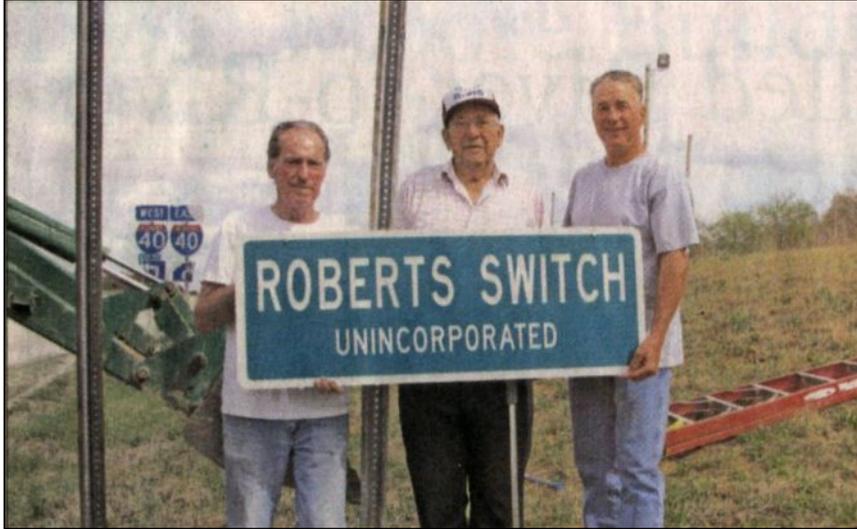


FORGOTTEN CROSSROADS: ROBERTS SWITCH COMMUNITY

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PUTNAM COUNTY – the Putnam County Archives continues collecting information about almost forgotten communities of the area – old local communities that may have nearly faded away in the present day: Places like the Roberts Switch community.



The Roberts Switch community lies in southwest Putnam County on Old Baxter Road between Boma and Hickey. The coming of the railroad in the 1800s planted the seeds of the small community.

Pioneer Joseph Roberts settled in

the area around 1812 and later his son, Francis Marion Roberts granted right-of-way to the railroad in exchange for one share of stock and an agreement that the railroad would build a switch and siding on the property. This led to the property becoming known as Roberts Switch.

(Pictured: Avery, Kenneth, and Tommy Roberts post the Roberts Switch community sign. Kenneth is the honorary ‘major’ of Roberts Switch and celebrated his 93rd birthday by helping post the signs).

Francis Roberts opened a general store and a saw mill near the switch, which he operated up until his death in 1912. The area became a community gathering spot. Local farmers brought their wood products, mostly cross-ties, to the switch to sell and be loaded onto the railcars that were parked on the siding. Passenger trains also stopped at Roberts Switch, though there was never a depot there.

Roberts Switch never had a post office, school or church. In the early days, residents went to elementary school or church at Herren’s Chapel, Hickey or Boma. They received mail from the Boma Post Office from 1888 until its closure on Feb. 28, 1959. Since that date, mail delivery has been through the Silver Point Post Office.

After Francis Roberts died, Amon Herren married the man’s granddaughter, Lettie Roberts, and operated a saw mill there. The saw mill passed to their son, Charlie Herren, who operated the mill until he moved it closer to his home at Herren’s Chapel.

In the 1960s, Interstate Highway 40 was built through the community. Now exit 276 is located just east of “downtown,” which was at the intersection of Old Baxter Rd. and Fisher Rd., where the old store house sat, next to the switch.

Now the community has a populations somewhere between 100 and 150, encompassing residents on Roberts Rd. and Austin Road to the east, Fisher Road, Whitefield Road, Maynard Road and Water Tower Road to the west and a portion of Old Baxter Road. The area has four main businesses: Donnie Burgess’ I-40 Tow Service, Chapel Sings and Designs, Tras-Pro Inc. Truck Repair and Wrecker Service and Boodock’s Bar and Grill. For years The Stop service station and souvenir store was a notable landmark for the community, but it has recently closed.

The Putnam County Archives requests those who have more information about the Roberts Switch community or who is interested in purchasing a community sign for another unincorporated town, can contact the Putnam County Archives at (931) 520-0042.

Read more about “Forgotten Crossroads at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>



Holding up signs for some of the “Almost Forgotten” communities in the Putnam County area are, from left, Glenn Jones, Putnam County archivist; Natalio Rivera, volunteer; Carol Bradford, archivist assistant; Glenn Bradford, husband of Carol and a volunteer; Mary Davis, archives assistant; and Bradon Campbell, volunteer.