

## Index of Pages

1. Burket was platted in 1882 by Elias Burket. Mr. & Mrs. Banks first residents in Burket. Lived in Banks Hotel. Post Office established in 1885. Adam Horn first druggist and post master
2. First Doctor, John Heffy, succeeded by Dr. Ensenberger and Dr. Freeman Williams in 1885. Data of saw mills. RR. built 1882
3. Adam Horn's house burned. W. E. Davis bought the drug store. Blacksmith shops. Knott Fuller cabinet maker. Three saloons.
4. Alva Shatto store. Red Men Lodge and dances. Buryanak meat store. Grades and High school. Wayne Powell's restaurant.
5. Burket Fire Department
6. Churches and Bank
7. Creamery. Prices paid for eggs at Davis Store. Lewis Foor.
8. Abraham Sarber induced friends to move to Burket.
9. Benton Sarber born in Kosciusko County. He sawed lumber for the first frame court house in Warsaw, and first business building in Burket. W. E. Davis owned the elevator. Liquid fertilizer building located west of elevator. W. E. Davis was postmaster. Later Clifford Hatfield was postmaster. Mr. Davis who managed his store for 56 years, died in 1940.
10. Tent show in Burket. Hand operated movie.
11. Law and order. Kangaroo court. Burket Detective Asshn. Davis store robbed.
- 12-13 Fourth of July in 1914
- 14 Big fire in Burket
- 15 Denzel Nelson Trucking Company. Wade Powell's tire store. W. G. Davis machine shop in 1941. Sold to Sun Metal in 1960 Sold to Dean Goshert in 1973. New addition to Tip-E-Pak in 1979

This material was  
typed and slightly edited  
by Eula Smith 1979

INTRODUCTION  
Of the  
BEGINNING OF BURKET, AND ITS RESIDENTS.

By Wm. G. Davis, Hialeah, Fla.  
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In 1836 Mr. Jesse Shortridge purchased one hundred sixty acres of land located in the north-west section of Indiana from the United States government. No price of the sale was given on the abstract furnished by the government. The land changed ownership several times. Mr. Shortridge sold the land to Mr. Thomas Leonard on June 7, 1842 for \$400.00, and he to Mr. George Copeland for \$1,300.00. In 1858 Mr. Copland sold the land to Mr. Elias Burket for \$1,315.00. On this land Mr. Burket built his home. This home was not located on a public road.

Before the railroad was built in 1882, a new north road was built on the east side of Burket and extending to Yellow Creek Lake. The only exit from their home to a public road was a lane running east to the angling road south of Warsaw, beginning at the S.W. curve in the road at Palestine, and traveling ~~S.W.~~ through the east side of Fred McSherry woods, and on south on the north side of the Dreisbach property, and ended at the Burket N.S. road.

The entrance to the usable angling road west is one and a quarter miles south of Burket.

Note: The Burket house was well built. I, W.G. Davis purchased it in 1933 and lived there 27 years, until we moved to Florida. The house has never been vacant.

## EARLY HISTORY OF BURKET

Burket was surveyed and platted in the spring of 1882 by Elias Burket. The first improvement in the new town was the saw mill erected by Samuel Banks, completed in the autumn of 1881. He cut the lumber for the first residence, also for the first business house, the drugstore occupied by Adam Horn, which was erected by Thomas Benton Sarber.

The second building was a hotel erected jointly by Horace Tucker and Peter Blue. This, when completed was conducted by Samuel and Mrs. Banks, who with their family <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ the first residents of Burket.

In the spring of 1882 J.J. Mohler opened a hardware store that was soon afterward purchased by John Sarber, who sold to George W. Nellons, who largely increased the stock, and in 1885 had a cash trade of \$3,400.

David H. Petry was the first dealer in grain, soon succeeded by Mr. Nellons who, since his ownership has purchased over 45,000 bushels of wheat exclusive of other cereals.

J.L. Newby opened the first stock of drugs, but Adam Horn was the first permanent druggist, and may be correctly termed a pioneer in that line.

The first general stock of merchandise was opened by David H. Petry in the spring of 1882.

The postoffice was established the same year with Absalom Kistler postmaster. Adam Horn was the official, and was the first postmaster in the new town under Democratic rule, his commission bearing the date April 28, 1885.



Dr. John Heffly, was the first practicing physician, but remained only a short time. He was succeeded by Dr. Ensenberger, and he by Dr. Freeman A. Williams, an accomplished physician who located there in April 1885.

The brick school-house was erected in 1882, with 125 pupils.

The principal industry of this village was the manufacture of lumber, three mills running constantly. The principal one was owned by Samuel Banks, and the estimated cut shipped exclusive of local sales of the three mills for the first three years was 5,500,000 feet. A sufficient quantity of timber still remained in the vicinity to keep them running for ten years. The

The third building erected, was used jointly as a drug store and saloon and was operated by John Newby. The business may or may not have been profitable, but after the drugs were taken from the stock, it frequently changed owners. It was last owned by Harvey Bybee.

Burket was named in honor of its founder and is a prosperous village of 300 inhabitants. There are two large mercantile stores, an excellent drug store in which it was located, blacksmith shops, furniture store, millinery and jewelry store. The New York, Chicago, & St. Louis Railway, built in 1882, furnishes excellent shipping facilities, and the location of the town on the N.E. quarter of section 9, places it in the best part of Seward Township.

The first business building is still in good condition. It was first used as a drug store, owned and operated by Mr. Adam Horn. It was located due north of the Davis store. West of the drug store was the house where the Horn family lived. One night in the early 1900's the house burned. With the aid of the bucket brigade, the store was saved. Soon after the fire, the drug store building and contents were purchased by W. E. Davis, who moved the drugs and fixtures to the new west room of the Davis store. The Horn family moved to Thorosby Alabama and operated a drug store there. The land where the town of Thorosby is located was given by Mr. Thorniston.

The Horn building was first rented for a hardware and postoffice. The mail and passengers were brought to and from Warsaw twice each week by Mr. Morris Robinson. He had a canvas covered wagon which was pulled by a team of black ponies.

On the north side of the extreme east end of Main street was a blacksmith shop belonging to Mr. Daniel Howard. The next building west, where Mr. and Mrs. Howard live, was the other blacksmith shop belonging to Mr. George Kern. The next lot west was where Mr. Knott Fuller had a cabinet shop. North of the shop was his small home. North, on the south side of the alley running east and west was a saloon. Another location of a saloon was in the second house west of the fire station office. The third saloon was west of the old M.E. Church. The foundation is all that is left of the first saloon. The other houses have respectable families. All three saloons vanished about 1900.

West on the north side of Main Street were several buildings. Mr. Alva Shatto had a meat market and grocery in the first building west. On the west side of the second floor was the Red Men lodge, and on the east side was a large room for public meetings.

The room on the lower floor of the next building was used for meetings and dances for the Red Men and their families. The music for the dances was furnished by George Kern who played chords on the piano. The next building housed the telephone<sup>office</sup> and post offices.

Mr. and Mrs. John Buryanek operated a very good meat market in the next building. Due to failing health, they moved to Laketon to live with their children. They were greatly missed in Burket. They are buried in the Laketon, Indiana cemetery.

The Banks Hotel on west Main Street was vacant for several years. In 1907 the school department rented it to teach the upper classes until the new high school was completed in 1908. The teachers of these grades were Mr. William McHatton and Mr. Andrew Sarber. The first five grades used the vacant building north of the Davis store. The teachers were Miss Bertha Blue, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Allen Blue, and Miss Emma Graff, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Graff, Sr. Until 1909, the Burket High School had only three grades. Any student wanting to graduate from high school had to attend a school offering the fourth year.

In 1950 Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Powell purchased the Horn building and operated a very good restaurant. In 1960 they rented the building to the Postal Department for a new location of the Burket Post Office. Mrs. Clifford Eherenman served as postmaster to complete her term. Mrs. George Hatfield then began as the new post master.



## Fire Department

Mentone gave Burket the first equipment for fight fires. It was a two wheel trailer equipped with two long round tanks laying side by side. They were operated with soda and acid. When one tank was empty, the full tank would be turned on and used while the empty tank would be recharged. This equipment was manufactured by the American LaFrance Company.

The next equipment used by Burket was a Ford <sup>truck</sup> ~~truck~~ with a large water tank and a gasoline pump to produce a good water pressure. This served very good for grass fires and small buildings. The department soon purchased a factory built tanker. In 1978 a much better tanker was purchased, and a larger building had to be built for it and other emergency equipment.

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## Churches

In the beginning Burket had no churches. The nearest one was the Brethren Church one mile south, and the Methodist Church at Palestine. A few years before 1889, Mr. and Mrs. Owen Gaskill moved from Bourbon to Burket and built the Gaskill saw mill. She wanted a church in Burket and donated freely for the building of the Methodist Church. It was built and dedicated in 1889. It was a well built one <sup>room</sup> brick church with frosted glass windows. The church was well attended. W. E. Davis began teaching the young people's class of twenty-one students. He continued teaching this class for 35 years. He was S.S. Supt. for several years, <sup>and</sup> ~~was~~ Pres of Kosciusko Co Sunday Schools for four years. The Burket Circuit consisted of Burket, Palestine and Cooks Chapel. The minister was paid about \$500 per year. Later on Talma was added and his salary was increased to \$700.

(cont'd)

Rev. Modlin was the Burket minister during 1914 & 1915.

He, being a good carpenter, directed the building of a new room on the east side of the church which accomodated many more people. Also a large basement for Sunday School classes. The Mentone M.E. church was also improving their church. The Burket church was getting new leaded colored glass windows, and as a friendly ~~act~~brought one for Mentone. It was placed in the north window on the west side of their church. Stated in the bottom glass is "donated by Burket M.E. Church".

When the Methodist was about completed, the United Brethren members decided to build a new church in Burket. It was built on the corner lot east of the Davis store. The brick for the church was laid by Mr. Rowland Kitterman who lived in Mentone near the west end of Center Street. The church was dedicated by Rev. Modlin in 1915. After the two churches merged, the membership and interest has greatly increased. A beautiful new room was built on the east side. Both of the old churches have been torn down. The Brethren church has been replaced by a a very nice home belonging to Mr. & Mr. Fred McSherry, Jr.

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All of the equipment of the bank which was located on the north side of Mentone Main Street, west of Cooper's store, was bought and moved to Burket and placed in the building north of the Davis Store. It was named "Bank of Seward". Mr. O. S. Gaskill was the president. The other officers were Mrs. Ida Hüffer, vice president. and Mr. H.H. Roberts cashier. The directors were Mr. Gaskill, Mr. Roberts, W. S. Howard, Geor. Alexander, and Clem Jones. The Bank ceased operation during the depression.



The Burket Elgin Creamery was started in 1910. The equipment was installed by William English and J.E. Daniels. These men were employed by the company who built the equipment. A Mr. Netland was employed to manage the creamery. Four country routes were established and served by Mr. Joe Burket, Oliver Davis, Vernon Jones and Del Meredith. They furnished their houses and enclosed wagons and served their routes six days each week, and received for their weekly service eighteen dollars.

W. E. Davis was the president of the creamery, and Miss Laura Snodgrass, a sister of Earl and Dr. Sameul Snodgrass was the ~~sixxxx~~ bookkeeper. The creamery prospered for several years. During May of 1930 there were 700 cases of eggs valued at \$6,000, sent to New York from Burket by the Nickel Plate railroad.

Mr. Lewis Foor, who dealt in butter and eggs, started coming to the Davis store each Monday with his team of horses and wagon to buy the butter and eggs the store purchased that week. He also did another service for the store that wouldn't be safe today. My father would put the cash receipts in a drawstring bag and lay it on the wagon seat for him to deposit in the Mentone bank.

Each week the Davis Store sent letters to the customers.

The following prices were paid for eggs at the store:

February 13, 1932 The store purchased 47 cases of eggs for 12 cts per dozen.

March 7, 1932 paid 16 Cts. for large clean eggs.

July 8, 1936 "notice" In the future the egg car will be loaded on Saturday.

Because of the weather and reduced prices of eggs, we have reduced our paying price ot 18 cents for all color and sizes.

December 1, 1937 We will pay 26 cents for large eggs, and 22 cents for medium.

Sept. 20, 1939 Large White Eggs 20 Cents Large Brown 18 Cents.  
Medium White or Brown .10 to .14 cents.

Mr. Abraham Sarber Induced Friends to Move to Burket

Mr. William Edmund Davis, a school teacher of Ottawa, Ohio married Ada Justine Parker of Kalida, Ohio on March 19, 1897. Mrs. Davis was the daughter of Lorenzo Parker, a cabinet maker of Kalida. After their marriage Mr. Davis worked with Mr. Hiram Parker, who was the father of Lorenzo Parker. Hiram Parker was an undertaker and taught Mr. Davis this profession well enough to assume his business. Mr. Davis purchased the equipment of Mr. Parker. Due to the advice of Mr. Abraham Sarber of Kalida to move to Burket, Indiana and practice his trade, Mr. Davis went to Burket but could not find a vacant house. He had to wait until one was built for him. During this waiting period he bought a house in Warsaw, Indiana. While there he served as an undertaker in conjunction with Mr. Amos Ringle who owned a furniture store. In 1884 his house was finished and he moved to Burket. He discontinued being an undertaker and purchased the building belonging to David Petry where he began the operation of the Davis Store.

Mr. Thomas Benton Sarber was born in Kosciusko County, Ind. in 1842. He was the son of Abraham and Louisa Henderson Sarber who were married in Franklin County, Ohio. They remained there two years and moved to Putnam County, Ohio, which at that time was a dense wilderness. Their nearest white neighbors were ten miles away. While in Putman, Abraham Sarber purchased several tracts of land. On one tract he founded the town of Kalida, the County Seat of Putnam County.

In 1841 Benton Sarber built a saw mill in Palestine, and a grist mill in 1843. Also in 1843 he sawed the lumber for the first

frame Court House in Kosciusko County. He also built the first business building in Burket for Mr. Adam Horn. In 1866 he moved to his farm located two miles south of Burket.

Other people who Abraham Sarber induced to come to Burket were Doctor Freeman Williams and his wife Nora. Also Lena Bess Parker, who married Elmer Vandermark. Nora and Bess were sisters of Ada Davis, the wife of W. E. Davis.

W. E. Davis owned the grain elevator in the early 1900's. He sold it to the Graff brothers, William and George, in 1914. They tore it down and built a more modern one. After they sold it, the new owners continued a good and honorable business which was an asset to Burket. West of the elevator is a liquid fertilizer company whose building replaced the pickle factory which burned in the early 1920's.

The Davis store was one of the most complete country stores. It had groceries, dry goods, women and men's clothing, shelf hardware and paints. Also heating and cooking stoves, and a complete drug department. Mr. Davis was postmaster from 1910 until the late 1920's when Mr. Clifford Hatfield became postmaster. The frozen food locker was installed at the store in June, 1940 and remained in operation until the store was sold in 1960.

Mr. Davis, who managed his store for 56 years, died in 1940 and was buried at Palestine, about 100 feet south of the church and about 40 feet north of his Ohio friend, Mr. Sarber. After his death, the store was operated, until sold in 1960, by Homer McGinley and wife, Lena, the daughter of Mr. Davis and W. G. Davis and wife, Gladys.



The memories of a tent show that came to Burket should remain with those who attended it.

The tent was located on the ground belonging to the railroad. To pay for the privilege, the owner of the show gave the foreman of the railroad a free ticket for each of his children. The foreman always got two tickets for my sister and me.

It was a very thrilling show. They had a monkey, named Nellie, who did a few stunts, and a lady dressed in tights who walked the tight wire which was located outside the tent. When her interesting act ended, she got off the wire and began selling tickets for a more interesting act in the tent. No one saw the lady inside the tent, but we saw our first movie.

The light in the projector was made by a burning piece of lime. The operator of the projector controlled the speed of the picture by turning the crank, and he talked all the time, telling us what was shown in the picture.

The picture was that of a man who was the night operator of a railroad station that was far down the track. His daughter was taking him his midnight lunch. When she was nearing the station, she discovered her father tied to the track. A train was coming very fast, but the daughter freed her father in time to save him. Everyone cheered. The operator explained the expression, "They were in the limelight."

After the salesman sold some "Sure Cure" medicine, we went home and explained the show to our parents, and hoped some day we could be "in the limelight."

When Mr. Elias Burket surveyed a small section of his land in 1882 to promote the sale of lots in the new town which he named Bellview. Due to a town in Ohio having the same name and located on the new rail road, they changed the name to Burket. At this time there were no elected officials. When one was needed, the county sheriff was notified. During this time honorable men were suggested to keep order. This system was not always honorable.

One time a poor weak minded man stole a small jar of lard. He was taken to one of the blacksmith shops where he professed to a group of loafers. They held a kangaroo court and declared a thief. They put him in a buggy, tied his feet to the foot rail, and took him to Warsaw jail. The sheriff released him the next day. When Burket was incorporated in 1930, marshalls were elected.

The stealing of horses became a problem. In 1888 the town organized 25 men to search for the thief. This order was called "The Burket Detective Association" with W. E. Davis serving as president, and Albert Hagenbrook as Secretary and Treasurer. When anyone reported a theft, three men were ordered to leave at once on horseback to try to find the thief. They were paid \$1.50 a day to search three days. If not found by then, they could return home. No record is found as to how long this order existed.

Homer McGinley began working at the Davis store in 1898. At night he slept on a cot to detect any trouble. One night in the early 1900's, tow men bro ke into the stor while a train was going through town. He refused to open the safe, so they tied him and placed him on top of the safe. They poured Nitro. on the door. Before they lit it, they removed him from the safe. The door of

the safe faced the outside wall which was about three feet away. On the wall were shelves that contained plug and smoking tobacco. When the Nitro. ignited, the door of the safe went through the wall, spreading the tobacco all over the gravel street. The next morning about everyone in town was busy getting the tobacco out of the sand. This was the only major robbery of the store.

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FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION IN BURKET 1914

The fourth of July celebration in Burket was well presented by the people of Burket. It began in the early forenoon, and lasted until late in the evening.

The parade was the first exhibit of original and comic acts. I cannot recall all of them, but a few remain with me. A Brass Band ( I think was from Silver Lake) marched into town, led by Billie McCormic. Following the band were the parade wagons which were well decorated, and other wagons advertising items sold in Burket. Next was a wagon which exhibited the skill of Mr. Jim Fudge, who was totally blind. He stood at a chopping block on a moving wagon and split kindling wood, with an axe, from sections of stove wood.

Another comic thing was presented by Mr. Willie Moore. He had turned the body of his buggy around, facing the back. His mule was pulling the buggy, which seemed to make the buggy run backward.

Several men and women dressed in the old style clothing they once wore. Young children were also in costumes. A young boy by the name of Roger Hatfield carried a bird cage with a kitten in it.



After the parade, it was time to have lunch, and then go to the ball ground. Here was the location of the battle between the Indians and White men. A log cabin had been built for the white parents and their daughter. The Indians wore costumes belonging to the Red Men lodge. As they entered the north side of the woods east of the ball field, some were walking and some were riding horses. Slowly the Indians left the woods to capture the white family and burn the cabin. All the white men started firing their guns which were loaded with blank shells. A few Indians got to the cabin, chased the father and mother away and captured the daughter. They set fire to the cabin and left. The daughter was restored to her parents.

As it began to get dark, the three Alexander Sisters stood in front of the Davis store and nicely sang several songs.

The people then walked west to the front of Mendel Store. Fireworks were to be shot from the roof of the two story store. Rev. Chas. Modlin was in charge of the fireworks. He placed a Roman Candle on the ledge of the store. Someone lit it and it fell into a cab with the baby in it. Someone upset the cab with the baby in it. No doubt this could have saved her life. She still retains scars from the burns she received.

Before the people went home, a wagon with a sign on each side which read "Bradway Bread and Burket Elgin Butter" came in view. Several women on the wagon were preparing Bradway Buns with Burket Elgin Butter. Everyone was entitled to one or more buns.

## The Burket Fire

In the Fall of 1927, and late at night, the Mendel store caught fire and burned completely down. A few items were saved. The store was located one half block west of the Davis store, and on the north side of the railroad track. Between the two stores was the original house built by Elias Burket. On the alley next to the Mendel store was a small building used for a barber shop. This building burned, but the Burket house only suffered paint damage. The Davis store and the building north of the store were the only buildings that escaped the fire. Sparks were blown over all the dwellings located on the next street north. If the fire department from Mentone and other neighboring towns hadn't responded haved, many of the houses would have burned. As soon as the weather permitted, those who were interested in Burket, began cleaning away the damage that was done. New buildings were constructed as soon as possible, and Burket was back in business.

The Mendel store was not replaced. Mr. and Mrs. Mendel moved to Bourbon and operated a hardware store for a few years. I am informed that they later moved to Winona Lake to retire.

I, W. G. Davis, am sorry not being able to tell of any other things that may have taken place during the fire. I was not living at Burket at that time. In 1919 I was a student at Rice Institute at Houston, Texas. The next year at Purdue, and the next two years at Ball State at Muncie. The next five years I taught in Wilson High at Muncie. The news I received was by mail and the county papers.

Mr. Denzel Nelson began operating a trucking business, and within a short time it developed to a very large business. Many people were required to operate it. When he sold his business, he and his business were greatly missed in Burket.

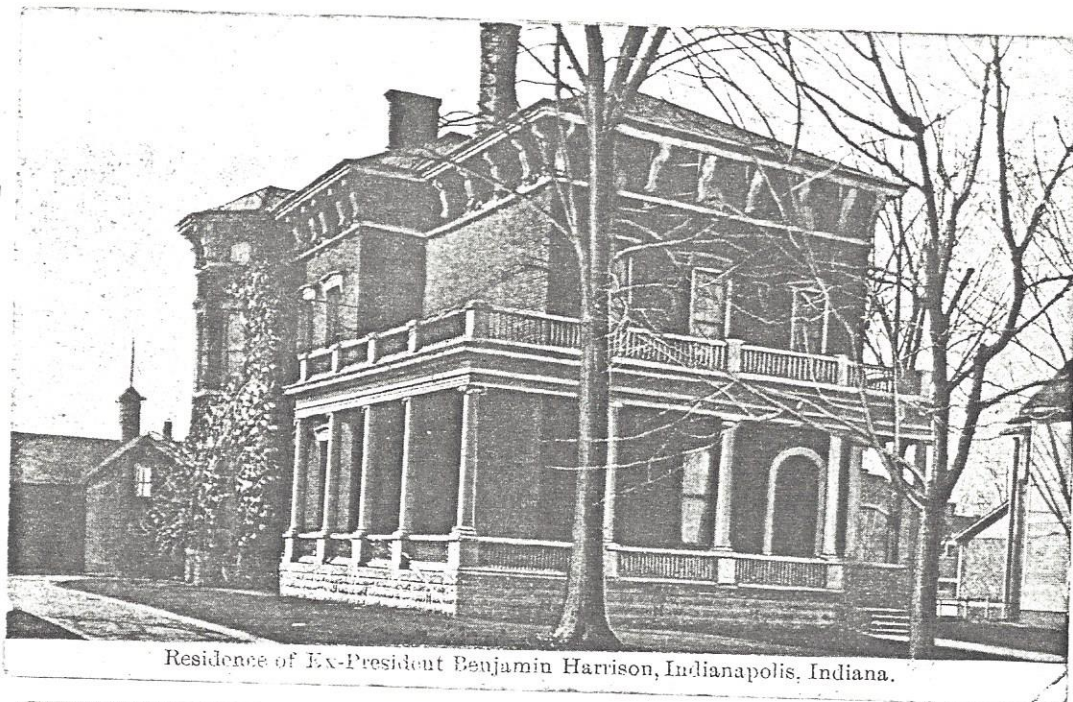
The building where Mr. Nelson had his trucking business was purchased by Mr. Wade Powell, to furnish more room for his expanding tire business. The building Mr. Powell left was sold to the Warsaw Black Oxide for their expansion.

In 1941, W. G. Davis began operating a machine shop, making many different items. Business developed quickly and in 1950 he purchased the vacant lot where the former Mendel store stood, and built a much larger block building. It was known as the Davis Manufacturing Company. He operated it until 1960 when he sold the entire factory to Sun Metal Co. at Warsaw. They retained the use of the building for several years, and in 1973 sold the building to Dean Goshert, who in turn sold or rented it to a firm to produce boiled eggs. The eggs are boiled, the shells removed, the eggs processed, frozen, and shipped by plane to their customers. Since this business started in Burket, it has increased in volume each year. It requires several women and men to process this item. In 1979 a new addition was added on the east side of the original building. This business is known as "TIP-E#PAK.

The lot on the west side of this building is paved with black top, and will be the location of a branch bank of Farmers State Bank at Mentone.



Post Cards shared  
by Hazel Linn



Residence of Ex-President Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis, Indiana.

This resembles  
the Horace Tucker  
house.



Fourth of July  
at Burket



Mr. and Mrs. W.G.  
Davis at Palestine  
Cemetery