

Griffith is Really Friendly **By Woody Wilcox**

Griffith, Indiana is a really friendly place. It's an interesting place, too.

One of the most interesting things about Griffith is that it is the home of the world headquarters of the MOOSE ADMIRATION SOCIETY. I don't know why the Moose Admiration Society put its headquarters in Griffith, Indiana. In fact, I can't find anyone in the town who knows why the Moose Admiration Society is headquartered in Griffith. But, there it is – across Broad Street from the town hall and police department. It has a stuffed moose on the top of the building.

Griffith is known as the town that came to the tracks. Many years ago, almost twenty railroad lines crossed at one point in Griffith. This caught the attention of two brothers – Elmer and Jay Dwiggins. Three streets in Griffith are named after these men – Elmer Street, Jay Street, and Dwiggins Street. Elmer and Jay Dwiggins were land speculators who sold Griffith swamp land to other real estate speculators. They believed that any town that had nearly twenty railroad lines crossing at the same place was bound to become a very important and wealthy community.

But, when times got tough, the Dwiggins brothers gathered up all the money that they had made by selling Griffith swamp land and they moved to Brazil—in South America. Everyone in Griffith was surprised by the sudden move of the Dwiggins brothers. No one in Griffith knew that the Dwiggins brothers could speak Brazilian Portuguese.

So many railways crossing at one point on South Broad Street became a problem for Griffith. At one time, about 120 long trains passed through Griffith every day. In the past, after one train passed, only three or four cars could get over the tracks before another train would come and block South Broad Street again. But, now, twelve cars can pass over the tracks before another train comes and blocks the road. That's more than a 300% improvement in letting cars pass over the tracks between trains.

If you want to visit Griffith overnight, you will need to stay in someone's home because there are no hotels or motels in Griffith. But, if you look nice, act nice, talk nice, and smell nice, a member of the Griffith Emergency Management Agency (Civil Defense) just might let you stay overnight in a disaster shelter.

Many people don't remember Griffith as a rural community. When I was a small boy, my father would saddle our horse and take me for a ride from our home on Broad Street across our farm to the EJ&E railroad tracks about a quarter of a mile away. My father would hold me firmly on the saddle and encourage me to smile and wave to the train engineers, the cabooses men, and the various hobos that were passing through our town.

One time when I was a small boy, I thought that I had thrown a gate loop over a post to keep our horse in its pasture. But, I didn't, and the horse exited its pasture, crossed Broad Street, and helped itself to the delicacies in our neighbor's garden. The neighbors phoned us to come and get our horse. Now, that's friendly! A lot of people just would have shot the horse and called a dog food meat company to come and get it. But, that didn't happen because Griffith folks were friendly then, and they're friendly now. Yes, indeed! Griffith, Indiana is a really friendly place.