

dise store run by Douglas Dunsworth. He had purchased the store from Winston Hatfield, successor to the first owner of the store in 1870, Elias Hatfield, a Dr. V. Stookey, and a blacksmith Josiah H. Voorhees who bought the business in 1875 from W. W. Moore.

Early business in Chalmers Township included the Wilson Sawmill built by J.O.C. Wilson and Devine Anderson on Section 14 about 1840. Fire destroyed it in 1856. Another mill was erected on the old site by Wilson, Thornburg, and Ferguson. Following owners were Eugene Pierce, John Safell & Son, Thomas Cornelius, John McCoy, and Samuel Fox, who finally sold the machinery. The building was torn down and some of the timbers were used to build a barn on Section 14.

St. Francis Hospital located on the southwest corner of West Grant Street and South Johnson Street was built in 1903 and was demolished in 1973 as the new McDonough District Hospital was built.

Colchester Township

Colchester Township was created in 1879 by taking equal portions from the neighboring Tennessee and Chalmers townships in 1880. A six mile strip was taken from the western portion of Chalmers Township. The northern half of the six mile strip measures two miles wide, while the southern half is only one mile wide. The sections retaining their original descriptions are 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 30, and 31. A six mile strip was taken from the eastern part of Tennessee Township, measuring one and one-half miles wide. Here also the section descriptions retained the numbers of 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25, 26, 35, and 36.

The town of Colchester is the third largest in the county and the only existing one in the township. Two other locales, Pleasant Valley and Ragtown, once existed but are now only memories. Colchester Township was once well known for its coal and clay, while the town of Colchester supported many different businesses throughout the years. Some, but not all, of these include the Princess Theatre, Carson's Variety Store, Stevens Brothers, Daisy Roller Mill,



Early Colchester Band Stand

Terrill's Store, Colchester Switchboard Company, Yetter Manufacturing, Jones Mortuary, McDonough Telephone Coop, and the Colchester Maid Rite.

The Colchester Maid Rite opened in the 1930s on the north side of the present U.S. 136 on the corner west of the old Christian Church. After Camp Ellis (Fulton County) closed in the 1940s, the Maid Rite's owner at the time, Francis Horton, purchased one of the camp's barrack buildings and moved it to the south side of U.S. 136 and redid the building, reopening the Maid Rite in 1947. Betty Jean Creasey began managing the business in 1950, purchased it in the mid-1960s and ran it until it

closed in the late 1960s. The Maid Rite was a source of income for many young people in the area.

Fraternal organizations have been important to the residents of the county, but one which was significant in Colchester Township for over one hundred years was the Colchester Order of Eastern Star. Organized Feb. 27, 1888, at Steven's Hall in Colchester, the organization served the community until its members voted to merge with the Blandinsville Order of Eastern Star No. 108 in 1993. During its existence, the organization was active each year with social activities and the annual marking of the veterans' graves on Memorial Day.



Colchester Maid Rite, when it reopened on the South Side of U.S. 136, in early 1947