From Mudsock to Amesville - A Jolly Good Place

A Poem by Eleanor A. Gifford

In her quiet retreat with an extended view  
The home of good men, strong and true  
With a view of outlines of surrounding hills  
Lies our little town, which was named Amesville.

With her varied scenery, content with rich soil  
Which yields abundantly, a return for the toil  
Placed upon it by men who believed in well doing  
Like those gone before us - Ames, Cutler and Ewing.

1837 was the date of the year  
Of the laying out of our little town here  
The village was started there and then  
And proved to be the home of many strong men.

The "Corner" as 'twas called where the roads meet  
We speak of it now, we will never forget  
How the men, work done, gathered here with their views  
About certain facts, They'd discuss all the news.
On this Corner was the store of Dickey and Brown
Where everyone went upon coming to town
This store was turned over before very long
To the Patterson brothers, James, Joseph and John.

Little Judge Fulton had his store ‘cross the street
Judge was a man they were all pleased to meet
His trade was good - he did lots of work
A.B. Glazier, Loring Henry were employed as his clerks.

Another store was erected in town
This one was owned by Hammett and Brown
These men worked faithfully, they wanted to win
John Brown was the clerk in this store for them then.

The old Ferris Tavern on the west side of the street
Was a place old Congressmen and Senators would meet
When stopping overnight many a yarn was spun
Many evenings were passed in good jolly fun.

Just north of town was a spot we’ve heard about
Here was Geo. Walker’s farm, store, mill and warehouse
Here many a daily sale was made
Geo. was an important competitor of the trade.
The "Coon Skin Library" in this store was kept
You quite frequently hear it spoken of yet
For 12 ½ cents you got three months good reading
The books were beneficial, to read them was pleasing.

A history has this library I just spoke about
And I doubt if some here have ever found out
It was an important factor in the education of men
That were growing to manhood and were living here then.

My father's office stands near the same spot
On which stood James Patterson's old Blacksmith shop
He was my grandfather, I remember him yet
And his jolly "ah boy" I'll never forget.

The next time you pass by the Millinery store
Upon close inspection you can see 'oer the door
The old faded sign of J & E Ginn
They opened a shoe shop and here started in.

The shop was supplied by a tannery here
Eakins & McCune built one quite near
To tan leather it took from the time they began
A good seven months but it was always well done.
They say the old tannery made a joyful noise
And was sure of the attention of all the small boys
They loved to see the patient horse going round & round
And watch the men feed the mill & hear the funny sounds.

Further down the street on one end of the lot
You could hear the noise of coopers in Mitchell's barrel shop
Here late at night one could witness the making
Of barrels, the house getting light from white burning lamps.

From Edwin Mervin's shop came the noise of plane & saw
Here many a piece of furniture was made without a flaw
Mr. Mervin besides being a successful cabinet maker
Was engaged in different work. The village undertaker.

R.R. Ellis and Martin Smith learned the harness trade
You can often hear the praises yet of saddles they have made
Caps made of wool, fur hats and such like
Were made by Geo. Wright and partner Will Pike.

Eli Brown did the butchering in this village here
And William Walsh the tailor with prices not dear
Abraham Dodds, Andrew Mullins were carpenters then
And contracts for building were taken by these men.
Fulton & Moore were doctors those days
They went day and night in many different ways
Not a lawyer in town - that seemed rather queer
But he was not needed any time of the year.

There were two churches then the same as today
And on Sundays a Meeting to worship and pray
To the Good One above them, and their blessings they gave
To Him who had helped them, and taught to be brave.

A step in education was taken at this time
The “Academy” was built, when done it looked fine
J.P. Withee was Professor and had been a good scholar
His instructions were good, and were pleasant to follow.

Simple lives were lead by many those days
Yet they had great enjoyment in different ways
For the Fourth of July they’d patiently wait
And when the day arrived they’d loudly celebrate.

When Thanksgiving came in those good old days
They were thankful to God, and to him would give praise
For His good deeds to them and all the good men
Gave thanks to Him for his goodness there - then.
May parties, apple cuttings, rug sewings and dances
were held those days, they were glad of their chances
Of enjoying themselves, the hard work and toil.
At times was forgotten, these were good times for all.

Where are these people now? Those good friends and all
You may mention their names yet they heed not your call
And where are the school house, the mill and the store
You may search where they stood but you find them no more.

And gone are the dwellings, not a stone or a block
Now remains of the village that was once called Mudsock
Ev’n the old red mud hole which gave name to the place
Is all covered with limestone to hide the disgrace.

Yes, gone is old Mudsock, gone most of the men
And the women who lived in the neighborhood then
And a man riding by at the present day would
Never know of the spot where the old village stood.

Today finds Amesville much different from then
The town’s been built up by industrious men
New stores have been finished, new dwellings gone up
And today are the homes of many of us.
The town has built up in different ways
School houses, churches which shows that it pays
To push ahead in the world, and the old tumble-downs
Were replaced by new ones, a great help to the town.

We have a new railroad, Post Office and Mill
Which proves to us clearly men can if they will
Make surroundings the best and in many ways
Establish a business which easily pays.

Today finds our Bank newly built on the corner
Which makes it much easier for merchant and farmer
To deposit their money than it was years ago
Riding miles to a Bank through the rain and the snow.

We are blessed with good sidewalks a great help to all
And during the bad weather which starts late in the fall
You may come; you may go all the day long
And you'll think what a great help someone has thought on.

1911 finds many things we have wished for here
The Hardware, the butchers shop it's nice to have them near
The barber shop, the drug store, the groceries all of them
We are glad to know that all these are conducted by good men.
The town has greatly changed as years went by
We can very easily see that men bye and bye
As the world goes on, change with it too
That's as nature's ordained it for the fallen - the few.

And those who at times have business away
And they've gone, we'll say, for several a day
They are glad to get back to this town once again
They are anxious to be free, for it's home to them.

When it's all said and done, when we've all breathed our last
The town will go on as it has in the past
While here on earth we meet face to face
And we talk about Amesville - it's a jolly good place.