

Unique transportation provided early residents

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and help push the coach out of a mud-soaked depression in the road.

Sometimes packed into the cross-seats alternately facing each other, the Orchard's passengers were stoically resigned to miles of dusty and bumpy rides no matter which route they took. Their baggage and any freight making the trips were strapped on the "boot" of the coach at the rear. Mail was locked in a strong box stored under the driver's seat.

Each Monday morning one Orchard coach left Louisville and another left Indianapolis for their weekly round trip. The Louisville based driver's circuit was six days — three each way. His Bloomington counterpart, heading south, made it to Louisville in three days and returned to Bloomington on the sixth.

Pulled by four or six dapple

gray horses, the coaches made stops for changes of teams about every twelve miles. Three stops in Monroe County were the Orchard's Temperance Inn at Bloomington, widow Sara Corr's post office at Hindustan, and John McCrea's stables at Harrodsburg.

Trusted employees, Perring and McPheeters handled all of the fares and freight charges for the Orchards without benefit of bond. A one-way ticket from Bloomington to Indianapolis was \$3 and to Louisville \$6. Unlike other stagecoach lines, the Orchard's had no second-class fares. The story that second-class passengers were obliged to step down at the bottom of a hill and walk up was stoutly denied by Perring in his account. In fact, he wrote: "No second class fares or half rate fellows like over-grown youths, or circuit riding preachers were

considered." He blamed any stories to the contrary on flamboyant driver "Windy Bob."

Obliging fellows, the drivers would digress from their regular routes to set down passengers at the doors of their residences. Perring quotes a Mr. Fitzhue, doorkeeper of the U.S. Senate, as saying that: "they (the drivers) were considered 'bigger men than old Grant' and there was nothing too good for them."

Dressed in their homespun suits and loaded with crude firearms, the drivers must have presented a colorful picture on their periodic trips to Bloomington. However, in the early 1850's their days as drivers were numbered as the New Albany and Salem Railroad inched its way north to the county. By 1856 passengers arriving at the Temperance Inn in Bloomington had gotten off the train instead of the stagecoach.