

ment made by many life-long residents, "That Laurelville would never be the same again", it is, and probably is better than it was before the flood.

Laurelville has much to be thankful for — There was no loss of human life caused by the flood and that the citizens of Laurelville live in a community of wonderful people.

SCENES FROM THE 1968 FLOOD IN LAURELVILLE



The combination of several days of rainfall, the breaking of a levee, the bridge on Route 180 creating a dam and then giving way, allowing the backed up water into the town meant disaster to Laurelville residents waking up early Friday, May 24, to the worst flood in the town's history.

SCENES FROM THE 1968 FLOOD IN LAURELVILLE



All the businesses in Laurelville were hard hit and some reports include 5 feet of water in the Salt Creek Valley Bank and 6 feet 8 inches in front of Johnson's Restaurant.

There was much damage to homes and property in Laurelville and the nearby village of Haynes.



THE LAURELVILLE BAND IN 1907
Can you identify anyone?



THE LAURELVILLE COMMUNITY HALL FIRE
This building served the community well for many years was finally destroyed by fire in the 1960's.

PERRY TOWNSHIP AND SOUTH PERRY

It has long been known that a village or city can only be as prosperous as the region around it is prosperous and so it is with Laurelville and the region around about it.

Perry township, one of the largest townships in Hocking County is also a fertile and beautiful region with its wide valleys and its gentle and rolling green hills. It has rich fertile and well drained soils which makes it an excellent place for good crops with lush green pastures for the herds of sheep, dairy cows and beef cattle.

The first white settler known to be a resident of the township was George Ballou who moved into the area about 1807 but remained only a short time. In 1808 Samuel Friend, John Morse and George White came in and brought their families with them. These first settlers had to go to Chillicothe to get wheat or corn ground for bread. It often took them a week to make the trip, as roads and bridges were almost non-existent.

The first white child born in the township was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Friend. His name was Samuel Friend Jr. but he lived only a short time and was recorded as the first death in the township.

Rev. David Dutcher preached the first sermon in the cabin home of Samuel Friend. During the service, which was interrupted, when a large bear came into the settlement and took a small pig from the pen. The men succeeded in overtaking old Bruin with his prize. The bear was killed. The first church and the first school were erected about 1820, both were of log construction. Benjamin Bennett built the first flour mill in 1824 — it was located on Middle Fork.

James Armstrong opened the first general store in South Perry in 1835. Levi Friend purchased the store soon after it was opened and operated it for many years.

Perry township formerly belonged to Fairfield County but in 1848 it became a part of Hocking County. South Perry was laid out in 1838 by Levi Friend. The Post Office, the first in the township, was established in 1838 with Levi Friend the post master. The first house built in South Perry was built by Ira McClelland and the first blacksmith shop was started by John Melhiser. Dr. William T. Floyd was the first practicing physician.

South Perry was incorporated in 1849 and Samuel F. Strous was elected the first mayor. He filled this office for about three years but did not seek re-election and South Perry returned to the classification of a village.

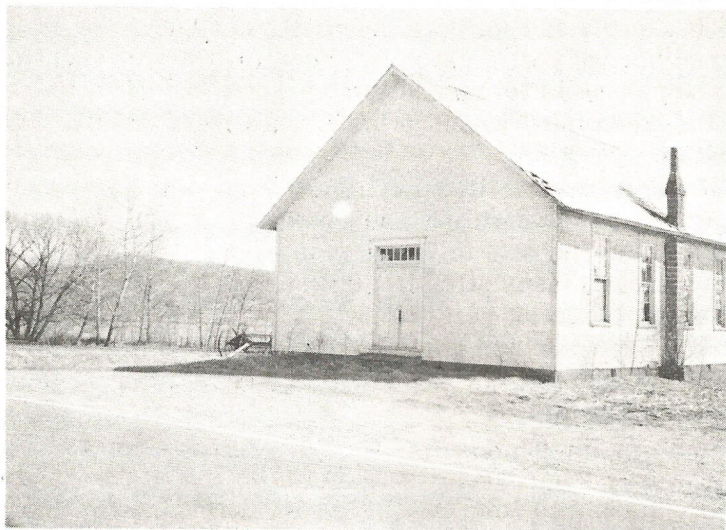
South Perry continued to grow and prosper through the years and it was thought to have attained a population of 150 people fairly early in its history. It had several business places, those usually found in small towns of this area.



THE OLD SOUTH PERRY METHODIST CHURCH

This was destroyed by fire.

A new modern church was built to replace the old frame church. The new church is of cement block construction.



**The Baptist Church now abandoned
located near South Perry
Picture taken in 1971**

AREA WEST OF LAURELVILLE

Immediately west of Laurelville is an area of fertile fields and lush green pastures. The area referred to here is located in Saltcreek township in Pickaway County. Saltcreek township got its name from the stream, Saltcreek, which flows diagonally through the township but it originated in Fairfield County above Tarlton and enters Hocking at Laurelville.

Settlers started entering this region about 1798 coming to the area from Pennsylvania. These first settlers for the most part were squatters who moved in and took possession of the land without purchase or a deed of ownership. When the land was put up for sale a few years later very often the squatter made the purchase and received a deed signed by the President of U. S. The average price of this land was three to five dollars per acre.

This fertile and gentle rolling land was leveled by the glacier millions of years before and now for the first time history was being cleared for agricultural purposes. Almost at the side of the township was the principle town of the township – Tarlton.

This progressive town was located on direct route from Kentucky to the east. General Jackson and Henry Clay stopped here on the way to Washington. Along this beautiful valley was found many attractive farm homes.

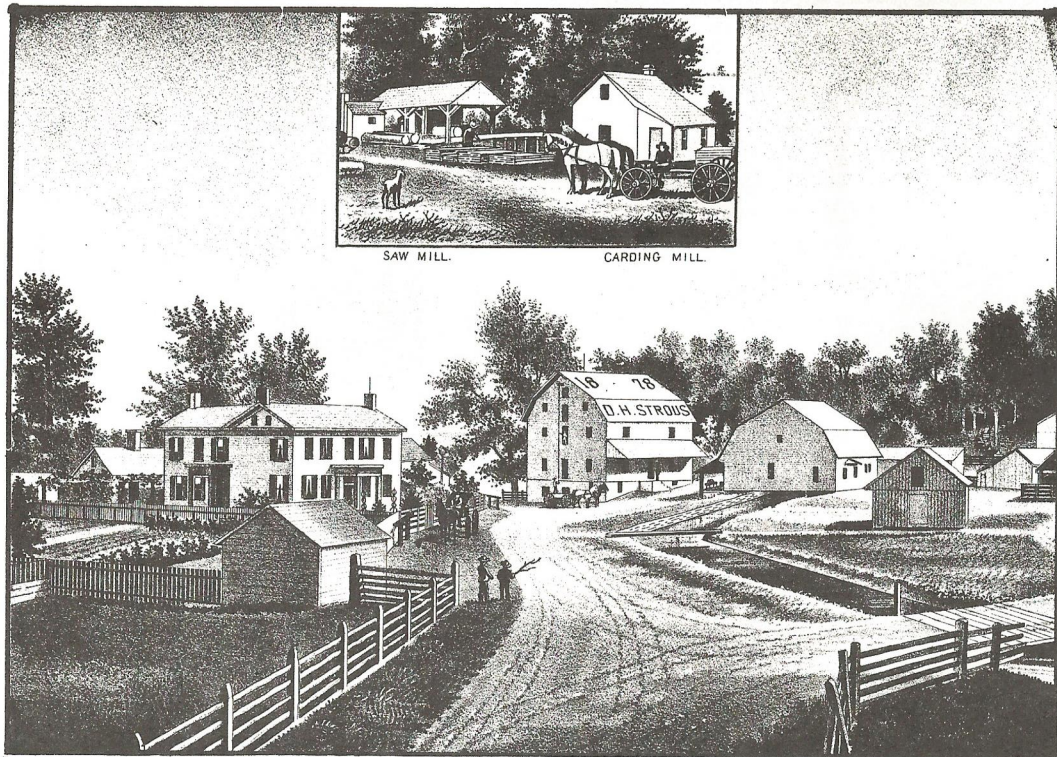
During the latter part of the 1800's there was considerable evidence of trade and communication between the people of the Laurelville area and the Saltcreek Valley residents and the village of Tarlton.

Some of the names of these early pioneer families of this region included: David Strous, Matthias Hedges, John Shoemaker, Jacob and John Lutz, Chris Holderman, John Reichelderfer, John Mowery, Henry Drum, Sam Lutz, Sol Riegel, H. D. Riegel, William Dresbach, George Dresbach and many others.



**A SCENE FROM LAURELVILLE'S MAIN STREET
IN NOVEMBER 1949**

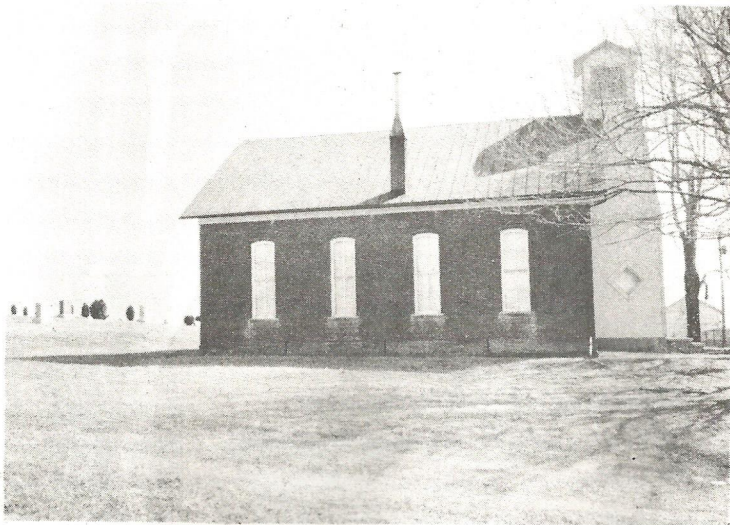
**One of the largest snowfalls recorded in
Laurelville's History**



SAW MILL.

CARDING MILL.

SCENE FROM THE HOME OF DAVID H. STROUS
Located just west of Laurelville 1883



BETHANY CHURCH

A brick structure erected in 1874.

Picture taken in 1971

SALTCREEK TOWNSHIP AND HAYNES

South-East out of Laurelville in Hocking County is the beginning of Saltcreek township. To show that there was very little communication between these early people there is a Saltcreek Township in both Hocking and Pickaway Counties. This also shows the influence of the fertile valley which gave these two townships the name.

The early history of Saltcreek township indicates that the early settlers were mostly farmers but in recent times, although agriculture is still important in this fertile valley, some diversity is noted.

Only one village was located in the township and this was located near where Pine Creek joins Saltcreek. This village was first known as Pineville because of its location but was later changed to Haynes and this was done to honor a prominent pioneer family by the same name.

Haynes had several dwellings and two general stores, a blacksmith shop and a post office. D. L. Davis was appointed the first postmaster.

Haynes was located at the junction of Saltcreek and Pine Creek. Bottom land provided this settlement good crops and other agricultural products.

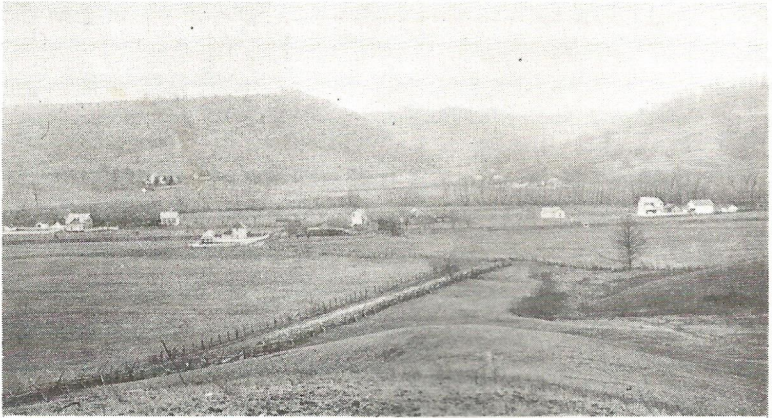
This village also marked the half way point between Laurelville and South Bloomingville, the center for Benton township further east. Haynes was also a stop on the Columbus and Southern railway that ran through the region in the early part of the twentieth century.

Saltcreek township had three churches in the early part of its history: They were Zion, Bethel and the Methodist Episcopal Church which was the largest church of that denomination in the area. In this section of the Saltcreek Valley, from Laurelville to Haynes area, several mounds are located, which show that other people of an age gone-by, appreciated this area and selected it as their home also. Judging from the large number of Indian arrow heads and other tools found in this area, along with the mound builders, the Indians too loved the area, and maybe to the point of fighting for it.

Some of the prominent citizens of this community included: D. L. Davis, Daniel Karshner, Moses Wiggins, Thomas Wiggins, William Hoover, Christopher Haynes, Nelson Karshner, Nelson DeLong, Charles Spencer, John C. Butler and others.



Hunter and Mettlers Store at Haynes
A picture of the past



HAYNES FROM A DISTANCE

From left to right: 1st Andrew Mettlers Home; 2nd Hunter & Mettlers Store & P. O.; 3rd Thomas Mettler Home.

BENTON TOWNSHIP AND SOUTH BLOOMINGVILLE

Benton township joins Saltcreek township about two miles west of South Bloomingville at a point near where Queer Creek joins Saltcreek. Queer Creek is the most important stream in Benton township and it forks at South Bloomingville with one fork reaching the Ash Cave area and the other reaching the Old Man's Cave and Cedar Falls area.

Queer Creek so named because of its deep ravines, bold outline and rocky bluffs did give it a weird appearance and it is thought that it prompted the name "Queer Creek".

Early explorers thought that Benton township was rich in iron ore, coal, silver and lead. Some coal was found and was mined but the minerals were not in sufficient quantity to justify a mining operation.

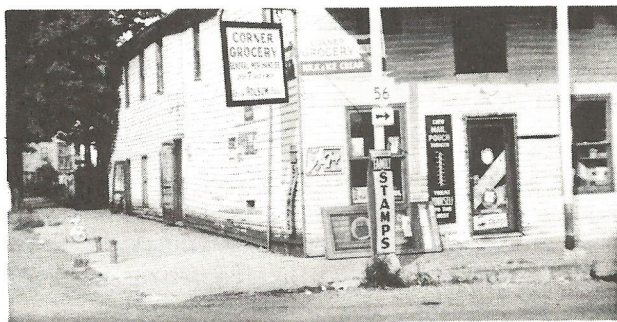
The early explorers or natives could not have known Benton township was rich in natural resources which probably exceeded their early expectation in minerals, but this was in natural gas. Another natural resource they knew about but one that they did not properly evaluate was the scenic beauty of Ash Cave, Old Man's Cave, Cedar Falls and related areas. No other area in the State is as popular with tourists as the Hocking Parks. Many thousands of people visit these each week, winter and summer. Millions of dollars have been expended to accommodate the thousands of people who come from all the states of the union to see nature's wonderland. This is truly a natural resource of major proportions.

South Bloomingville was laid out by John Chilcote who owned the land upon which it was located.

History indicates that South Bloomingville had two general stores, one was owned by John Goddard and the other by John Quellin. George Gill owned and operated a drug store. Two hotels were located here, "The Ohio House", operated by J. W. Iles and the other, "The American" was owned by William Evarts. This small community boasted of two physicians, Dr. Green and Dr. Redfern. In the early days of which we are writing South Bloomingville had one millinery shop, and flour mill and a blacksmith shop.

The township had nine schools located in the township with one being located in the village.

Some of the prominent citizens of the area included: Benjamin Allen, John Allen Jr., George Amerine, J. P. Shaw, Eli Dennis, W. B. Fleming and others.



**PLEUKHARP'S STORE AT
SOUTH BLOOMINGVILLE**

A landmark in this village for many years.

THE COLUMBUS AND SOUTHERN RAILROAD

Between 1902 and 1915 the Columbus and Southern railroad ran between Wyandotte Junction and South Bloomingville through Laurelville area. Since the railroad had no round house or "Y" to turn the engine it ran forward one way and backward the other-thus the nickname, "Old Push and Pull". The crew and those who rode the train regularly called the engine, "Old Rosie". The newspapers often referred to the railroad as "The Queen of the Valley", the valley referred to was the Saltcreek Valley which the right of way followed for most of its length. Many people living today will attest to the fact that the physical condition of the equipment was so poor that a rigid schedule was impossible. The adopted schedule called for a morning run from South Bloomingville to Wyandotte Junction then back to Laurelville, then a return to the Junction in the afternoon and completion of the schedule by a return to the starting point South Bloomingville, in the late afternoon or evening.

The train ran during a period when speed was not as important as it seems to be today. People did not complain too much when a person on horseback would make better speed than the train.

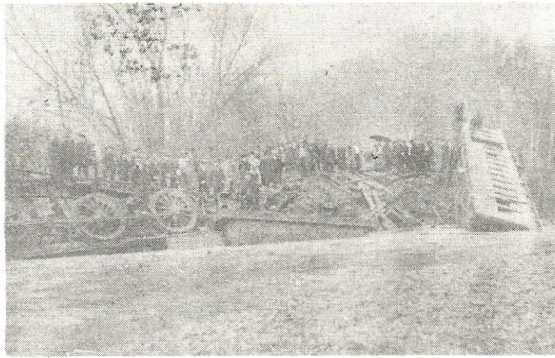
Passenger cars and freight cars were in the same train, coal, railroad ties, telephone poles, piling and lumber, along with a few passengers and the mail constituted the main items carried by the train.

The owners and those who planned the Columbus and Southern planned to push it through to the coal fields of Athens, Vinton and Hocking Counties.

Financial problems along with the hilly terrain of eastern Hocking County stopped the road at South Bloomingville and short of the coal, the one item which would have made the railroad a success.

The severe floods of 1913 which heavily damaged large sections of the roadbed and trestles hastened the abandonment of the Columbus and Southern railroad which was junked in 1916.

The railroad which had a rather short and troubled life was missed by most of the people of the small towns and the country-side through which it ran.



**The Columbus and Southern Railroad
wreck of 1907 caused by the flood.**



Along the tracks in Laurelville many years ago



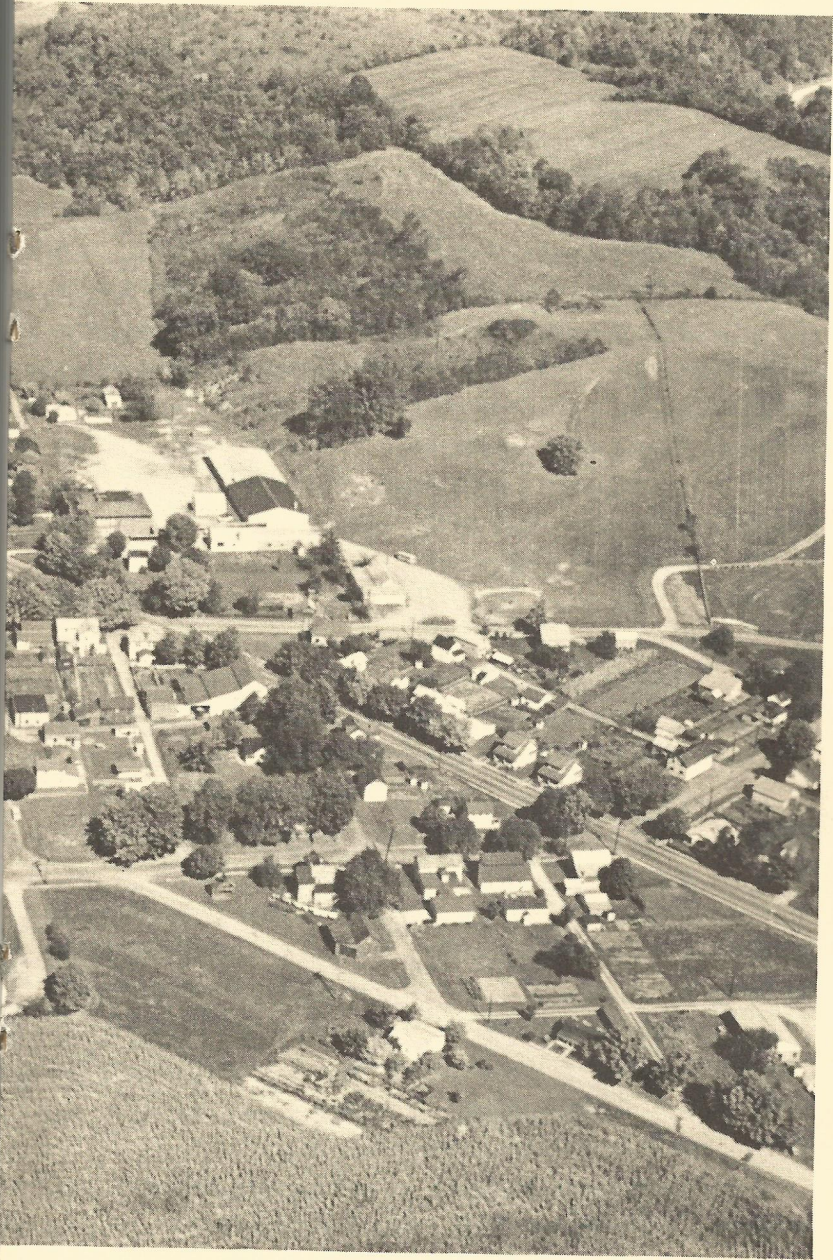
**The Village Square in Laurelville showing
Whites Hardware, Mettlers Store, Mowery Hotel building
with Dave's Barber Shop, McNichols Used Furniture Store.
Taken in 1971**

JUST NOW

Never mind about tomorrow —
It always is today;
Yesterday has vanished,
Wherever, none can say.
Each minute must be guarded —
Made worth the while somehow;
There are no other moments;
It always is: **JUST NOW**

Just now is the hour that's golden,
The moment to defend.
Just now is without beginning;
Just now can never end.
Then never mind tomorrow —
'Tis today you must endow
With all that's true and noble,
And the time for this is — **NOW!**

Author Unknown



61