

BUCKTOWN

African American community in Winchester, KY.

Although the official name may be Poynterville, Winchester residents know this African American neighborhood as Bucktown. Winchester's white newspaper, along with other area white newspapers, represented Bucktown primarily in a negative light in the early twentieth century. Stories about the neighborhood included robberies, drunkenness, murder, dueling, chicken stealing, crap games and bootlegging. Even in a 1909 account of a flood where the water stood three feet deep and caused extensive property damage, the local newspaper quoted a citizen claiming that the flood "cleaned" Bucktown, and it was hoped that it would remain that way. Winchester's mayor, J. A. Hughes, issued an order to the police department to arrest any man in the community who did not work and was loafing in the area.

Occasionally, articles included prominent African American establishments and leaders. Curry's Eating House, Birl Turner's livery business, Oren Bates's store, and a carriage drummer provided services to the community. Rev. J. W. Hutchens had remodeled Clarke's Methodist Episcopal Church in the early 1900s, and D. R. Taylor sold dry goods and notions from his department store.

Decades later, Bucktown was home to a massive Labor Day weekend celebration. Hundreds of people from nearby communities and areas such as Chicago, Cleveland, and California jammed the neighborhood. The roots festival featured beauty queens, scholastic achievers, musicians, and the local African American motorcycle club, the Ebony Riders. The gala ended with a parade on Labor Day. In 2008, Heritage Park was dedicated not only as a green space for Winchester's African American citizens but also a demonstration of a revival of the Bucktown area.

Source: Gerald L. Smith, *Kentucky African American Encyclopedia* (2015)