

WEST JEFFERSON IN DAYS GONE BY

By Charlie Miller

Series 8

OLD STATE ROAD: Also called Ludlow's Road. At the beginning of the 19th century, there was not a single road within the present area that comprises Madison County. Shortly after Ohio became a state, the Legislature of Franklin passed legislation to erect a road from the public square of Franklinton, located on the west bank of the Scioto River, (Columbus) to Springfield. By March of 1804 it had been surveyed as far as Big Darby Creek. The court ordered to open said road 33 feet wide, and to make it passable for loaded wagons.

At best it was a horrible road in wet seasons, stage coaches and wagons often mired hub deep and had to be pried out. In dry seasons it worked fairly well. When Madison County was formed in 1811 out of Franklin, \$175 was allotted to spend on the road in the County. In 1822 the village of New Hampton, forerunner of West Jefferson, was erected along the road.

It entered the County by crossing Big Darby Creek and entered Jefferson Township about half a mile south of the present location of U. S. Route 40. It continued south westerly just before reaching the current Plain City-Georgesville Road, then directly to crossing Little Darby Creek. After crossing the Creek it turned Northwest at 56 ½ degrees west of north and entered New Hampton as Main Street. This is the current Cemetery Road. It then became what is now Frey Ave. Shortly after crossing what is now Fellows Ave. it turned 74 degrees west of north, crossed what is now Main Street and became what is now Taylor Blair Road. It went northwesterly on Blair Rd for a mile or so and then turned west. It stayed a little north of Route 40 and left the Township. The road can be seen in Summerford Township where it is now called "The Old Columbus Road."

The 1819 Kilbourne's Ohio Gazetter listed this.

Miles

Columbus

Franklinton 1

Little Darby Creek 2 (New Hampton)

Deer Creek 9 (Lawrenceville, a little north of present Lafayette)

Pleasant Twp. 6

Springfield 12 *Mail stages run three times weekly on this route.

In 1823, the Neil Stage Line was formed and probably ran on this route. Post Offices in Madison County were: Canaan, Grassy Point, Lawrenceville and London. New Hampton did not have a Post Office until 1830.

During this period of time cattle were annually driven to market in Philadelphia, Detroit and Baltimore. Madison County was noted for its fine breeds of cattle.

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In 1822, New Hampton was erected on this road and from Kilbourne's Gazetteer of 1826 we read: New Hampton, a small regularly laid out village on the west side of Little Darby Creek, 15 miles west of Columbus on the main western road to Springfield.