

## Appendix L: Bringing a Community Back to Life

### APPENDIX L

#### Bringing a Community Back to Life

The land in and around Buckhorn Lake State Resort Park was once the site of a thriving community known as Bowlingtown where hundreds of residents lived. Originally settled in the early 1800's, the entire community of Bowlingtown was purchased by the government in the late 1950's to build the Buckhorn Dam. With the construction of the dam and resulting lake, the valley was inundated with water thus eliminating the primary access to this area and the community itself.



Where the lodge is now located was the site of the Bowlingtown school house, the Buckhorn putt-putt golf course was once a cemetery, and a sawmill was located just over the hill. There was also a post office, school, churches, grocery, blacksmith, Frontier Nursing Service and numerous homes scattered in the hills, valleys, and mountains. A few residents stayed. The rest have moved away. Yet a couple of times a year, descendants of Bowlingtown come back for a reunion, filling the lodge, and enjoying fellowship and reminiscing of days gone by.



In the past few years, a historic marker has been placed in front of the lodge, a plaque hung inside, and the lodge kitchen was named the Bowlingtown Country Kitchen in 2007. And in further remembrance, a welcome sign at the entrance to Buckhorn Lake State Resort Park now says "Welcome to 'Bowlingtown' Home of Buckhorn Lake State Resort Park". Bowlingtown is not to be forgotten.

#### HISTORY OF BOWLINGTOWN

*...Early records refer to this area as the Bowling District, founded by Reverend Jesse Boling, his wife Mary Pennington, Reverend Duff and 50 other families. They were led to this remote area under the guidance of Daniel Boone. By the late 1800's Bowlingtown was a thriving community of hundreds. There was a post office, school, churches, grocery, sawmill, blacksmith and the Frontier Nursing Service. Local officials included a sheriff, magistrate, justice of the peace and tax commissioner. The citizens were primarily farmers and coal miners. They were known to be patriotic, honest, kind, and well-educated.*

*In 1960, when the construction of Buckhorn Lake began, Bowlingtown had to be abandoned and families relocated. Family graves (873) were re-interred to Buckhorn Cemetery. All were sad to leave their homeland of seven generations." ...*

Excerpt taken from a website created by Jewell Gordon.