

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

Boone County Roads Toll and Otherwise

By

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Boone County Roads (Toll and Otherwise)

Roads have been a problem in Boone County since its formation in 1799. The first indictment in newly-formed Boone Circuit Court (July 1, 1805) was against Dicky Berkshire, surveyor of the road from Livingston's Landing on the Ohio passing Garnett's mill to where the road leaves Middle Creek, "for failing to keep the same in good repair."

Boone was atypical — an agricultural county with a number of towns, none of which were dominant. Not until 1930 did any town reach a population of a thousand. Initially, Petersburg on the Ohio was the most populous. By 1870 Florence, a cross-roads on the Covington and Lexington Turnpike had become somewhat larger. By 1890 Walton, served by two railroads as well as the turnpike, had become the largest.

The citizens and officials of Boone County made frequent use of the General Assembly for enactment of special and local laws, especially those affecting roads. Such measures reflect the concerns at the time of enactment, even though they were not always carried out. Such acts were prohibited by the 1892 Constitution.

The first specific mention of Boone County roads was in Chapter DIII December 11, 1822:

"It shall be the duty of the county courts of Boone, Campbell and Mason to levy as much on said counties as will be sufficient for the purchase of tools and instruments as said courts shall consider necessary to keep in good condition the roads in said counties."

That same year a general law exempted males of 50 and over from the requirement to work on roads, streets and alleys.

The completion of the Covington and Lexington toll road through Florence and Walton stimulated the authorization of others, some connecting. Some were:

√ A "state road from Landing to intersect Covington and Lexington turnpike near the Grant County line. (1835)

√ Burlington Turnpike Road from Porter's Ferry on the Ohio opposite Lawrenceburg, Ind., through Burlington to a point on the Covington and Lexington turnpike. (1836)

√ Burlington and Florence Turnpike. (1837)

√ Covington and Burlington Turnpike, by way of mouth of Dry Creek. (1837) (An alternative route to Covington along the Ohio.)

A group of citizens would become interested in a better road between two towns or areas. They might be interested in a profitable enterprise; or they might be concerned about the convenience and prosperity that a better road would contribute to themselves and their communities.

A charter would be secured from the legisla-

ture. Subscriptions for stock would be solicited at various places. When a certain percentage had been subscribed, they would elect officers and begin construction. They could begin the collection of tolls after the completion of a few miles to specifications.

Some roads failed to sell sufficient stock to start operations. For some that did, it might be years before completion of the road.

The Panic of 1837 spawned the first great depression in this country, lasting seven years. Wholesale prices in Cincinnati, the primary market for the area, were cut in half by 1842. There was little more toll road activity until 1847.

By that year the depression had ended, farm prices had recovered and interest in better roads was awakening. The county's white population rose from 7824 in 1840 to 9373 in 1860.

The county road system, financed by a 3 cent ad valorem tax and a poll tax, plus the requirement that citizens work on the roads was inadequate. Like residents of many other counties in the region, the citizens of Boone County apparently preferred to finance better roads with user fees rather than with increased taxes. Turnpike authorization accelerated:

1847. Burlington-Florence. A new charter. Boone Turnpike. Florence-Union-Carlton Ferry

1848 Florence-Anderson Ferry.

1849 Burlington-Dry Creek (on to Covington)
Petersburg-Burlington
Rough and Ready. Woolper Creek-Taylorport-Constance

Hamilton-New Lancaster. Hamilton-Mud Lick-Covington & Lexington
1850 Piatt's Ferry. Opposite Lawrenceburg to Petersburg and Burlington. Union. Florence-beyond Union. Verona. Verona-Covington and Lexington

Mitchellsville-Dry Creek. Petersburg and Burlington Tp to Dry Creek.
1851 Farmers. Burlington-Belleview. Napoleon (Gallatin County) to Big Bone Lick.

Union-Beaver

1852 Hamilton-Union. Hamilton-Big Bone-Union Tp
Peoples. Burlington to Mitchellsville and Dry Creek Tp
Hamilton. (Apparently same as Hamilton-Union)

While the turnpike companies were attempting to take over the more travelled, and potentially profitable, roads, the county government was concerned with maintaining the lesser ones. The first of a long series of Boone County road acts was passed

January 28, 1848 (Chapter 140). It was modelled after a Trimble County law, providing for a 3 cent ad valorem tax and a poll tax of \$1.50. The county was to be laid off in road districts.

There were Boone County road acts in 1850, 1851, 1854, 1856, 1858, and 1859. Most of the changes were minor.

The 1854 Act (Chapter 170) might be considered typical. It raised the number of districts from 20 to 50 with an overseer for each. Tax raised from 2 cent to 3 cents; poll tax of \$1.50 on white males between 16 and 50 and on male slaves and free males of color over 16. Overseers should expend funds as follows: day labor 75 cents; for team, plow and plowman, \$1.75; for team, wagon and driver \$2.25. Overseer to receive \$1 a day but not over \$8 in one year.

The 1859 Act had a tax of 2 cents with a poll tax of \$1.50 on white and 50 cents on black. Divided into 30 districts. Work to be done mostly in April-July each year.

From 1854 until 1880 there were at least 16 more turnpikes authorized.

- 1854 Gunpowder-Buffalo Hill. Florence-Union Tp toward Big Bone
- 1856 Union-Richwood. Union to to Beaver
Buffalo-Hamilton
Union-Big Bone. Union and Burlington Rd-Big Bone Church-Hamilton
- 1858 North Bend. Sand Hill to Mitchellsville and Dry Creek TP
North Bend and Woolper,
Ohio River-Francisville-Taylorport- Constance
- 1860 Verona-Morning View (Kenton County)
- 1865 Independence (Kenton County)-Big Bone. Independence-Richwood Church-Beaver-Big Bone
Beaver Lick-Verona
- 1866 Lawrenceburg Ferry-Bullittsville. Connects with Burlington and Petersburg.
- 1869 Burlington-Hebron. Burlington to intersect turnpike at Hebron.
- 1870 Florence-Independence. Covington and Lexington (gate 3)-Independence
- 1872 Ludlow-Florence. Florence to intersect turnpike between Anderson Ferry and Ludlow.
- 1876 Mineola-Anderson Ferry. William Walton's gate to turnpike near Anderson F.
- 1880 Woolper. Connecting Burlington-Belleview and Burlington-Petersburg roads.

Whitehaven-Richwood. Beaver-Union tp to Beaver-Richwood near Richwood Church.

By this time the county's system of toll roads was essentially complete. After numerous delays every town was served by turnpikes.

Boone had become a mature rural county. The population of 11,996 was a record. The economy was prospering. Mail service had developed into the following:

- Petersburg, twice a day by boat.
- Hamilton and Grant, daily by boat.
- Florence and Burlington, daily by stage from Covington
- Walton and Verona, daily by train.
- Hebron and Bullittsville, three times a week by stage from Covington
- Beaver, three times a week from Walton
- Union, three times a week from Florence.
- Additional post offices would be established before yielding to rural free delivery after the turn of the century.

There appears to have been as many as 30 toll house gates in the county. There were two between the following towns: Florence and Burlington; Florence and Union; Florence and Walton; Florence and Anderson Ferry; Burlington and Belleview; Burlington and Petersburg; Hebron and Gainesville (Idlewild); Woolper, connecting Petersburg and Belleview. There were single gates on other roads. Some would be built in later years. For example, the Union and Hathaway in 1913.

A good example of the constricting influence of toll roads would be the town of Florence. It was ringed by five toll gates. One could maneuver freely in an area some two miles in diameter, but to go outside one had to pass a gate.

1. To go to Erlanger with its railroad one encountered a toll gate about a half mile into Kenton County. If one went on into Covington, there was another.

2. To go toward Lexington one encountered a toll gate about two miles south of Florence and another north of Walton. On to Lexington there would be 13 more.

3. To go to Union one passed the first gate about a mile and a quarter out and a second one before Union.

4. To go to Burlington one had to pass gates near each end of the trip.

5. To go to Constance to take Anderson Ferry to Ohio or the turnpike toward Covington one toll gate about a mile from Florence with another before the river. There were two more on the Covington and Dry Creek Turnpike into Covington.

The 1882 General Assembly enacted three road laws affecting Boone County only - Chapters 664, 1025 and 1295.

Union and Richwood Turnpike (Union and Beaver)

A Union and Beaver Turnpike was chartered in 1851. It may not have become operative.

The Union and Richwood Turnpike Company was chartered March 4, 1856, to build an artificial road from Union to Beaver.

Apparently construction took some years. Two bills were passed in 1869. First, to amend the charter to allow the erection of a toll gate before completion of four miles and to collect proportionate tolls at Covington and Lexington Turnpike rates. The second, a month later, allowed collection of tolls before road completed.

Chapter 740 (March 25, 1872) enacted the most detailed rate structure this writer has seen in a statute. (The reason for inclusion of this road). The charter was amended so that they have the right to charge "not exceeding the following rates of toll." Calculations made by the writer)

Per Mile - Cents	1	2	3	4	5
Horse, Mule and Rider	1	1 1/4	1 3/4	2 1/2	3 1/4
Jack, Jennet, Mule,					
Horse led or driven	3/5	3/4	1 1/20	1 1/2	1 19/20
Head of sheep or hogs	1/10	1/8	7/40	1/4	13/40
Head cattle	2/5	1/2	7/10	1	1 3/10
Buggy, Carriage,					
Sleigh-1 horse	2	2 1/2	3 1/2	5	6 1/2
Buggy, Carriage,					
Sleigh-2 horses	3	3 3/4	5 1/4	7 1/2	9 3/4
Jolt Wagon-1 horse	3	3 3/4	5 1/4	7 1/2	9 3/4
Jolt Wagon-2 horses	5	6 1/4	8 3/4	12 1/2	16 1/4
Jolt Wagon-3 horses	6	7 1/2	10 1/2	15	19 1/2
Jolt Wagon-4 horses	7	8 3/4	12 1/4	17 1/2	22 3/4
Jolt Wagon-5 horses	8	10	14	20	26
Jolt Wagon-6 horses	9	11 1/4	15 3/4	22 1/2	29 1/4
Spring Wagon, Cart,					
Dray, 1 horse	3	3 3/4	5 1/4	7 1/2	9 3/4
Spring Wagon, Cart,					
Dray, 2 horses	4	5	7	10	13

Column (1) also applies to persons coming on said turnpike road between Lassings and the Frogtown Road, or John Bakers Lane, or at said points. . .charged one mile of toll.

(2) Persons coming on the turnpike at the intersection of the road leading to Richwood Church with the turnpike. . .one and one-fourth mile of toll.

(3) Persons coming on the turnpike at McAtees or Mrs. Emily Utz's house . . .one and three-quarters mile of toll.

(4) Persons coming on the turnpike at R.D. Hedges' gate, or between that point and Mrs. Emily Utz's farm . . .two and one-half miles of toll.

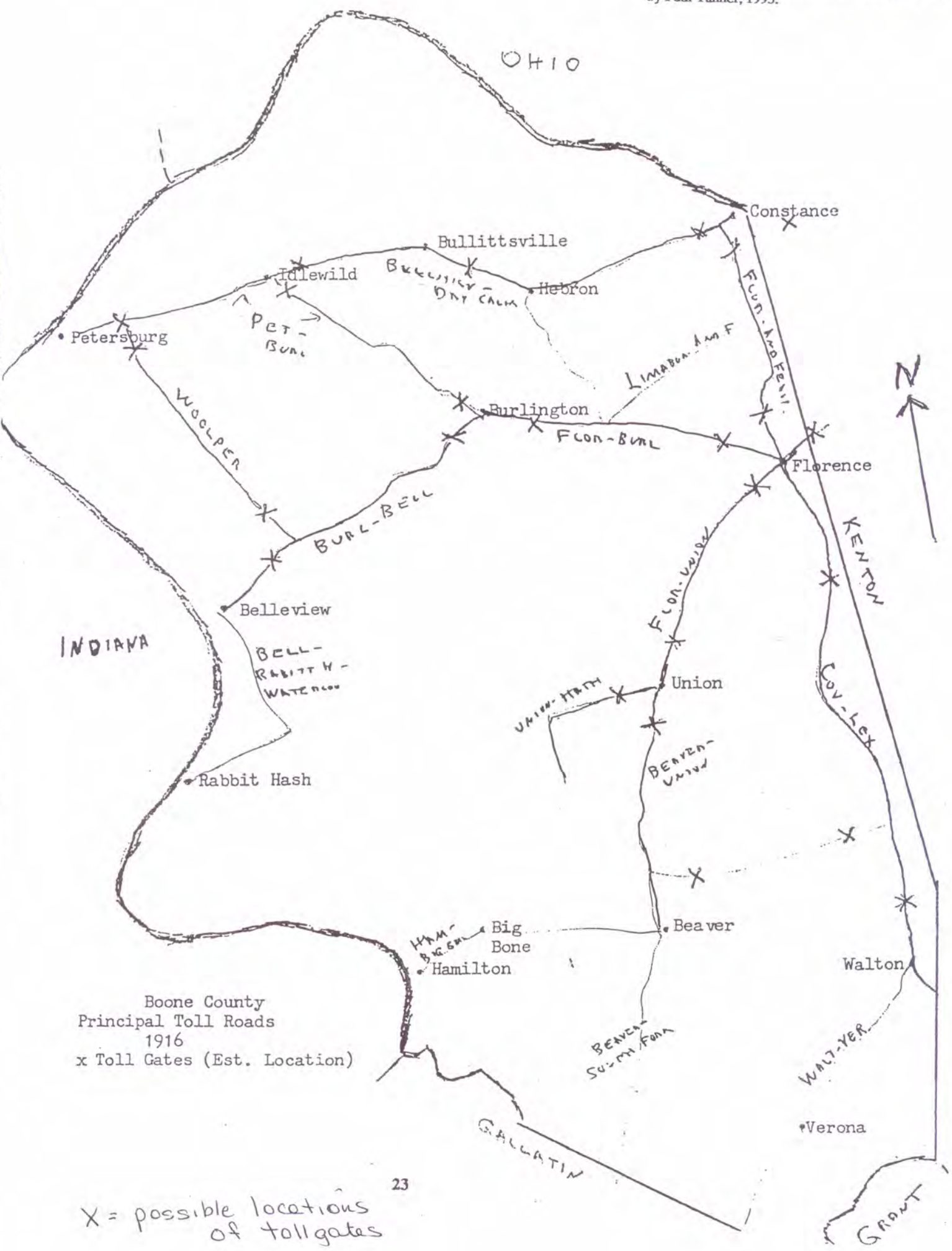
(5) Persons coming on the turnpike at F. Dickey's will be charged three and one-quarter miles of toll.

They may have had only the one toll gate near Union with tolls being determined by distance therefrom. We wonder how they handled all the fractions; how long the rates were followed.

March 24, 1873 (Chapter 232) the route was amended to read "From town of Union; thence to pass land to F. Dickey to Geo. Buckholz farm to a point in road from Union to Beaver in front of Buckholz's house." Beaver was deleted as a terminus.

The 1884 Atlas designated this road as being the Union and Beaver Lick.

September 21, 1915, the county took over the "Beaver and Union Turnpike", paying \$1 per perch for unspread rock. The "Richwood and Beaver" road was taken over the same day.



Boone County
Principal Toll Roads
1916
x Toll Gates (Est. Location)

x = possible locations of toll gates

A Short Bibliography of Boone Toll Roads

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