

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

Boone County – Boom County

By

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"Thar's gold in them thar hills" - and valleys, too. If I were writing a news article about the industrial and residential potential of Boone County, that would be my lead line. For truly, in considering the ultimate possibilities for county development, that would be a true statement.

An aura of historical romanticism has been built around Boone County's past. Even the members of this eminent historical society, in presenting papers on some past event or about a leading pioneer family, or some great man, or even a hamlet or village, have uncovered by their brilliant word pictures, facts which have thrilled their hearers, and even their readers, thousands of miles away.

For one hundred and fifty years Boone County has been a land unto itself, and most persons, including the weary traveler in the early days, knew only that the Lexington Pike passed by the eastern edge of the county, and that Covington and Cincinnati lay dead ahead. How people lived, who they were, and what occurred in the county to the west of the old pike, seemingly aroused no curiosity.

At the turn of the century, John Uri Lloyd, who attained eminence

in Cincinnati as a manufacturing chemist, started writing novels about Boone County - partly historical and partly fictional, and people began to discover that Boone County was a natural rural paradise - within a stone's throw of Cincinnati. They had been coming down to Big Bone Springs from time to time after the close of the Civil War, but when the place passed the peak of its popularity, most persons lost all interest.

From a rural standpoint Boone County's area consists of 251 square miles, or approximately 160,000 acres. It has a total average farm crop value of approximately \$10 million, derived from two thousand acres of tobacco, twelve thousand acres of corn, and twenty thousand acres of hay. Livestock and dairy production brings in an additional four million dollars.

When the airport was constructed, Boone County really began to become "Boone" County, due to constant newspaper publicity, and the tide was turned. The Airport's annual payroll now is in excess of \$1,250,000.

And so Boone County became a magnet for city folk seeking the fresh air of the country. Attracted by its reputation for good government, newcomers found that this reputation was further enhanced by

the attitude of the native Boone Countians. Even during the now historic Kefauver investigation, Boone County boasted to the world that here there was "no gambling, no vice, no corruption, that it had honest, fearless public officials, reasonable taxes, equitable property assessments, excellent schools, a county-wide system of good roads, churches of all denominations, and friendly, hospitable people.

Boone County on many occasions has been lauded to the skies by Circuit Judge Ward Yager. The attitude of Boone County's citizenry with respect to law enforcement has been acclaimed the "new plus ultra" in the highest ideals of county government.

Let's compare a few figures: In 1939, there were only 1,586 autos listed with the county tax commissioner, having a total value of only \$132,020. In 1949, there were 3,580 automobiles, valued at \$1,416,525, while in 1954, there were 6,005 automobiles, valued at \$1,986,400.

Consider real estate values for example. The total real estate in 1939 had a value of \$8,285,034. In 1954, the value of all real estate in the county had grown to \$18,382,340. In 1955, the total taxable property in Boone County had further increased to \$3,100,000, which, in fact, represents only about 50 percent of its market value.

In fact, more than \$5,000,000 worth of new homes were constructed in Boone County in 1954.

These figures indicate how the rural picture is changing. In fact, history has been made, and tonight, it still is being made. One hundred years ago about 70 percent of the population was engaged in farming. Today only twelve out of every one hundred persons in the United States produce food on farms. Actually, it is these twelve who have actually produced, through scientific methods, advances in chemistry, plus ultra-modern farm machinery, more food and fibre than the country knows what to do with.

But this picture will change, for more babies are being born now, than ever before, and the population of the United States will soon reach the staggering figure of 200 million. And while it staggers us, let us remember that China boasts of more than 500 million, with India following with some 400 million people.

But with scientific advances in agriculture being so rapid it is quite likely that the twelve persons now producing food on farms for every one hundred persons will be reduced by half within the next twenty years.

So you see, with every tick of the clock, that history is being

made, and history sets the pattern for the future.

With less land being used for agriculture, and still fewer persons, except those actually engaged in the so-called "subsistence" farming, remaining on the land, it must be industry to which the county must turn to take up the slack, and "Boom" County can furnish hundreds of sites ideally situated for industry, both light and heavy.

Hundreds of acres of choice industrial sites can be found along U. S. 25, which parallels the Southern Railway between Florence and Walton.

The town of Walton, which boasts of two railroads, the Southern and the Louisville and Nashville, is the gateway to both the North and the South, depending in which direction you are traveling.

Then, "Boom" County has thousands of acres of what is termed "second bottoms" land along the Ohio River from Constance to Hamilton's Landing, which would make ideal sites for heavy industry when the Markland Dam is constructed. With a series of high-level dams along the Ohio River which would guarantee a minimum channel depth of 25 feet at low water, we will be able to make shipments all over the world without transferring cargo. The Ohio Valley will, indeed, become the Ruhr of America, and Boone County should begin to look alive to

its potentialities in this respect.

Coal, raw material, everything needed for heavy industry can be floated up or down the Ohio for this purpose. In fact, I am reliably informed that certain Cincinnati entrepreneurs have been taking options on Boone County land in certain areas with the idea of prospecting for natural gas. It is a well known fact that several small gas wells now exist in the county, but it is believed that deep test borings will locate a much vaster field.

If it becomes necessary to construct additional railroad facilities to serve such proposed heavy industry, I have been assured by a competent engineer that it would be entirely feasible to construct a railroad spur from Walton to the Eastbend bottoms - a distance of not more than 8 miles.

I am wondering if anyone has ever thought of what would happen to our metropolitan water supply in the event of contamination by reason of germ warfare or an atomic attack?

"Boom" County has the answer. From deep wells, driven anywhere in the Ohio River bottoms from Taylorsport to Eastbend, Boone County could furnish a daily supply of 100 million gallons of pure, germ-free water from wells three hundred feet underground, for drinking and

sanitation purposes. It would take only one 16-inch diameter well to produce a minimum of one million gallons daily.

I wonder how many persons know that within three miles of Burlington at the Middle Creek bluffs, near Commissary road there are springs which could be developed to supply a million gallons a day of pure, clear, limestone water, for use of nearby municipalities. I am surprised that a distiller has not already "latched" on to this project.

Here is my picture of the industrial development of Boone County. Industries along U. S. 25 between Florence and Walton, on the east side of the county. Heavy industry along the Ohio River, all the way from Taylorsport to Hamilton's landing. And skirting on the inside of such industrial development, in the form of a giant circle, an orderly, well-planned residence zone, the focal point in the middle to be the giant 1,000 acre lake on Gunpowder Creek, as proposed last year by Noel Walton, county engineer.

Such a lake could well furnish recreation, swimming, boating and relaxation to all Boone County residents, as well as their suddenly discovered half million "friends." Such a lake would add a lot to the already good advantages in establishing industries in Boone County by supplying additional water facilities.

There are other advantages in establishing industrial sites in Boone County. It is the labor supply. Do you know that thousands of skilled workers commute daily from Boone and adjacent counties to Cincinnati? There isn't a one of them who would be willing to swap a thirty to fifty mile round trip daily to one of ten miles, even at slightly less pay. Have you ever thought of the courage it takes to travel thirty miles to work on a zero morning on icy roads?

I wonder how many of you know that in Burlington we have a packing plant employing 56 persons, which turns out frozen chicken pies, beef pies, swiss steak dinners, processed beef steaks and frozen fruit pies - the kind you see advertised over television, or see in the various food markets throughout the tri-state area? The most famous brand names in America have their products prepared in this plant in Burlington, which soon will be turning out 50,000 frozen pies in one eight-hour shift.

I wonder, too, if you know that because of the steady, dependable supply of interested, conscientious workers, that this plant is enlarging its facilities to double capacity? That's "Boom" County for you!

Think of all the cultural advantages that lie adjacent to Boom

County! The University of Cincinnati with its medical school and allied scientific centers, Xavier University, Chase College, Institutum Divi Thomae, University of Kentucky's northern extension center, Villa Madonna College, Cincinnati College and Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati Art Academy, Summer Opera, Taft Museum, Cincinnati Natural History Museum, Baker-Hunt Foundation, to name only a few.

And I have this answer to those who would protest against industry locating here. How do you think that we continue to build schools without increasing the tax rate? It is because of the taxes that such industries, now located here, pay into the county treasury. Do you realize that the two pipe lines which run through the county pay taxes? and the railroads? and the high-tension lines to the Pike County, Ohio atomic plant? Do you know that even barges and towboats paying the Ohio River pay taxes into the county, and that last year the Boone County School system received approximately \$5,000 in such taxes from such barges and towboats? Do you know that still more schools are planned for the county, to be built in part from funds derived from these "pot of gold" sources of tax revenue? So let's don't take pot shots at the goose that laid the golden egg!

How are we going to further this idea of Boom County? We need

a Chamber of Commerce, dedicated to extolling Boone County's virtues. We should make every Boone County resident a member, at a nominal annual membership fee. We should establish a County Planning and Zoning Commission for orderly residential and industrial development. We should begin to think about establishing a hospital, however small, for Boone County. If Campbell County can do it, if Owen County can do it, then "Boom"County ought to be able to do it twice as fast.

All of us ought to keep the fires fanned constantly. We might even adopt a standardized greeting on seeing each other on the street. Instead of saying "hello," perhaps we could, in our enthusiasm, say "Boom-Boom!"

I have been assured by one of Northern Kentucky's leading merchants that a one-stop shopping center is planned for Florence or its immediate vicinity, construction to start as soon as the new access highway is completed.

It takes industry just a little while to awaken to the advantages of establishing in a community. In the meantime, new home construction will continue to expand in Boom County. I am willing to make the prediction that new construction in Boom County will approximate eight million dollars during 1955.