





SOUTH WEBSTER

1787 ~~to~~ 1987

Part 1 Beginning and Growth

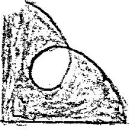
Part 2 Incorporation

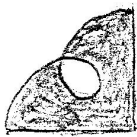
Part 3 Mayors

Part 4 Life in the Twenties

Part 5 Down Memory Lane

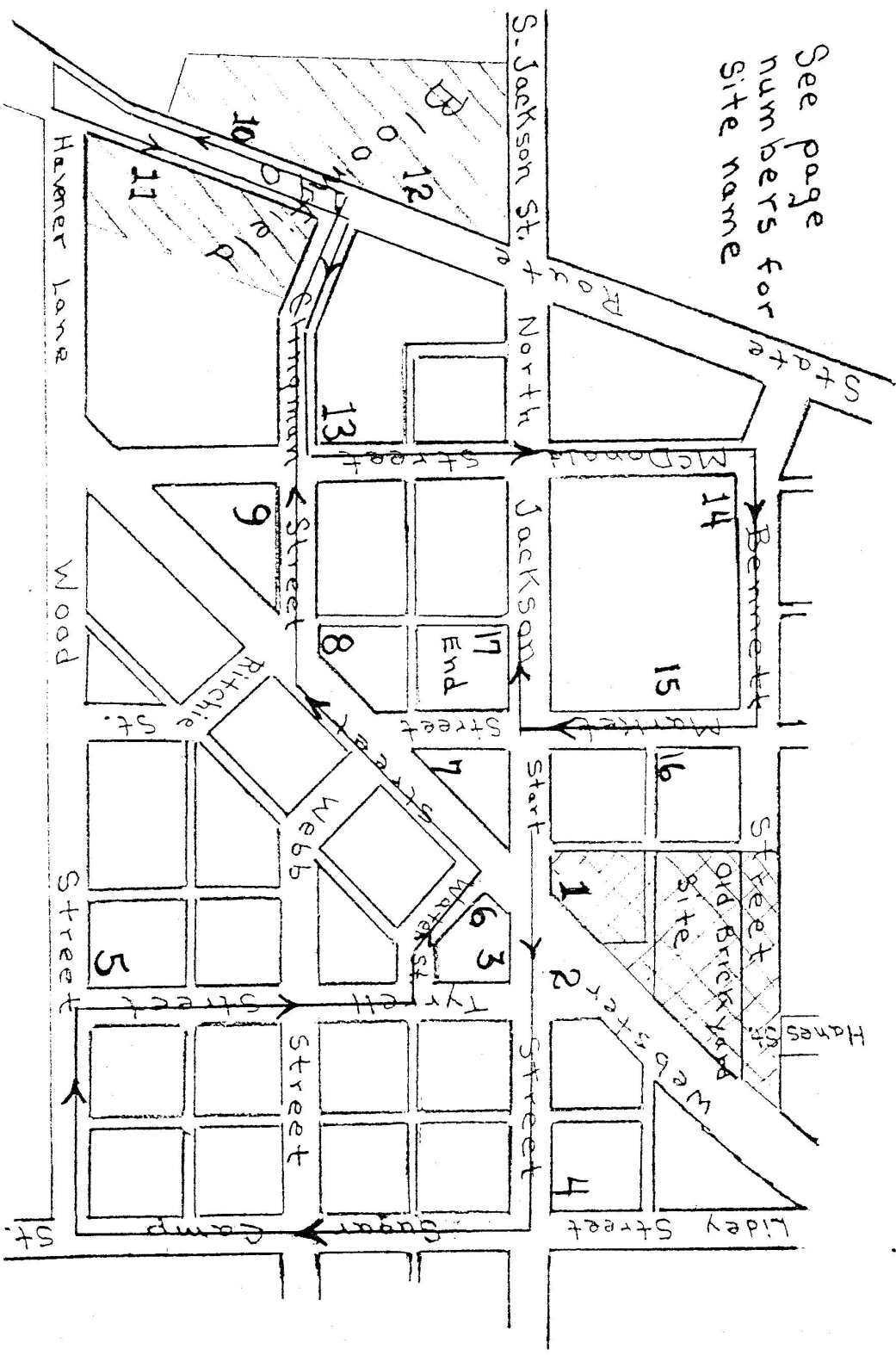
By
Carl & Elizabeth Shamhart





Memory Lane Sites

See page numbers for site name



INTRODUCTION

The sites chosen for the centennial tour were picked from many submitted to the South Webster Area Historical Society. There are many worthwhile sites in the area, but we had to limit them to what we felt were the most historical.

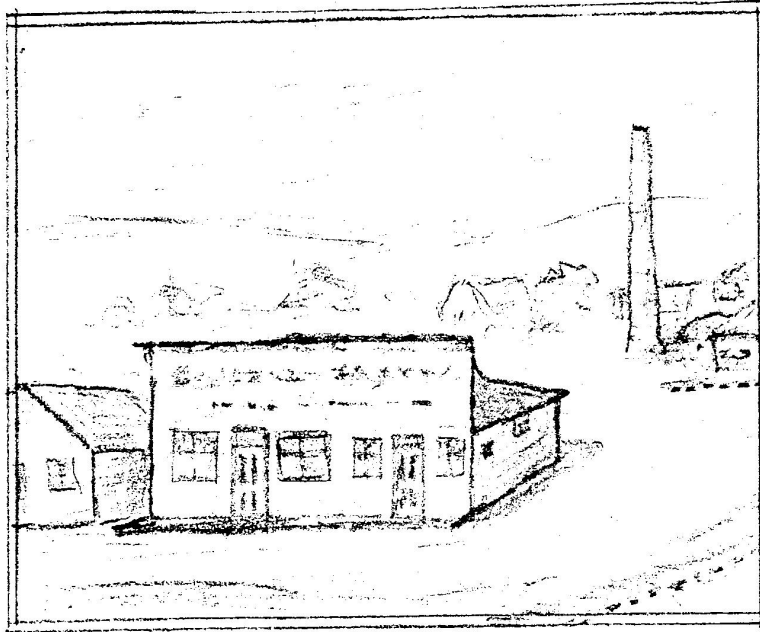
Maybe as time goes on we can research each one submitted and add to this list.

The first page of your booklet is a map with numbers on it. Each number shows the location of a tour site.

The following pages are numbered according to site numbers. Each page contains a sketch and a history of the site.

The SWAHS hopes you enjoy your tour and that you keep this little booklet among your memoirs.

1871



THE WEBSTER FIRE-BRICK and COAL COMPANY was organized in the Fall of 1869 by John Bennett, George Edmunds and W.S. Gillilan. By 1871 the company was in operation and the company store had been built on lot 74 on Jackson Street.

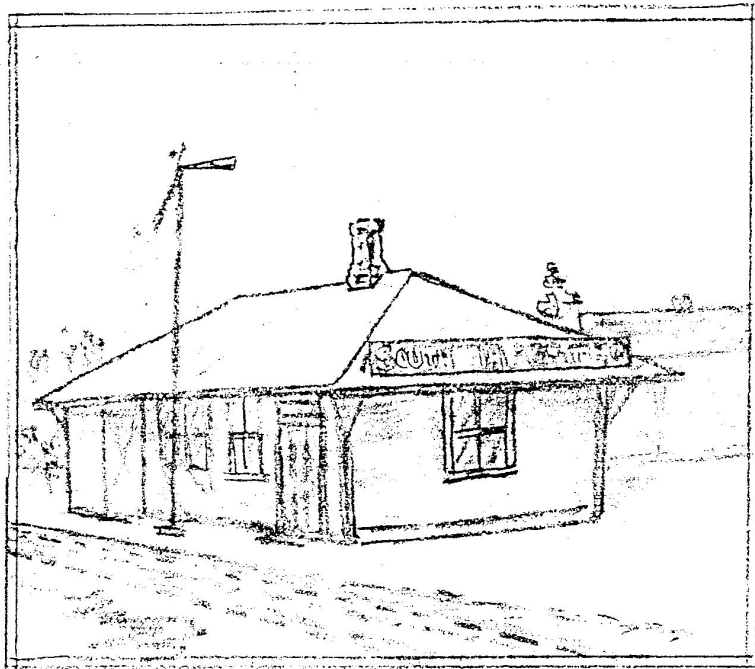
The brickyard had three kilns and employed around 200 men. The clay came from Bloom Township and by 1900 business was good. They were shipping several carloads of brick a week.

But after a few years into the new century, it all ended. A bitter strike marked by violence and shooting closed the yard. After 1905 it never ran again.

The company store survived and down through the years has been operated by many owners. For the last sixty years it has been operated by three generations of Simmerings-Edward and Mayme, Raymond and Vivian and last but not least, Tamela.

When we walk inside this store today, it is hard to believe that people were stepping up to this same counter and doing the same thing over a century ago, and it appears it will continue for years to come. Let's hope this old landmark never ceases to be open to serve the residents of our village.

1853



1965

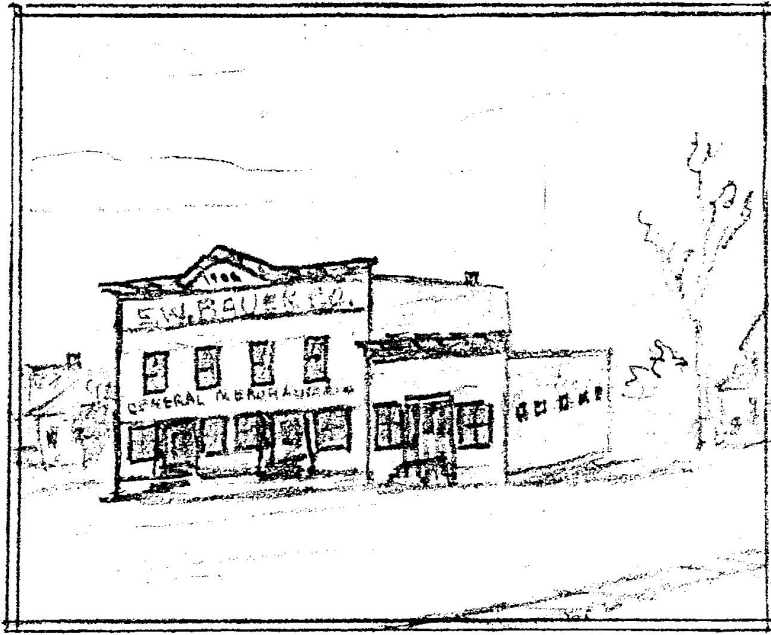
THE TRAIN DEPOT in South Webster was at one time one of the most popular places in town. Passenger trains made four stops a day loading and unloading people, mail, parcels, etc. Many times the local musicians would gather at the depot and sing and play while people awaited the trains.

The first depot was a smaller building across Jackson Street and down the tracks from the last site. It was built in 1853 along with a small freight building near the tracks.

The depot on Jackson Street was built around the turn of the century. Among the later station masters were Edward Prosch and Earl Shamhart.

The last mail and passenger train made its last run through South Webster on Saturday, January 14, 1950. The old switcher continued running for several more years until the railroad from Portsmouth to South Webster was abandoned in 1974. The depot was torn down in the mid 1960s, thus ending more than a century long history of trains in South Webster.

1902



THE BAUER BUILDING was built in 1902 by William E. Tripp. The 1902 part of the building was the large two story part, but the one story part was built a few years later.

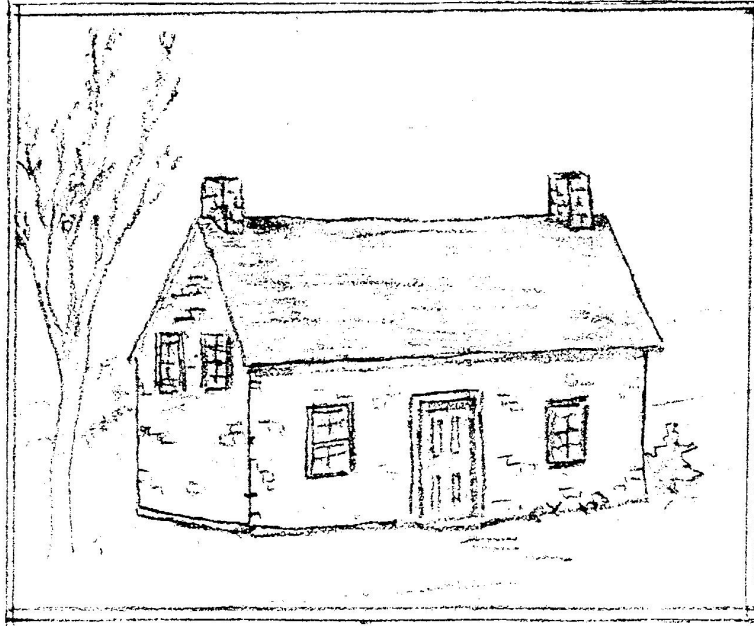
E.W. Bauer became owner of the building in 1917, and it continued operating under his name until sometime in the 1950s.

At its prime this store employed from four to five people, full time. The one story section housed the grocery and shoe store, while the mid-section was for the dry goods and clothing. The north section housed harnesses and hardware, while feed was stored in a building to the rear.

The large top story of the Bauer Building was used for lodge meetings, during the early part of this century, when lodges were popular. It also contained a stage where plays were performed by organizations of the village.

Since the 50's several businesses have been operated in this building, the latest being a restaurant and an upholstery shop.

1845



THE OLD SHOEMAKER'S HOUSE now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan Crum was built in the mid 1800s. Ernest Poetker bought it from James Carmichael in 1869. It remained in the Poetker family until 1916 when it was sold to A.O. Bennett.

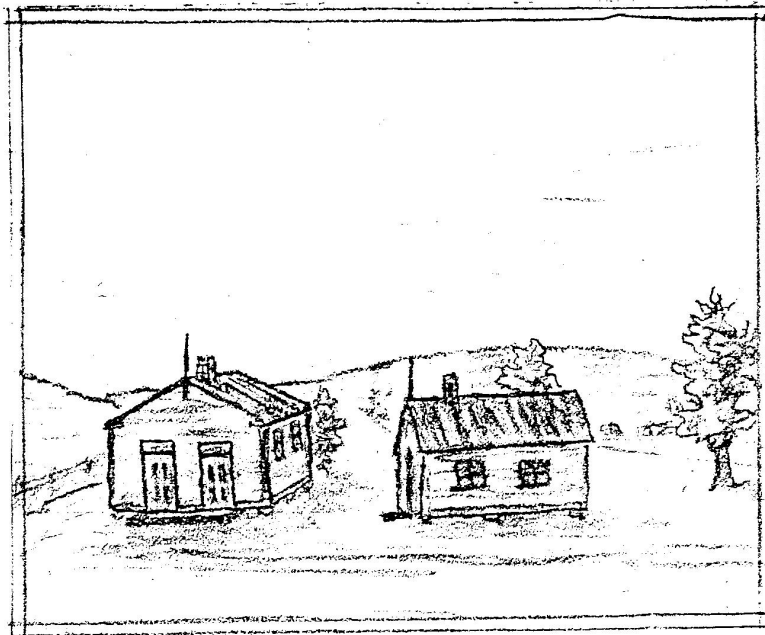
Mr. Poetker started his shoe making in this house. However, in 1883, he purchased the two lots across the street for his business. Here he tanned the hides and made and repaired shoes and made leather goods in the shop that he built, directly across from his home.

The Poetker family continued the shoemaking trade until the turn of the century. With the coming of factory made shoes, the old shoemakers had to be content with repair work on shoes, harness and other leather goods.

The Shope family was our most recent shoe and leather goods makers and repairers. Frank (Slim) Shope started in the family blacksmith shop. His son, Marshall, continued the trade first in a small shop on Webb Street on lot 34 and now owns the shop on the corner of Webb and Tyrell.

1835

1859



1882

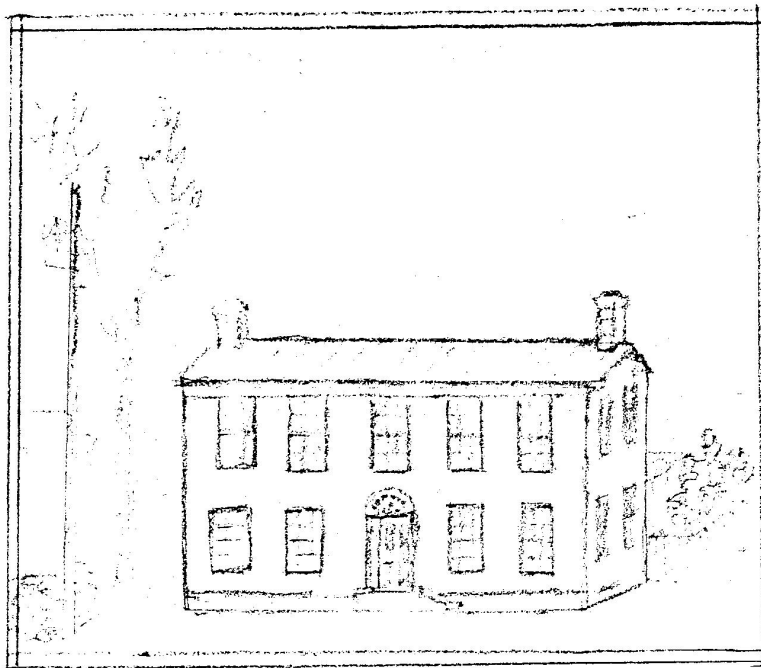
THE SECOND AND THIRD SCHOOL BUILDINGS in South Webster were located on what is now the corner of Tyrrell and Wood Streets. The second school building was built before Webster was ever platted. It replaced the first old log school building that stood on what is now the Arnold McCoy farm.

The third building was built beside the second building in 1859 for a cost of \$380. These two buildings accommodated the students of School District 2, until 1882 when a large two room building was built on Market Street.

These two buildings were sold shortly after 1882. Morgan Davis bought the older building for \$6 and tore it down for lumber. John Lummus bought the 1859 building for \$200 and later sold it to Bloom Township.

It is still used by the Township Trustees for their meetings and as a voting place for Bloom A precinct voters.

1858



1919

SOUTH WEBSTER'S ONLY HOTEL was built around 1858 by Dr. William A. Watts, who died in 1891 at the age of 78. It was built for his home and later was used for a hotel, as it was rather a large house. The front part, a two story section, housed the sleeping rooms and the one story rear part housed the kitchen and dining room.

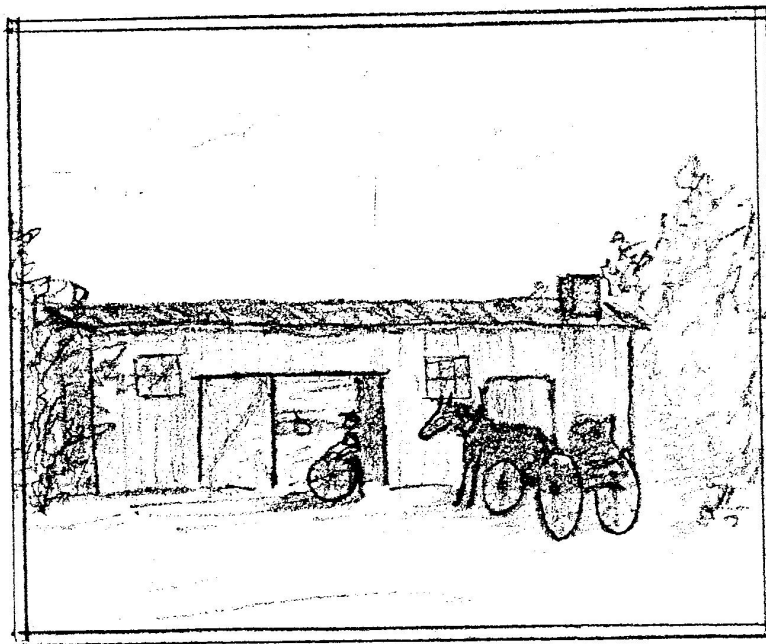
It was used regularly by traveling salesmen and other business men who had to lay over in Webster from time to time.

When South Webster became a village in 1887, J.W. Blair was proprietor. He was followed in the late 1890s by James Shope, the blacksmith, who had a wife and eight children. His grandson, Marshall, wondered where the guests stayed.

The official name of this hotel was CENTRAL HOUSE, but like most hotels it was given several nick names by the many residents who patronized it over the years.

With the coming of the automobile and faster travel between cities, the need for hotels in smaller towns declined. The old CENTRAL HOUSE faded out of existence and was torn down in 1919.

1907



1957

THE SHOPE BLACKSMITH SHOP in South Webster was only one, in a long history of the Shopes and blacksmithing. The first Shope to blacksmith in the village was James Shope, who came to South Webster from Bloom Switch in the 1890s and practiced in an old shop where the Hagen Insurance building now stands.

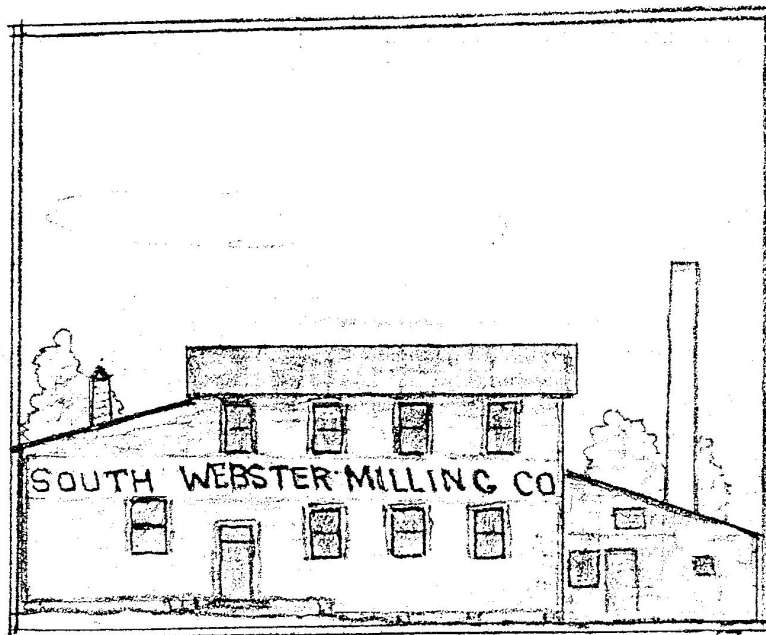
In 1907, at the age of 51 James built his own shop. It was in this shop that his three sons John, Edward and Frank, learned the trade. John blacksmithed in New Boston, Frank became an inspector for Selby Shoe Co. and Ed remained in the shop at South Webster.

Ed bought the shop in 1915. He was known for his skill at the trade. The shop was a favorite hangout for men and boys of the village. It was here they pitched horseshoes, chewed tobacco, cursed and told tall tales.

The old blacksmith shop site was sold to the Fire Department in 1957. Ed died in 1978 at the age of 89.

Many of our senior citizens have fond memories of the Shope Blacksmith Shop, which was a part of our landscape for half a century.

1857



1936

THE SOUTH WEBSTER MILLING COMPANY building was built around 1857 by J. Tisen and J. Bennett. Its first name was Tisen and Bennett and Company. After South Webster became a village, the name was changed.

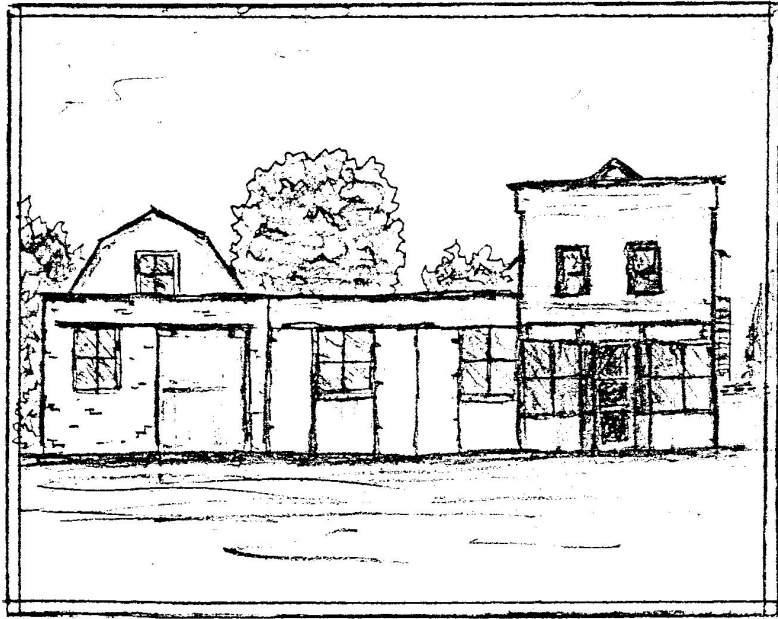
The ownership changed several times down through the years. Iva Aeh's grandfather, I.J. Emery owned it in 1866. The last two owners were W.J. Mossbarger who bought it in 1904 and sold it to H.H. Mittendorf in 1909.

The mill produced flour, corn meal and many different kinds of animal feeds. During World War 1 this mill produced a carload of flour a day, which was shipped out on the railroad nearby.

The old mill stayed in operation until the early 1920s. It was torn down in 1936. One can still see the old foundation on Clingman Street, near the Jerod Hagen home.

Before our water system was put in for South Webster, the fire department used the old mill well for water. This well had supplied water for the mill's steam engine for over 70 years. Like the old mill, it too has disappeared from the scene.

1911



1961

THE F.H. SIMMERING building that stood on the NE corner of McDonald and Clingman street was started in 1911 when Fred's dad, William, built the 33 x 60 store building with a lodge hall overhead. As business grew, shortly after WWI, a hardware was added on the north side of this two story structure.

With the coming of the twenties, the automobile was becoming common in South Webster. In 1922 Fred applied for and got the Ford Agency. He built a brick garage adjacent to the store and hardware. This was the first car agency in our village.

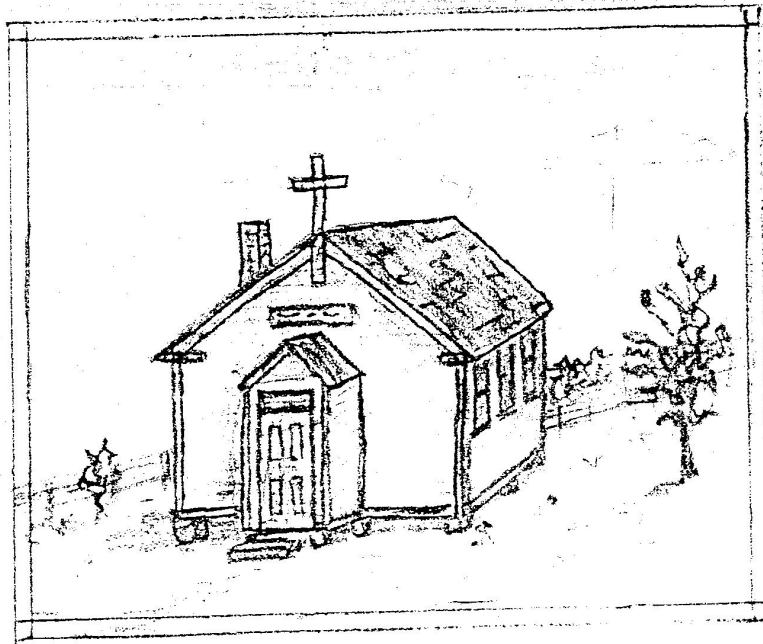
This was a busy corner during the twenties and remained so until 1923 when Fred built the large Ford building on the NW corner of Jackson and Main streets.

The volume of business outgrew the original grocery and hardware building, so in 1936 Fred built the large brick structure on Jackson street adjacent to the Ford Agency.

For a time, 1946 to 1955, the old store building was the home of the Z and D restaurant, but in 1961 it was torn down, all except the original Ford garage portion.

You can still see today the foundation of the grocery and hardware portion and all of the original Ford Garage.

1853



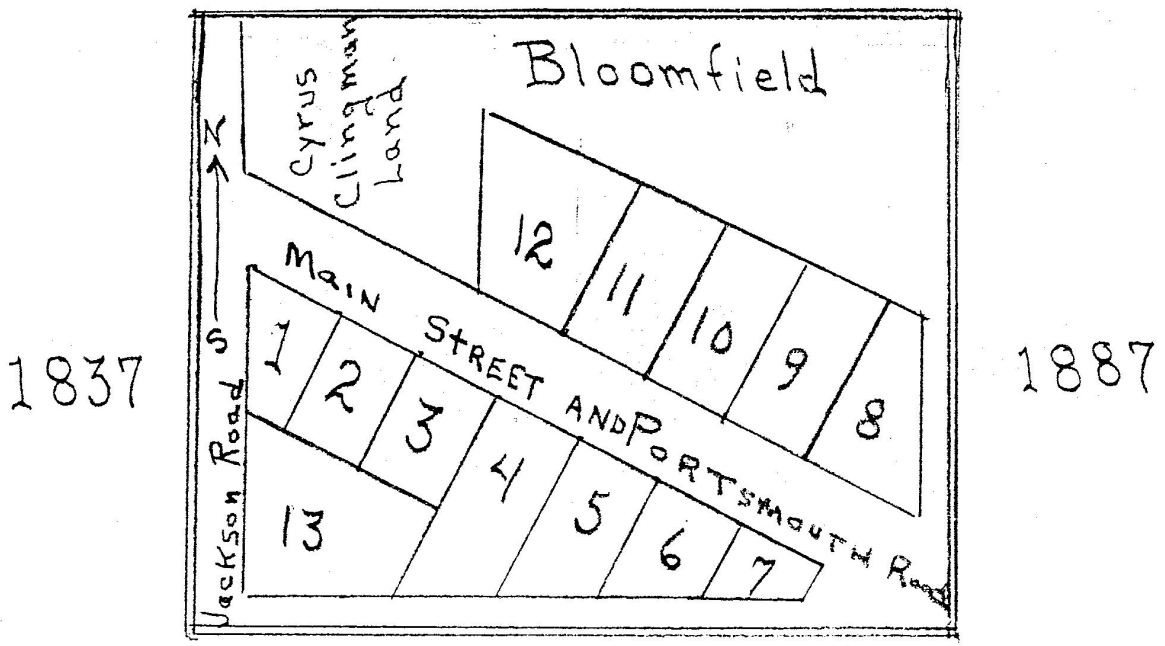
1892

THE FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH in our village, was built on Lot 7 in Bloomfield in 1853. It was a simple, small structure and was one of several on the circuit of Rev. W.J. Bussinger.

As time went on, the congregation grew until South Webster had its own M.E. minister.

In 1892 a new church was built on lot 49 (the present site of the United Methodist Church). This church stood until 1932 when it was destroyed by fire.

The church was rebuilt the same year and the 1932 Christmas Eve service drew a capacity audience. Several additions and improvements have been made in the past 55 years to bring it up to the fine building it is today.



THE FIRST LOTS PLATTED IN BLOOM TWP. were lots laid out in 1837 by Gilbert Bennett on the old Portsmouth and Gallipolis Road. This settlement was called Bloomfield.

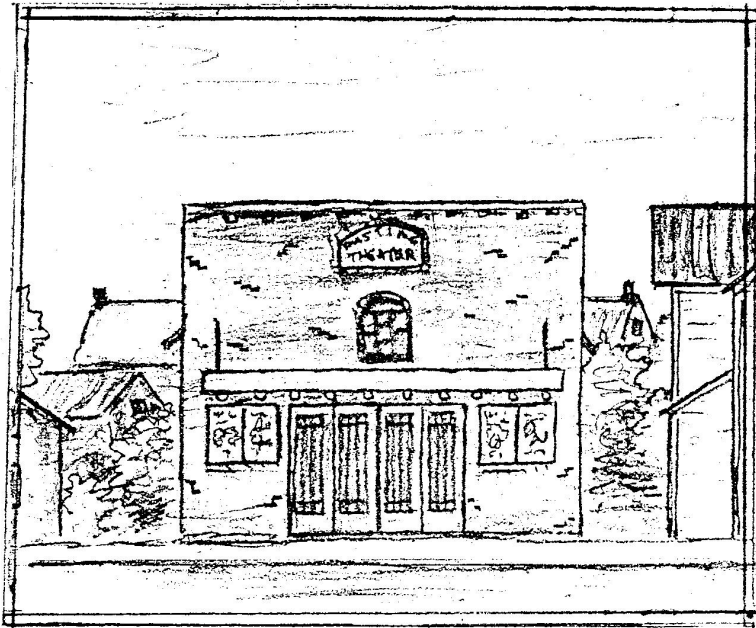
Webster was laid out in 1853. These two unincorporated towns remained until 1887, when they were both incorporated into the village of South Webster.

The first Post office in this area was called IRON FURNACE. It was established January 31, 1833. John Clingman was the first postmaster and his salary was \$300 a year. He was also the first blacksmith. It is safe to say that he operated the post office in his blacksmith shop, as there were probably only around 500 people in the whole township at this time and little mail to handle.

The location of the first post office is not known at this time, but it is believed it was in the Bloomfield area, as the Clingman farm was adjacent to Bloomfield. Also, when Bloomfield was laid out in 1837, Cyrus Clingman, the second postmaster, owned the land where the Chevrolet garage now stands.

The post office for the area carried the name of Iron Furnace until after South Webster was made a village. Asaph McCall was postmaster at the time and in March 1888 had the name changed to South Webster.

1923



THE PASTIME THEATER on McDonald street brings fond memories to most of our middle age and older citizens. Built in 1923 by P.W. Johnson and Harmon Simmering and operated on electric produced by a generator which was owned by Harmon Simmering, it was the first building to use electricity in the village.

The first of the old silent movies was shown in April 1923. Admission was 25¢ for adults and 10¢ for those under 12. The theater was packed and people waited outside to get in.

Guy Newell and Russell Poetker, after being taught by Guiford Riley, operated the projector. Hazel Poetker played background music on the player piano. Later on, Elizabeth Simmering helped with the music.

The old silent movies lasted until the early thirties. For a while the old building was used to house the fire truck. It had the first siren in Webster on its roof.

In 1936 Floyd Hagen opened the old theater with talkies. Stewart (Mike) Johnson bought him out in 1937. Mike and his wife, Marie, operated the theater for twenty years. By 1957 drive-in movies were the rage. The old theater closed that year, but her memories will live as long as her last patron breathes the sweet air of this planet.

1880



1932

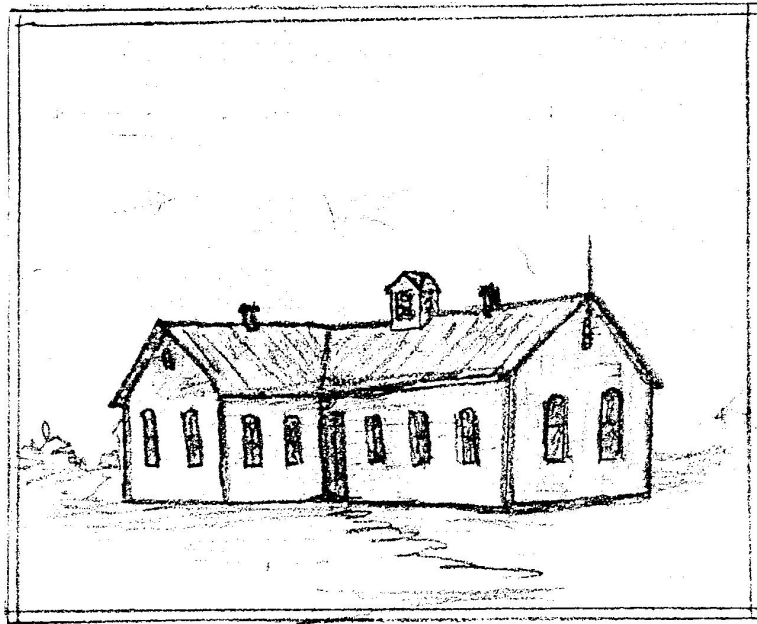
THE WEBSTER GERMAN LUTHERAN CHURCH was organized in the Fall of 1879. The next year, 1880, a fine church was built on Bennett street. The first pastor was Rev. T.H. Yeager. Most of the German people of the village spoke the German language, so during the church's early days, duplicate Sunday services were held, one in German and one in English.

Most of the Germans in our village came over in the mid-1800s. Many of them sent back to Germany for their brides, and they were a close knit group, holding on to their old ways and marrying within the German nationality. During this period, the German Lutheran Church was active.

As the second and third generations grew into adulthood, and with the breaking away from some of the old German ways, German marriage to outsiders became common. By the early 1900s the old church was inactive.

After the German Lutheran quit using the church building, it was used for a while by The Church of God and the Methodist Youth Group. But on June 11, 1932 this beautiful old structure was taken from our scene by the fire. Like the old ways of the early Germans, it is gone forever.

1882



1930

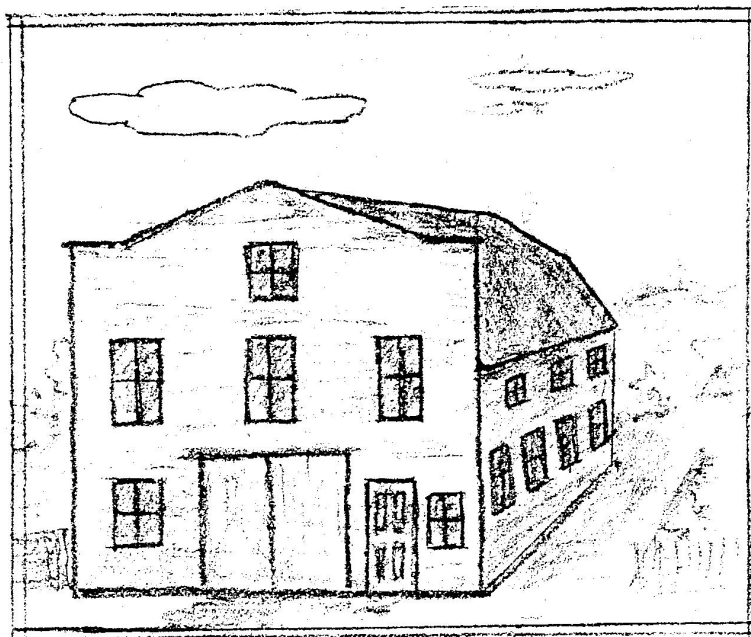
THE FIRST HIGH SCHOOL program for Bloom Twp. was a two year program started in 1911 in the South Webster School building on Market Street. The first graduates (class of 1913) were: John Cullum, Walter Heller, Blanche Jackson, Clarence Kuhner, Harry Martin and N.B. Potts.

This building was built in 1882 and replaced the two older buildings on Tyrrell Street. It started as a large two room wood building, but over the years, two more rooms were added, so by 1911 it was a four room building.

High School continued in this building until the first brick High School was built in 1917. This old wood building continued to be used for the lower six grades until January 1925, when the new brick grade building was finished.

The old wooden building was vacant from 1925 until 1930, when it was sold to Edward Prosch and was torn down. The lumber was used to build two houses, facing Bennett Street, on the old school lot. These houses today are owned by Lonzo Estep and Bill Masters.

1910



1957

THE LIVERY STABLE on Market Street was built by John Gabler around 1910. This was before the automobile came on the scene in South Webster. The livery stable was like car rentals of today. A person could go to the livery stable and rent a horse, horse and buggy, or even a team and wagon to take care of his business in the area.

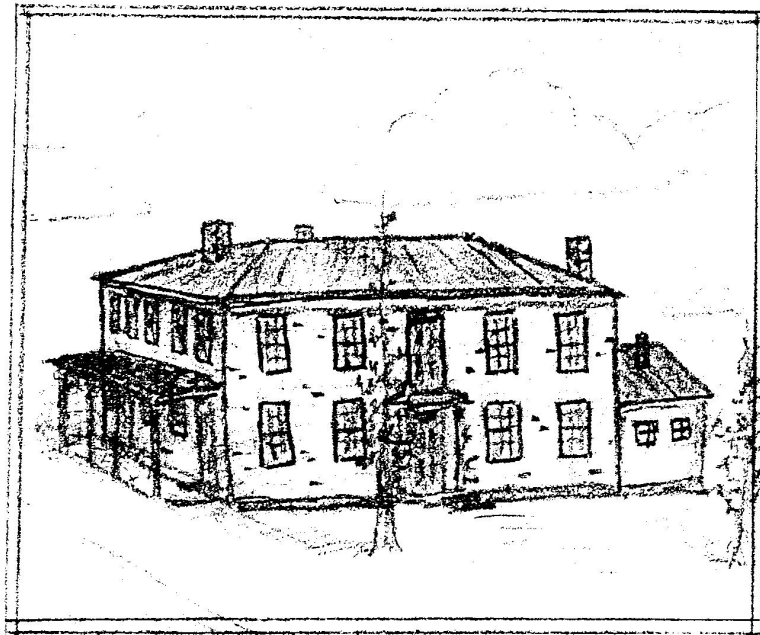
Many traveling salesmen came to town by train and rented a horse and buggy to contact businesses in the area. Like the small town hotel, the livery stable passed out of existence with the coming of the automobile.

Doc Stevens owned the stable in 1923. He removed the bracing so the boys could play basketball in the loft. Frank Lair, mayor and J.P. practiced law in the old building.

During the 1930s and 40s, Wilbur (Bill) Newell used it for his horse trading business.

Paul Hagen bought it in 1949 and used it to raise chickens. He later moved his operation to his farm, and the old building was torn down in 1957.

1830



1972

THE STAGE COACH STOP for this area was the old brick house that stood where the bank parking lot is now located.

It was probably built in the 1830s by Henry Richart, as he owned all of the land on the east side of what is now Jackson Street from Sugar Camp, south to the corporation line. He was the one who sold Gilbert Bennett the land to lay out Bloomfield in 1837.

It probably ceased to be a stage stop after the railroad came through in 1853.

It was better known in later years as the Mittendorf House. It was in the Mittendorf family from 1905 until 1972, when it was razed for the Bank building. H.H. Mittendorf, a justice of peace held many court sessions in the old house. These sessions were always open to the public, which sometimes filled the chambers and overflowed to the porch and out into the yard.