

Historical Significance Behind Homestead BBQ Site

Written by Luke Short
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HOPKINS COUNTY, KY—Interestingly enough, one of our region’s more popular BBQ joints has a lengthy history behind it, stretching back around 150 years.

Though located in Hopkinsville, Homestead BBQ & More is a very interesting site worth making the half hour drive from Madisonville to check out. In addition, relatively new owners, Tim and Barbara Rigdon, also own and operate Trackside BBQ, which is adjacent to Wal-Mart and in the Big Spring Inn. You may have seen Trackside BBQ in their mobile unit as well, serving up food at local events.

But beyond the surface facts, the log-cabin style Homestead BBQ & More in Hopkinsville has lasted throughout 150 years, including residency by a silversmith and his family, a well known military commander, as well as a plethora of more modern-day tourists.

Plus, as City-County Historian, William T. Turner, states, “The location serves as a delightful gathering place for the sharing of fellowship over plates of delicious food.”

However, a little bit of explanation behind the restaurant is in order. What follows is a synopsis of what has happened over the last century plus.

Silversmith, James Stevenson (1799-1861), and his wife, Nancy Parish Lander Stevenson (1830-1904), constructed a three room log “shotgun” house on North Main Street in 1847, just fifty years after the country was formed. The home stood for nearly 130 years on the east side of North Main Street south of the main entrance to the city, later Hopewell, and now Riverside Cemetary. Stevenson and his wife reared a family of six children here, one of whom, Betty, a seamstress, lived in the landmark for nearly 82 years before her death in 1930.

Destiny left its mark on the Steveson house when between November, 1861 and February, 1862, Confederate Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest maintained his headquarters here. He came to Hopkinsville to recruit and to train men in preparation for the engagement at Fort Donelson. His

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force of ten companies, 750 men, was camped in Glass' Woods for five weeks before departure to the Dover, Tennessee area, on February 7, 1962.

Following the death of Miss Betty Stevenson, the home was acquired by her sister, Mrs. A.J. (Lucy D. Stevenson) Reeder and her three daughters, Nannie, Lurenia and Sophia. In 1933, the Reeders had the old house torn down. Using the original logs, contractor, T. H. Owen, built the present house which they occupied on August 2, 1933. The original mantel from the room previously occupied by Colonel Forrest was installed in the new home. It was later moved to the Pennyroyal Area Museum.

Lureina and Sophia operated Reeder's Rest Over Guest House, utilizing three adjacent houses from 1940 until 1968. Many north and south bound tourists along U.S. 41 received the warm hospitality of the Reeder Family through these years. Mrs. Reeder lived in the home until her death at 100 in 1954 and her daughter continued to live there until the last survivor died twenty years later.

The City of Hopkinsville bought the Reeder property for development into Riverside Cemetery in 1979. Billy Young acquired the house and moved it in the fall of 1974 to its present location on North Drive. Wayne and Juanita Burnham bought the house and added the log room on the back using logs from a pen barn on the Marion Sisk farm on Petsch Lane. They operated the Log House Restaurant here, 1976 until 1992. For about a year, Pappy's Grill occupied the Location.

The Homestead Restaurant was opened in the old log house on March 13, 1994.

To find out more information on both Homestead BBQ & More and Trackside BBQ, such as directions and email addresses, you can visit their official website at

<http://homesteadbbqandmore.com/> . In addition, both can also be found via Facebook. In addition, Homestead BBQ can be reached by phone at (270) 885-0538, while Trackside BBQ can be contacted via phone at (270) 821-2300.

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Historical Information provided by City-County Historian, William T. Turner