

## **SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON CALFKILLER COMMUNITY**

Putnam County, TN

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN

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In their search for “almost forgotten crossroads” of Putnam County, the Putnam County Archives has been collecting information from local residents about the Calfkiller Community.

The Calfkiller Community is located in the foothills of the Calfkiller River Valley, along State Highway 84, where Mill Creek empties into the Calfkiller River and Mill Creek Road intersects with this highway. When passing by, you can't tell that there was once a thriving community called Calfkiller, with schools, stores, and a grist mill. The only remembrances of days gone by is when you pass by the well-kept churches, church yards and cemeteries.

John Henry came from North Carolina in 1812 and settled near the head of the Calfkiller River. His lands embraced the beginning of that river. His first house was a log pen thatched with cane, which grows everywhere in the area. Other pioneers from North Carolina who came to Calfkiller are James Robinson, James Scarbrough and Ned Ellems. James Stamps came from Virginia and settled on the Calfkiller.

According to one tradition, the river is named for an Indian chief. Another story says the river comes out of a cave, and supposedly a calf fell in and washed out.

The post office was established at Calfkiller on February 13, 1872, with Benjamin F. Burton as postmaster. After 33 years of postal service to the area, the post office closed on June 15, 1905, and the area residents started receiving their mail from the Monterey Post Office.

T. J. Moore was a farmer and merchant who operated a general store next to Johnson Baptist Church in this community. His son became a well-known physician in Algood, Dr. J. T. Moore.

Luther Gooch operated a gristmill on the opposite side of Long Hollow Road. People used to vote at the gristmill.

The Calfkiller School was on Calfkiller Highway,/Hwy. 84, south of Monterey, near where Mill Creek flows into the Calfkiller River. It was located across the road from the Bohannon Church and Cemetery.

The school was first held in Johnson Baptist Church until 1931, when a separate school building was built at this location. The school closed in 1962. Sometime after the school closed, the building burned. Gary Lowhorn said the school closed the year he was to go into fifth grade. The students were sent to Monterey.

Betty Sue Austin said that the school had four rooms; grades 1-4 were in one room; grades 5-8 were in another room. One room was used as a lunch room. The other “big” room, as it was called, was used as a playroom when the weather was bad.

Clarence Tayes Jr. and Betty Sue Austin said the community furnished a hot lunch; parents would send sackfuls of pinto beans and home canned foods. Later the government provided food for the school lunches. Tayes said that Bonnie Tabor Roberts was hired to do the cooking at school.

Ella Emery said that she went to Calfkiller School until seventh grade when her family moved away. Some teachers that Ella remembered are Lillian England McCloud, Dolly Alma Lee Bohannon, Herbert Officer and Lucille Little.

Clarence Tayes remembered one of his teachers, James Alcorn. Mr. Alcorn was in his first year of teaching when Clarence was about 12 years old. Clarence, Willie B. Henry, Waylon Tabor and Marson McCormick would go swimming at recess in the river behind the school, and then go back to class with wet hair.

One day Mr. Alcorn was standing on the bank overlooking the river and saw the boys. He never said a word when the boys got back to the building until the next recess.

Mr. Alcorn called the boys to him and bent each one over a desk.

Clarence said, “He whipped us hard; we never went swimming in the river again during school.”

Waylon Tabor said, “Mr. Alcorn would ‘twist’ the paddle; it really hurt, but we were too big to cry.”

Clarence knew that if his parents found out that he got whipping he would get one at home. Some girls in the class would go to his house to get milk; he told Rosie Mae Harris and two other girls not to tell on him. They didn’t tell.

The Calfkiller Schools and Community signs were donated by Jimmy Holloway, Clarence Tays, Roy Brown and Brenda Bullock. If anyone has information on the Calfkiller Community or any unincorporated community, please contact the Putnam County Archives at 121 B South Dixie Ave., or call (931) 520-0042.

(See pictures next page)

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



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Celebrating the Calfkiller sign are, from left, Randy Porter, Steve Bullock, Helen Holloway, Glenn Jones, Brenda Bullock, Madison Phillips, Brenda Brown, Ella Emery, Danny Emery, Lois Gentry, Joyce Dillon, Carol Bradford, Waylon Tabors, Willie Shirley, Jimmy Holloway, Clarence Tays and Phines Holloway.



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Celebrating the Calfkiller School sign are, from left, Randy Porter, Steve Bullock, Helen Holloway, Brenda Bullock, Garry Lowhorn, Christine Lowhorn, Madison Phillips, Brenda Brown, Ella Emery, Danny Emery, Lois Gentry, Joyce Dillon, Carol Bradford, Waylon Tabors, Bettye Sue Austin, Willie Shirley, Charlotte Tays, Jimmy Holloway, Clarence Tays and Phines Holloway.



Celebrating the new Calf Killer sign are, from left, Glenn Jones, Roy J. Brown Jr., Waylon Tabors, Clarence Tays Jr. Marson McCormick, Brenda Bullock, Betty Stark Steve Bullock, Kara Phillips and Jimmy Holloway.

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