Mt. Tabor died because of

By ROSE WOERTZ
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Among the ghost towns in Indiana history is Mt. Tabor, which was located in Bean Blossom Township on the northwest corner of Monroe County.

IN ITS HEYDAY, it rivaled Bloomington as a young bustling community with the excitement of newcomers and new businesses. But Mt. Tabor died because of the whim of a New Albany man who probably never set foot in the town.

Early settlers who came in covered wagons to Monroe County were attracted to the Mt. Tabor area because they needed to build their cabins near a water supply. Bean Blossom Creek meanders through the township, and the settlers used it for such practical needs as drinking water and doing the laundry.

Settler John Burton had another idea about the creek. In 1819 he bought a tract of land along it and built a saw mill and grist mill, using the creek as a source of power.

OTHER SETTLERS were arriving in the Mt. Tabor area and began buying Burton's services at the mills.

In 1825 James Turner and Jefferson Wampler established a blacksmith shop. About this time William Ellett opened a grocery store and a saloon.

In the spring of 1828 the town was thriving with various enterprises. Flour and livestock were important in the town's commercial interests. As many as 5,000 hogs were slaughtered in a season.

Noah Stine operated a cooperage shop that supplied barrels for shipping flour and pork. David Wampler conducted a tannery and the Posey brothers made hats from lamb's wool.

Samuel Hartsock bought the old Burton sawmill and gristmill and rebuilt both, improving the dam and increasing the water power.

THE FIRST POSTMASTER at Mt. Tabor was William Hite. Also in 1828 the town was platted by County Surveyor Irvin W. McCollough at the courthouse in Bloomington with 66 lots.

A stave and hoop-pole business was thriving. Mt. Tabor's spinning wheel factory was turning out wheels for pioneer housewives. Fanning mills were in demand to separate the chaff from the seed of wheat. The fanning mill factory at Mt. Tabor employed 25 workers and had four salesmen on the road.

When the spring rains made White River back up into Bean Blossom Creek, Mt. Tabor's slaughter house put steam-scalded hogs on flatboats and shipped them to New Orleans. During the 1840s as many as 5,000 hogs were sent to New Orleans in one season. Matthias Berry, who lived at Mt. Tabor, claimed he made that trip on flatboats at least 13 times.

Residents of Mt. Tabor, who were going about their business in 1840, probably would have laughed if they'd been told that a New Albany man was going to kill the town within 30 years.

IN THE 1840S RAILROADS were beginning to crisscross Indiana. Enterprising businessmen could see the advantages of moving people and freight by rail instead of by stagecoach and wagon.

James Brooks who lived in New Albany decided he wanted to link his city with Salem. In January of 1847 he got a license from the State Of Indiana for the railroad, and construction began between New Albany and Salem. The forerunner of the Monon, the railroad was named the New Albany and Salem Railroad.

Brooks also visualized a railroad spanning the state from the Ohio River to the Great Lakes. The surveyors that were working for the New Albany and Salem Railroad were working their way north in Monroe County in 1849 and were instructed to plot the railroad in the cheapest way possible. Every creek or stream crossed by the railroad had to have a bridge, and that would cost the investors in the New Albany and Salem Railroad money. Blasting through a limestone ledge for a railroad cut was also too expensive.

MT. TABOR'S MERCHANTS must have been anxious to share the New Albany and Salem Railroad with Smithville, Bloomington, and Ellettsville, but the surveyors of the railroad plotted the line one mile west of the town.