

Situated in the southeast corner of Polk County, the town of Pleasant Hope still stands as one of its older localities, and from the very beginning as a pioneer educational center, the community has continued to maintain good schools. The first seeds of activity at the place were sown by the Rev. R. D. Smith and the Pomme de Terre Congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church after the Rev. Smith and wife Eliza A., on March 20, 1847, obtained a title to a tract of land that was to later become a part of the town. Next followed the opening of an academy on the ground by Smith in 1849, according to the Goodspeed's History of Polk County. County records also disclose that on October 3, 1851, the Rev. Smith and wife deeded the ground and building to the trustees of the Pleasant Retreat Academy of which Smith himself was a trustee. The deed stipulated that besides being used as an academy, church services were to be conducted June 14, 1873, with the following charter members: E. S. Mason, E. W. Spence, Henry Gardner, H. H. Walker, I. O. Parrish, W. B. Cavin, Z. T. L. Burns, W. B. Patterson, J. W. Barr, J. A. Cowden, William Patterson, and G. T. Patterson.

The Odd Fellows Lodge - Pleasant Hope /18, I. O. O. F., was organized in July Sundays of each month, while the alternate Sundays were to be made available to other evangelical denominations. The academy was discontinued around the year of 1855. In 1851, Smith and Heddon opened the first general store which was located in either a dwelling or out-building. Heddon's interest was acquired by Kerr, who in 1853, joined Smith in putting up the first business house as such. A post office was opened on December 3, 1851, and called Pleasant Hope, with the Rev. Robert D. Smith installed as the postmaster. Since he was the only Smith listed on the census at that time, Rev. Smith must have also been the storekeeper, with the post office being located in the store.

Now comes a question concerning the various stories that list a succession of names by which the place was called, namely: "Lick Skillet," "Pin Hook," and then "Pleasant Hope." If the academy started in 1849, and the first store and post office in 1851, the names had to change pretty quickly. Before the academy started there seems to have been nothing much there unless possibly a church camp ground. The name "Lick Skillet" could have very well been given to the place by people who camped there during revival meetings, but it seems reasonable to believe that the academy name of "Pleasant Retreat" gave the inspiration for "Pleasant Hope." As for the once sharply resented nickname "Pin Hook," some wag in another town may have coined it from the initials P. H. during a school contest. J. A. Cowden and brother was said to have been in business during the ten year span between the years of 1851-61, while in June 1857, Neil McKenzie changed his advertisement in the Bolivar Weekly Courier to announce a store in Pleasant Hope in addition to the one at Bolivar. Not much is known as to the status of the business firms during the Civil War, however, McClure and Company opened for business following the war, as did Massey and Patterson.

One of the stores had a succession of proprietors beginning with C. B. Holland in 1870, Emery Spencer, 1871-77, and W. A. Wilcox, 1877-82. That store seems to have been the only store in the village for a time as the writings of A. C. Lemmon in his 1876 Centennial paper reveal that there was one store, a flouring mill, two black smith shops, one shoe shop, an academy and church.

Furth and Wilkinson began business in 1884, with R. C. Wilkinson having the management for a number of years. After Kirby and Colwell opened a store in 1885, Colwell later acquired full ownership and then sold out to Wilson, Wilcox, and Company. The latter owners saw the store destroyed by fire in 1888, leaving Pleasant Hope with but a single general store, as the Goodspeed History of 1889 listed only the remaining general store, an implement and grocery store, a drug store, a blacksmith shop, a wagon maker, and a flouring mill which had been

built in 1872, with a carding mill in conjunction. The mill, which had become the property of Sallee and Cowden, had been remodeled in 1882, making it one of the best roller mills in the area. The Presbyterian Church, upon its organization on July 15, 1837, was named the Shiloh Congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The name was changed to the Pomme de Terre Congregation in 1840; all of their meetings being held either in homes or out of doors up until the academy hall was made available to them. The meetings were discontinued after the outbreak of the Civil War, but the congregation resumed their meetings early in 1864, which was much sooner than the majority of churches were reactivated. William Patterson and wife, on August 8, 1873, deeded a parcel of ground lying west of the old academy to the group. Terms of the deed required that they erect a two story building in conjunction with the Masonic Lodge which had recently been organized, with the lodge to have ownership and free access to the upper floor. A building was constructed in compliance with the terms as stipulated in the document. In 1885, the name of the church was changed to the Pleasant Hope Congregation.

The Masonic Lodge - Pleasant Hope Lodge #467, A. F. and A. M., was organized on 1886, with L. D. Burdett, L. C. Adams, J. M. Harrelson, Levi Boswell, J. J. F. Caldwell, Jesse Eagon, and R. G. Wilkinson being charter members. The membership was increased to thirty-five within the four years following. The Methodist Church was organized in 1895, holding their meetings in the Presbyterian Church there perpetually by the Pomme de Terre Presbyterians on the second and fourth building. They started out with around two dozen charter members, among who were Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Walker who donated them a tract of land on which to build their own house of worship. After the old academy was closed, a minister came to the town in 1859, and started a high school in the building. The school was supported by subscription, and apparently was not too profitable for its founder, since he lasted only four months. He was succeeded by A. C. Lemmon, a pioneer Polk County educator who is said to have been the last to conduct classes. The school was evidently revived after his tenure because in 1876, while Polk County Clerk,; Lemmon prepared his Centennial paper in which he states that Bolivar had the only graded public school in the county, but credited Pleasant Hope and Humansville with having the only high schools. Since Lemmon listed Pleasant Hope with having an academy also at that time, it is very likely that the high school and academy were one and the same institution. A public subscription school was organized in 1878, its directors obtaining a two acre tract from J. H. and Sarah Walker for the location of a building. In the case of many such schools, there were times when the enrollment was not sufficient to maintain the program, causing a suspension of classes. This seemed to have been the plight of the Pleasant Hope school five years later, for in 1883, an educator from Illinois came to town and began a high school in the apparently unoccupied building, the old academy building by this time having weathered beyond further use. Shortly afterward a group of town civic leaders decided that such an institution should have strong local sponsorship, so they organized the Pleasant Hope Institute, bought land west of the school ground, and soon began construction of a 20' x 40', three room, two story brick building. The school was transferred from the public school building into the new structure in 1885. They changed the name, calling it the Pleasant Hope Normal Academy, however, its original name remained on the land records. The tuition rates were \$1.50 to \$3.00 per month, and the boarding fees were \$1.50 to \$2.50 per week. The years following 1900 saw business activity increase, and new faces came upon the scene. The Adams General Store became Adams and Tillery when Frank Tillery joined the business. Later proprietors of the store were: Jack Martin, W. I. Allison, Horace Miller, and Arthur Holloway. A grocery store was owned by Ray Tyre, and then Paul Beckerdite, while Bob Burns had a store which stocked groceries and a line of work clothing.

Orval Cavin had a dry goods and clothing store, and a hardware store was operated by Batum and McCoy, with later owners being Jim Patterson, Johnny Glenn, Horace and Murry Miller, and Ethel Noyes. The Pleasant Hope Bank was organized on August 25, 1905, operating for a few months in a corner of the hardware building before moving into quarters across the street. The first president of the bank was Storm O. Whaley. J. R. Stubblefield opened a hotel which was later acquired by Mrs. B. W. Gorden; then in 1921, the A. C. Cochran family started a hotel, giving the town two hotels for a time. Cochrans remained in business for 37 years. Wm. Goodnight had a drug store, being succeeded by Wallace Green, and he by B. W. Gorden. Bousman's opened a second drug store which was in operation for a while. For a good many years the citizens could get medical treatment through the services of Drs. Lundy, Albright, and Cochran; and Dr. R. K. Richter practiced dentistry there before moving to Bolivar. He was succeeded by Dr. Ray Cochran, who had his dental office on the upper floor, and a garage on the ground floor. He alternated from one floor to the other according to the demand. It is said that he would refuse to "work on teeth if a ball game was being broadcast over the radio. He finally dropped his dental practice and gave all his attention to auto repairing. A Ford agency was owned by Gene Cowden during the era of the Model T. Raymond Benton started an undertaking business, using a hearse body mounted on a Model T Ford chassis. He maintained a room for keeping the bodies prior to funerals which were all held in either homes or churches. Benton didn't practice embalming, and later sold the business to Willard B. Erwin.

Two blacksmith shops served the area over a long period of time. Among the craftsmen was George Tillery; the last two, Jess Clingman and Herman Neff stayed on until the era of horse drawn farm machinery was phased out.

The roller mill, which was located east of the business area, continued running until the depression years, being under the management of Choate and Benton, followed by Cal Sallee, and lastly by B. W. Gorden.

An attempt was made on two different occasions to establish a weekly newspaper in the community. The X-Ray was started in 1897, and was discontinued in 1898; then in 1904, the Eclipse began publication, but stopped in 1906. Another church entered the town in 1918, when the First Baptist Church was organized in the old Union Church building which had in reality become a community hall for any sort of gathering. The group used the old building for eleven years while struggling to have a building of their own. In 1923, they obtained ground from Dr. Cochran, and began to build. They were able to occupy the structure in 1924, but due to a lack of funds they were forced to use it for some time without its being completed. Finally upon tiring of the unfinished appearance, a group put up the necessary money, and the completed building was dedicated in 1927. Although electrical power lines did not enter the community until 1927, the business houses were prepared to carry on their services after dark. Those that were grouped in the central area had acetylene gas lighting. The gas was generated from water-activated carbide in a large community tank and piped to the buildings, each of which had a meter. When gasoline mantle lamps and lanterns entered the domestic market, the homes and remaining business houses adopted that form of lighting.

As public school systems began to replace subscription schools and academies, Pleasant Hope organized a public school district and made use of the institute building, having all of the elementary grades in the downstairs room, using the two upper rooms for teaching two years of high school. In 1926, a frame addition was attached to the brick building, making it possible to move up to four years of high school, and also expand the elementary school. On January 4, 1928, the entire facility burned to the ground. The school directors held a bond

election in the next month, and the citizens responded with a vote of 119 to 6 in favor of the issue. A larger building was constructed of native rock, and was ready for occupancy shortly after the beginning of the new school year.

Like the majority of communities, Pleasant Hope has experienced a period of transition that has seen former businesses and professions leave, but the town has kept abreast of the change by adapting to meet the present day needs. While some of the older buildings may stand empty, new ones have been built and occupied. Business firms at present are The Pleasant Hope Grocery and Farm Supply, Laney Sales, a full-service family store, Jones Card and Gift Shop, Hillenburg's Processing and Slaughtering Service and Retail Market, Pleasant Hope Auto Supply and Service, Hillenburg's Full Service Station, June's Drive-In, Pleasant Hope Appliance Store, Campbell Associates, Real Estate, and Wes Campbell Insurance (Formerly operated by C. C. Alley).

The Pleasant Hope Bank has withstood economic conditions down through the years where other banks have been forced to close. They have changed locations for a third time having moved into new modern quarters in 1979. The present officers are H. L. Eagon, President; and Frank E. Wiles, Executive Vice-President.

The town has had a barber shop continuously as far back as anyone can remember, and the Farmers Exchange, which closed in recent years, was among the first in the county to be organized. A water system was installed within the community in 1965, making it possible for them to have a fire department which was organized in 1969.

Of the two lodges that were active for many years, only the Masons are still functioning. Benevolent activity hasn't slackened however, since a Lions Club was started in 1950. Some of their projects are: sponsorship of softball, the basketball banquet, the turkey shoot, and the Junior Livestock Show which is successor to the annual School Fair which began in 1922. The Fundamental Baptist Church was organized in 1944, using the old theater building for a meeting house. After acquiring land, they began construction of a building of their own, occupying the covered basement in 1948, but in 1960, they had the auditorium completed and it is still being used.

The Methodist Church, which has been meeting in their original building, recently held ground breaking ceremonies in advance of erecting a new house of worship.

The Presbyterian Church, which for so many years had played such a vital part in the life of the community, began to find it difficult to locate available ministers. On top of that, they lost some of their members due to deaths and population turnover, and they were faced with the need to either spend a sizable amount of money in repairing their building or put up a new one. It was felt best to disband and dispose of the old structure, so the congregation was dissolved in 1974.

Pleasant Hope R6, which was consolidated in 1949, was among the first three schools in the county to do so. They followed up by erecting a modern elementary school which has been enlarged twice since. Fire struck again in 1979, destroying the high school building. The patrons again responded to the challenge by having a modern sprawling new facility completed in 1980.

The schools turn out many high quality students, boasting a world's champion livestock judging team in 1977. Then back in March 1929, the boys basketball team, after having won both the Polk County and district regional tournaments, went to the state tourney at Columbia. They reached the semi-finals, being defeated by only two points at the hands of Kansas City Southwest. They also lost in the consolation match to Independence, the previous games having worn them down, but by today's classification, they would have been state champions in

the 1A through 3A classes, and fourth best in 4A.

Due to its nearness to Springfield, many of the people in and around the community commute there daily where they have employment, and the town still gets support from the productive area farms which have perpetuated its existence.

The town has had its population slowly inch upward from the beginning, the 1980 census showing the greatest gain, an increase of 89 for a total of 354.

Their latest community achievement has been the completion of a senior citizens housing project.

Despite the fact that neither a railroad nor a principal through highway has ever entered the town, it is served by Missouri 215 and state farm roads H and KK, the community has done well; it seems that the founders chose a fitting name, Pleasant Hope.