

# Never head of Slickville?

## It once was a thriving community



**Bill  
SPURGEON**

### Our Neighborhood

That's what my Harrison Township authority, Gene S. McCreery, now of Muncie, once told me it was called.

Slickville was a thriving community more than a century ago, located almost on the Madison County line along what is now Delaware County Road 650-N. There were several houses and other structures, all gone now, and like many such hamlets in the 1880s, there were visions of a bright future.

Much of that part of East Central Indiana was swampy, and when early settlers decided to farm it,

They're planning a celebration next week at Slickville.

And it's a sure bet there won't be anyone there who now calls it home, because Slickville belongs to the past.

That won't stop some folks who have roots in the neighborhood from celebrating its history. At 2 p.m. Sept. 7, an Indiana historical marker will be unveiled there.

Don't know it as Slickville? Maybe you know Lickskillet.

drainage was necessary.

Among the settlers were members of the Carter family. An 1887 atlas shows George J. Carter with 160 acres along what is now County Road 925 West, northeast of the Slickville site. One of his descendants, Mara Carter, was a young writer for *The Muncie Evening Press* in 1935 when she wrote about Slickville and Manassa Myers and his sons, owners of the tile works.

The tile works is the reason for the historical marker that's to be unveiled Sept. 7. The marker was proposed by Sarah Ann Voyles, who lives with her husband Roger in Alexandria, is a great-granddaughter of Manassa Myers and was born and raised in southwestern Harrison Township.

Working with the Indiana Historical Bureau on the marker, she also worked with Gordon Carter, now owner of the tile works site, to determine where it will be erected. He is Mara Carter's younger brother, and he told me that his sister died while still young, more than 50 years ago. Mara and Gordon were offspring of Urba Carter, now deceased, an innovative farmer and livestock-raiser more than a generation ago.

When I visited the Carter home a couple of weeks ago, Gordon told me that it was still possible at some times of the year to see where the kilns of the tile works had stood, and it's there that the marker will be erected — on the south side of County Road 650-N, just east of the Delaware-Madison County line.

The works opened in 1883. Western Harrison and most of Washington Township were quite swampy and there was a good market for the clay tile turned out by the Myerses — Manassa and sons Manassa Jr., Monroe, Edward, John and Jesse. There was abundant timber (much of which was cleared out so crops could be planted) and at first the tile kilns were fueled by wood.

In 1887, the year after discovery of natural gas in East Central Indiana, a gas well was drilled and the kilns were converted to that fuel.

The tile works occupied 5 acres, leased by the Myerses from Charles Leeson. It turned out scads of clay drainage tile — 400 rods a day of the standard 4-inch diameter size alone.

The 1887 atlas showed several houses in the area, but no "Slickville" designation. A sawmill to the east on the Carter property was begun in 1887 by Monroe

Myers. According to Mara Carter's article in *The Press*, it once processed a red oak tree from the Thomas Day farm that produced 1,600 feet of lumber.

Leeson built a building for a general store; it was later leased by Herschel Hamilton and Slickville became a neighborhood trading center. There was never a post office. To the west, in Madison County, Hiram Cox ran a blacksmith shop. That building has been moved but is still extant on a nearby farm. A picture of it from more than 85 years ago will appear in *The Album of Yesteryear* in *The Star Press* Sunday. The marker to be unveiled Sept. 7 contains this inscription:

#### Slickville Tile Works

Site of production mill and three beehive kilns, first fueled by wood and then by natural gas, circa 1883-1910, owned & operated by Manassa Myers, Sr., family. Produced drainage tiles (hollow cylinder-shaped sections) from adjacent clay pit for local use. Drainage tiles have been used throughout Indiana to develop and maintain farm land.

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