high

water a few years later, boat traffic had entirely ceased and the present solid steel bridge was erected.

The Bank of Buffalo Valley was opened in 1912. Today in Buffalo Valley there are three general stores, three grist mill, two blacksmith shops, one pole and timber yard, one produce dealer and several live stock dealers. This is the largest hog market in the county, shipping an average of seventy-five cars of hogs every month. The lumber shipments total about fifteen cars monthly, with another ten of produce, poultry and miscellaneous items. The population is 134 by actual count.

Buffalo Valley has this unique distinction – it has no real estate for sale. This may sound strange to people who are fed up on boom methods and auction lot sales, but it is the literal truth. For years there has been no land for sale in the village of Buffalo Valley. *Pg. 83 & 84*

SILVER POINT

Silver Point, situated at the head of Buffalo Valley, four miles north of Caney Fork River, was settled by several old families, notably the Mitchells, Maggards, Wallaces, Burtons, Pucketts and others.

Five public roads lead in Silver Point, making it easily accessible to a large territory of good farming country. It is a good shipping point, especially for timber products and live stock.

There is a good elementary school in Silver Point, and also two churches – Methodist and Christian. The colored people have a Christian church here.

Silver Point is a second-class postoffice, with four rural routes. There are three general stores and a grist mill in the village and a saw mill near by. The population is about 100. *Pg. 87*

BOMA

Boma and Brotherton, small stations on the railroad, each have general stores and a few residents. Both promise to grow into village proportions and some day may figure prominently in the county history. *Pg. 87*

DOUBLE SPRINGS

Originally, most of the land around Double Springs (so named because of two large springs in close proximity), was owned by Major Richard Cooke, although

small tracts were early purchased by others. This was a postoffice about the time of the Civil War, but it did not aspire to be even a small village before the coming of the railroad. Daniel Hawes, who clerked in the store a White Plains, and Joseph Ray sold goods here at an early date. Later G.W. Judd & Son were local merchants. Here, also was one of the ante-bellum "muster grounds." Among the older citizens we might name J.M. Barnes, Wood McBroom, J.M. McClellan, T.M. Scarlett and W.J. Steakley.

One of the large industries operated here before the days of prohibition was J.C. Barnes' steam distillery. At one time two large distilleries were running here at full capacity, the second one being operated by William J. Lewis. The last saloon in the county to close its doors was the "Lone Star" in Double Springs.

The Gainesboro and Sparta road crosses the old Walton Road at this place making it a good trade center. A large part of the railroad shipments to and from Jackson County passes through this village. This is also a good market for poles, crossties and timber products generally. Considerable live stock is shipped from this point.

At present, Double Springs has three general stores, a hotel, livery stable, garage, grist mill and a blacksmith shop. A very neat little church was erected a few years ago. The population is about 200. *Pg. 86 & 87.*

BOMA
by Reba Smellage
Siftings from Putnam County, Tennessee
by Mary Hopson
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Boma is an unincorporated community 3 miles west of Baxter on Route 56 (Exit 256 from I-40). When the Tennessee Central Railroad was built from Nashville to Knoxville, Mr. Pierce Fisher was appointed to be the first postmaster and to suggest a name for the community which had been called Lee's Fields up to that time. Mr. Fisher suggested the names of his two daughters. A postal official in Nashville selected Bomar and dropped the letter R from the end of the work to create the name Boma for the new stop on the railway.

The non-operational workings of a phosphate mine are still to be found on the outskirts of Boma. Two churches, the New Home Baptist Church and the Boma First Church of God, are located in Boma.

The Smellage Cemetery with more than a thousand graves was started in 1865. It has an annual Decoration Day which has met the 4th Sunday in May each year since 1900.

Among the Scotch-Irish-English early settlers were families with the following names: **Anderson**, Barks, Brown, Carr, **Denny**, Duke, Fisher, Hancock ,Herd, Herren, Julian, Kinnaird, Laehome, Lee, Lorne, Maxwell, Maynard, Nichols, Oaks, Pritchard, Shanks, Smellage, Stewart, Whitefield and Whitehead.