

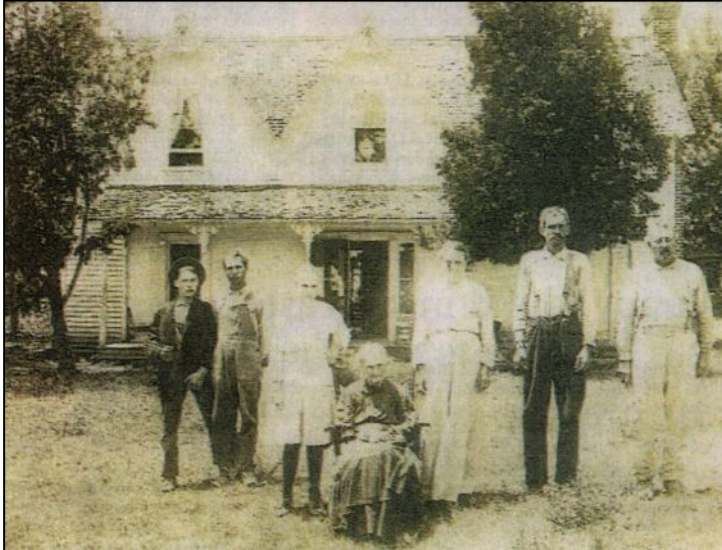
THE DITTY COMMUNITY

'Forgotten Crossroads'

By Megan Trotter

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PUTNAM COUNTY, TN – The Putnam County Archives office is collecting historic information on almost forgotten communities located around Putnam County. One such community is Ditty, which was located at the current intersection of Burgess Falls Road and Ditty Road.



The community was at first within the boundaries of White County until Putnam County was established in 1854 and the county lines were moved. It was named for Abraham Ditty, who owned 4,320 acres of land at one time. He was the son of John Ditty, a Revolutionary War soldier, and Mary Ann Spangler Ditty, who are both buried in Ditty Cemetery. By 1890, the population was about 75 people.

(Pictured: Members of the Farley family gather at the family home in the Ditty Community).

Bill Cameron of Cookeville remembers visiting the community as a child and seeing where his mother, Billie Scott Cameron, and her family grew up.

“The biggest thing that would happen every day is the mailman would come around and the peddler would come around and he had a horse-drawn wagon,” he said. “You could always buy candy from him. My mother would leave me with a nickel so I’d had enough to buy candy when the peddler came around. (My family) would buy things like lard and cooking supplies from him and that was a way of life back here.”

The postal service in Ditty began in February of 1882 with Isaac N. Davis as the postmaster. Later, in 1885, Cameron’s grandfather, M. C. “Matt” Farley became the postmaster until the postal service moved to Cookeville in 1904. The old post office was located in the general store, also owned by Cameron’s grandfather and his grandfather’s brother. Farley was also the Justice of the Peace for nine years.

Cameron’s mother was raised on almost 900 acres in Ditty inside a house built from a kit that cost \$800. It was brought in on the railroad to the Double Springs Depot, loaded up to a mule and wagon and carried to the spot where it still stands today at the southwest corner of the intersection.

“I remember going down there as a kid and sleeping in the old house,” Cameron said. “It doesn’t have any insulation in it, so it got really cold.

“We took mother down to the old home place in 2010, and we had a video camera. She got to tell stories about her chickens that lived out there that she would raise, and her father out there with a team of mules – just a lot of stories. As she went in the different rooms she would remember what kind of things happened there. At 95 years old, it was neat to see her light up like that about the things that she did.”

One of her favorite stories was an adventure she had when she went out to gather eggs from the chickens one day. She reached into the nest and felt around for the eggs. She felt three bumps, but quickly realized that something wasn’t right with the texture of the eggs. When she positioned herself to take a look, she

saw a snake with three egg-shaped lumps in its stomach. She called for her father, who caught the snake and split it open to get the three eggs back.

“Well, (in the story) it started at three, and went up to 13.” Cameron chuckled. “The number changed over the years.”

The new signs marking the Ditty community were paid for by the descendants of Joe Wheeler Scott.

Signs are being purchased to set up around other local ‘forgotten’ communities in Putnam County. Those interested in donating to the fund to purchase signs for their community can contact the Putnam County Archives at (931) 520-0042. Those with photos or information about forgotten communities—even those already featured – can contact the archives at the number above or come by the office at 121 B. South Dixie Ave., Cookeville, TN. A photo with the sign for the Pippin community will be taken at 1 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 22, at the Pippin Church of Christ. Current and former residents are welcome to attend.

*See more about the History of Putnam Co., TN at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>



Celebrating the new Ditty community sign are, from left, Lillard Maxwell, Ron Farley, Glenn Bradford, George Johnson, Carol Bradford, Alma Jean Johnson, Judy Hill, Lloyd Dilldine, Carlos Howell, Joan Dilldine, Terry Dilldine, Bill Mitchell, Billie Mitchell, Marie Mosley, Skyler Mosley, Permelia Elmore, Claudine Branch, Amelia Kendrick, Bill Cameron, Elizabeth Cameron, Glenn Jones and Betty Stark.

Photo by: Ty Kernea.

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