Stinesville: the town that stone built

Treasured among the photo albums of elderly citizens and the descendants of Stinesvillians are old pictures of its boom-town days. As its neighbor, Mt. Tabor, was dwindling, Stinesville was becoming the town that stone built.

John Hoadley Sr., and his brother, William, had sold their saw and gristmill at Mt. Tabor and moved to Stinesville and Gosport, respectively. John indicated his faith in the future of the railroad village by buying nine town lots there. He retained the property at Mt. Tabor, where his widowed mother-in-law, Sarah Francis York, continued to live.

THE EARLIEST USE of limestone — elegantly called "Indiana marble" — was for tombstones. Hoadley, like others, started a modest business of producing the stones and urns, which

became increasingly sophisticated in design. An early photo of his first shed and stoneyard bears little resemblance to the huge mills of today.

Gradually, the value of limestone for buildings was recognized as Indiana communities grew out of the log cabin stage. That was particularly true of public buildings, since most private homes were being constructed of brick and lumber.

Since the earliest days of his work with limestone, Hoadley's "edge" as a businessman was his training as a millwright — the forerunner of the present-day mechanical engineer. That training made it possible for him to design and build his own mill and quarry equipment.

AS THE DEMAND for limestone building blocks grew, so did the mills in the Stinesville area, needing and attracting an ever-increasing pool of laborers from quarrymen to cutters in the mills. As the mills grew, so did the sophistication of their equipment. Hoadley, for example, designed a huge lathe for turning fashionable building columns for the neoclassic style of architecture.

Photographs of Stinesville