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INTRODUCTION

TUCK-A-HOE is the product of my 7th grade Language Arts classes at Williamston Junior High School who are members of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Association. The articles they have written, reflect their interest in various aspects of local history and their search for information has led them from Castine, Maine to Seattle, Washington! Most of the information in the articles was obtained from interviews with people in the community who had either known the subject of the article or who had personally experienced the event.

One important thing they have learned from this project is that all the history is not in the history books, but exists right around us and involves people we see every day. Most importantly, they have learned that they too, can be historians and that through recording these stories, they have made a valuable contribution to the citizens of our county.

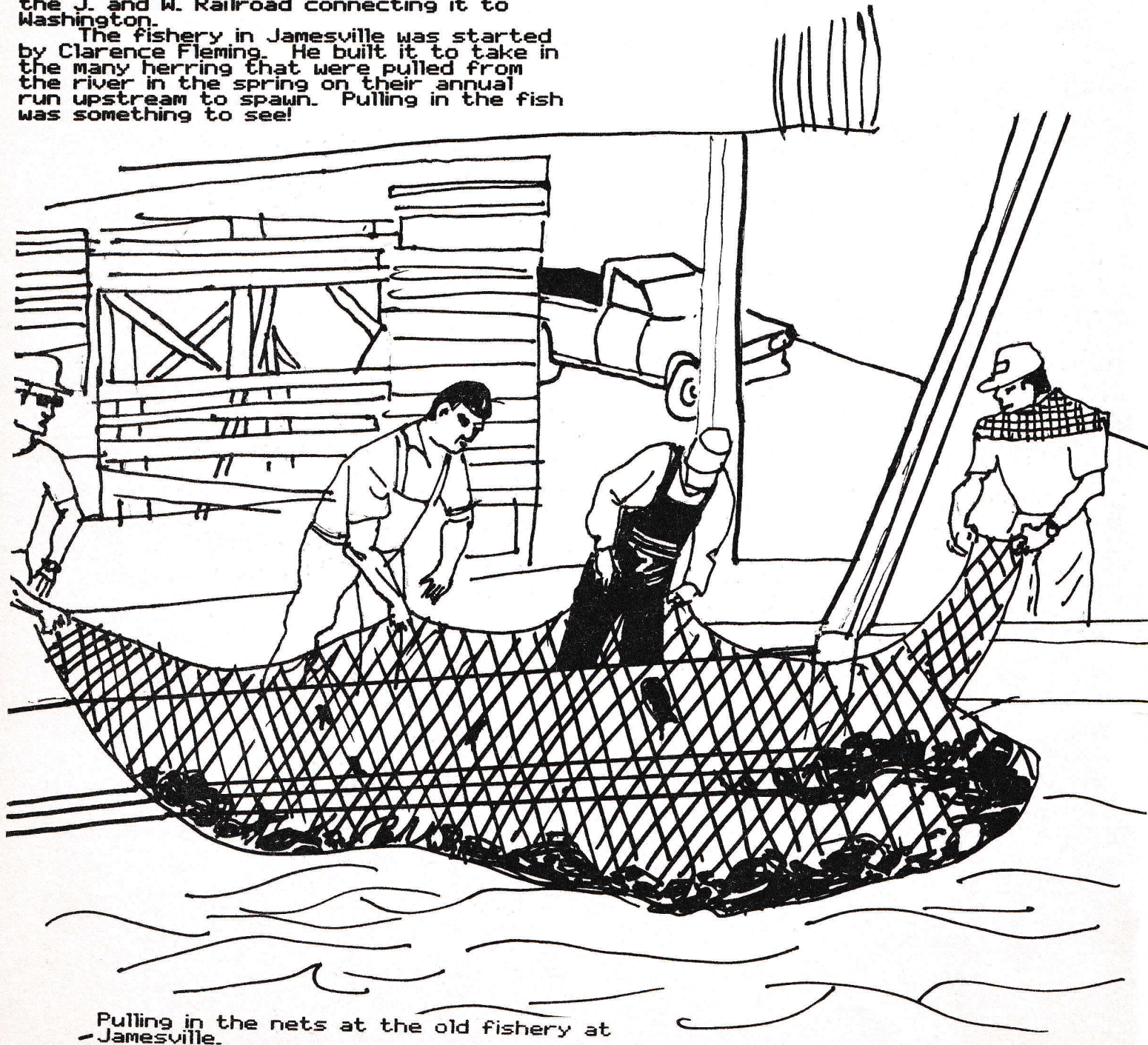
Elizabeth Roberson, Adviser

Clifford B. Lilley, Chad Grimes
and
Cathy Jo Robertson

We have been fortunate in Martin County to have the Roanoke River, one of eastern North Carolina's largest rivers running through our county. Through the years, it has not only provided the people with fish of many different kinds, but also has provided a means of transportation. At the turn of the century, fishing on a large scale in the county was an important industry and there were four fisheries operating along the river at that time. The fishery at Jamesville became the most important due in part to the J. and W. Railroad connecting it to Washington.

The fishery in Jamesville was started by Clarence Fleming. He built it to take in the many herring that were pulled from the river in the spring on their annual run upstream to spawn. Pulling in the fish was something to see!

bottom and corks attached to the top. This net was loaded on a boat, which took it way upstream. When dropped from the large flatboat, the net would bow out into a large horse-shoe shape. The lead rope of the seine was attached to two horses that were hitched to a windlass near the fishery. As the horses would walk in a circle, the net would be gradually drawn out of the water. Men would be standing along the bank to help guide the net in and dump the fish out onto the floor of the fishery. As many as 20,000 to 40,000 fish were pulled in at one time when the fishery was operating at its peak. It's quite different today however, when a catch of 3,000 is considered a good one.



Pulling in the nets at the old fishery at
Jamesville.

Arthur Fudd

They were then taken to Chowan to be packed and shipped all over the world.

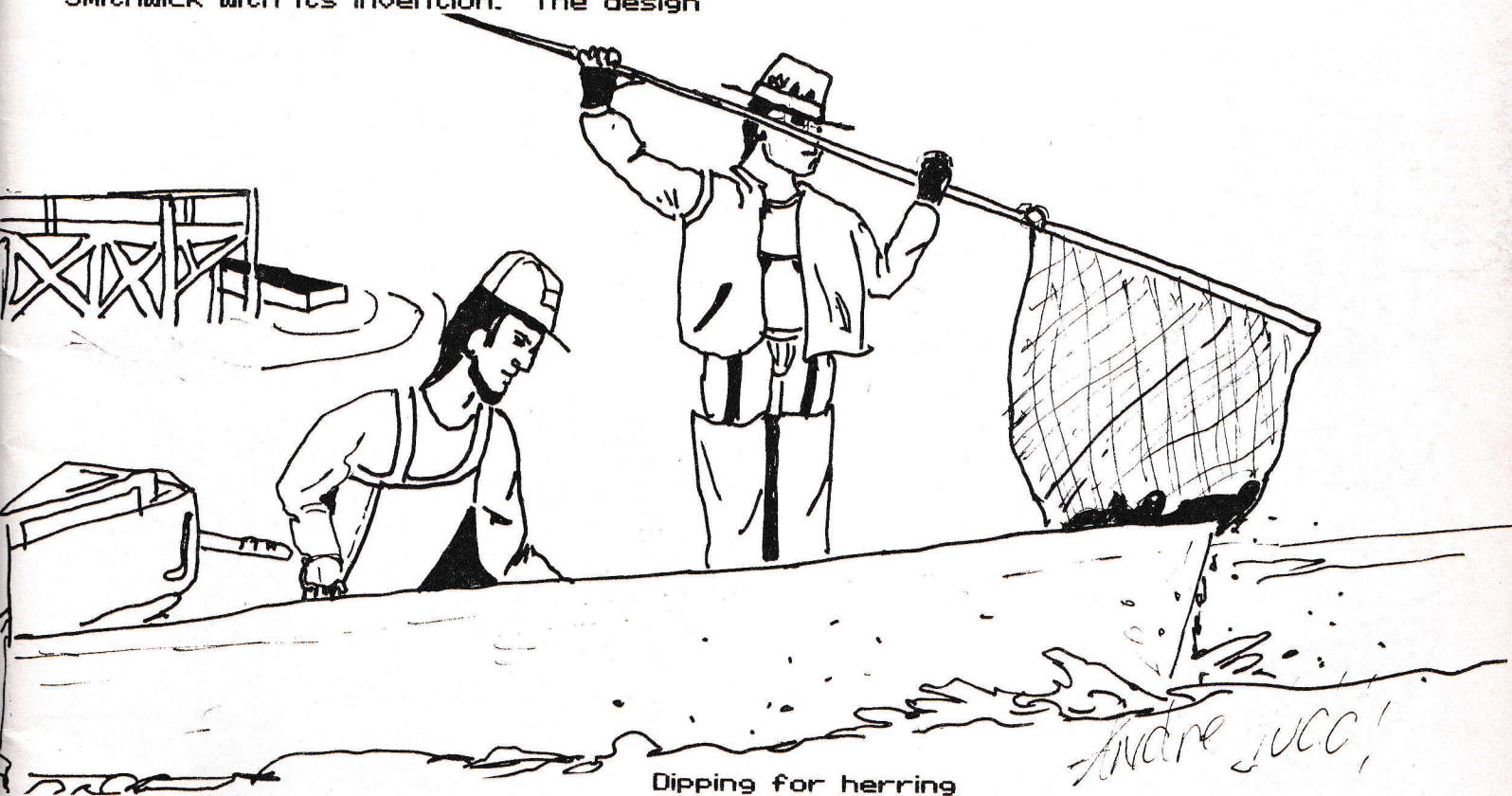
When the dam was built up river below Roanoke Rapids, the number of fish in this area dwindled considerably. The fisheries are no longer in operation, due in part to the smaller catches, as well as the decrease in demand for the fish. Most of the fishing on the Roanoke that is done today is for recreational purposes only.

There are many different methods for fishing in the Roanoke. Most of the fishermen today use the same methods as their fathers and grandfathers before them did. The most popular methods include the dip net and the drift net. Wire fish traps are sometimes used also. These are generally fastened with a rope to a bush or tree. The fish caught by this method are usually white perch or catfish. Sometimes a stray sturgeon will wander in it too.

One of the most unique methods of catching fish is by the "fishing machine". Nobody is sure how the machines first came to be used, but it was thought to have been invented by an Indian. There are others who credit a man named Smithwick with its invention. The design



The Fishing Machine



Dipping for herring

is similar to those used in Alaska to catch salmon, but the Roanoke River is the only river in the east that has a swift enough current to operate it successfully.

It is made of two cypress flats, 16 feet long and 4 feet wide. These flats, connected side by side, 8 feet apart by a long rotating beam. On one end of the beam are two doubled-arm paddles on ash poles, 12 feet long. A dip net 8 feet wide and 10 feet long, made out of elm, ash, or birch is covered with chicken wire and is connected to the beam between the two slats. The machine is then tied to a log over the river bank. When the paddles are put into the water, the current pushes against them, causing them to rotate. As it rises above the water, large numbers of fish are in the net, and

might include as many as 75 to 100. This machine was very popular during the Depression days and there were at least 25 to 30 of them operating on the river at that time. They became a source of full-time income for many people who could not find other jobs.

Although the methods mentioned are all efficient methods to fish, the most rewarding aspect of fishing comes when a fisherman takes his favorite rod and reel to his special "spot" on the river and sits back to wait for the "big one".

Even though herring aren't caught in the abundance they once were, people still gather on the river on Easter Monday for the annual celebration of the end of winter and the anticipation of "better days".

The Roanoke River is considered to be the most important river in the northern section of the state. It is formed by the junction of the Staunton and Dan Rivers in Virginia, traveling over four hundred miles where it empties into the Albemarle Sound. In 1738, Moseley named 18 land-owners living on the Roanoke River. A man named Wimble owned land on the river at this time and he gave the location of 28 other settlers, but gave no specific names.



A schooner docked at the wharf in Williamston in 1935

The Roanoke was a busy artery during the early 1800's and was of great importance at that time. It supplied not only a means of travel but also a generous supply of fish for food. The reason it was such an important trade route was because there weren't many roads or bridges in Martin County at that time, therefore there was little overland trade.

There were several shipyards operating along the Roanoke River near Williamston around 1785, with the earliest mention of one being in 1738. The first ship built was an 87 ton sloop named "THE HUNTER". After that, mostly schooners and brigs were built. On March 20, 1855, Elder C.B. Hassell had a notation, "Gilbert L. Moore had launched this day above

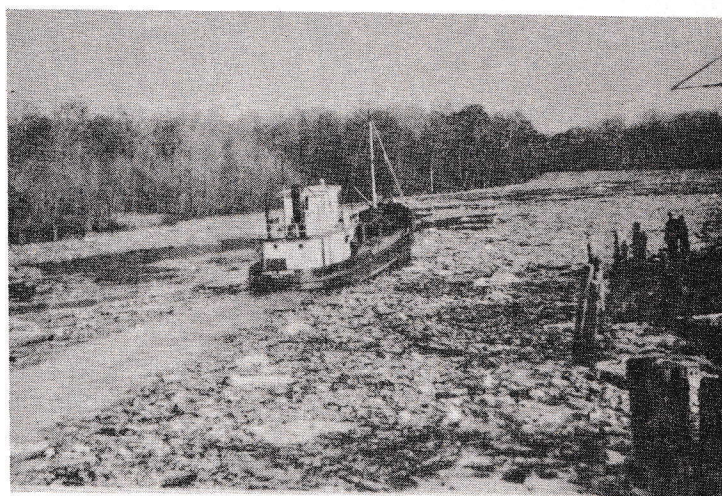
at an annual stockholders meeting. The canal was supposed to be built between Williamston and Washington. The subject seems to have been dropped for the time, but records show that in 1856 plans were begun again to build a system of canals connecting the Roanoke, Tar, and Neuse Rivers. It would consist of a chain of canals extending from Williamston on the Roanoke to Washington on the Tar, to New Bern on the Neuse. The plan proved to be too costly however, and was apparently never carried out.

by steamboats to the town of Halifax. It is known that more than 65 ships of different sizes and types operated on this river between 1835 and 1940. At one time, Williamston was the busiest port of northeastern North Carolina. As late as 1936, over 213,000 tons of freight was handled and the value of it all was in the millions of dollars. In fact, at this time, Williamston was the Roanoke's main port having a regular transportation schedule. Trade goods included salt, whiskey, sugar, coffee, fish, corn, molasses, fertilizer, tobacco, and timber.

Due to the sharp curves and rapids in its upper areas, navigation by large boats up the Roanoke River has always been a problem. The earliest record we have of a system to improve navigation on the river was in 1795 when the counties bordering the Roanoke sent representatives to Halifax to draw up a plan. They organized the Roanoke Navigation Company and sold shares at \$100. each.

Another charter for this company was made in 1812 when it controlled most of the transportation carried on in the Roanoke River. Tobacco was the principal commodity handled and there is a record of six hogsheads of tobacco being loaded onto bigger boats for shipment across the ocean. A canal around the falls and rapids in northern North Carolina made possible the route from Virginia to the sea. This company proved to be ineffective in handling shipping problems, however, and was dissolved in 1875.

In December 1824, linking the Roanoke and Pamlico Rivers by canal was discussed



Tug boat on the Roanoke River during the big freeze of 1936 when the river froze over

at an annual stockholders meeting. The canal was supposed to be built between Williamston and Washington. The subject seems to have been dropped for the time, but records show that in 1856 plans were begun again to build a system of canals connecting the Roanoke, Tar, and Neuse Rivers. It would consist of a chain of canals extending from Williamston on the Roanoke to Washington on the Tar, to New Bern on the Neuse. The plan proved to be too costly however, and was apparently never carried out.

navigate the Roanoke River. On April 15, 1829, "THE PETERSBURG", the first steamboat ever to navigate the Roanoke River, arrived at Halifax.

Sometime in the 18th Century, a landing was settled along the Roanoke River near Hamilton. The site was known as Hogtown or Hoggtown as seen on some of the earlier maps. The town thrived during the late 18th Century and early 19th Century.

Hogtown was probably settled as an inspection station for goods coming down the river. Some of the goods were hemp, flax, flour, butter, beef, pork, rice, indigo, tar, pitch, turpentine, staves, shingles, lumber, and deerskins. The name Hogtown may indicate the shipment of large quantities of live hogs downstream to Edenton.

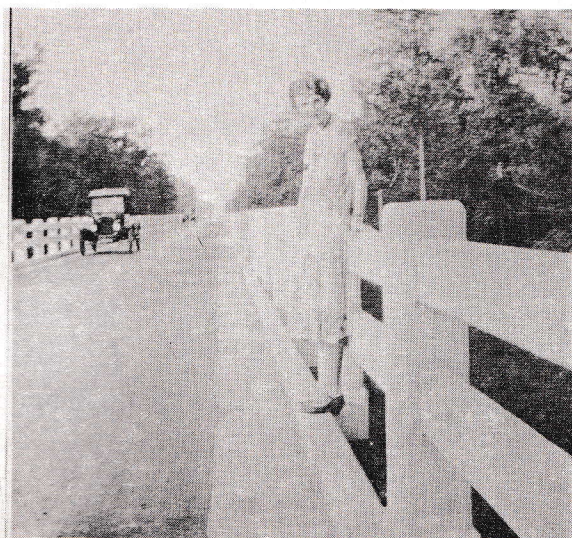
The Roanoke River was a very important factor of the development of Hogtown and Martin County. No one is sure about when Hogtown was founded exactly, but after a while a post office was established there on June 22, 1796. Later on, the Hogtown post office was renamed "Clark's Store." On January 10, 1842, it changed again to "Roanoke". The post office had several different post masters over the years. They were David Clark, William Clark, Kenneth Clark, Luman Whittlesey, and Thomas Jones.

There is no record of a warehouse being in Hogtown, but one was probably erected there in 1775. Hogtown was never incorporated but the post office remained there until after the time Hamilton was incorporated in 1804. Prior to that time, Hogtown had also served as a polling place for elections in the upper part of the county. After Hamilton was incorporated, an act was passed that the polling be taken in some designated place in town. After that time, there is little or no mention that Hogtown ever existed.

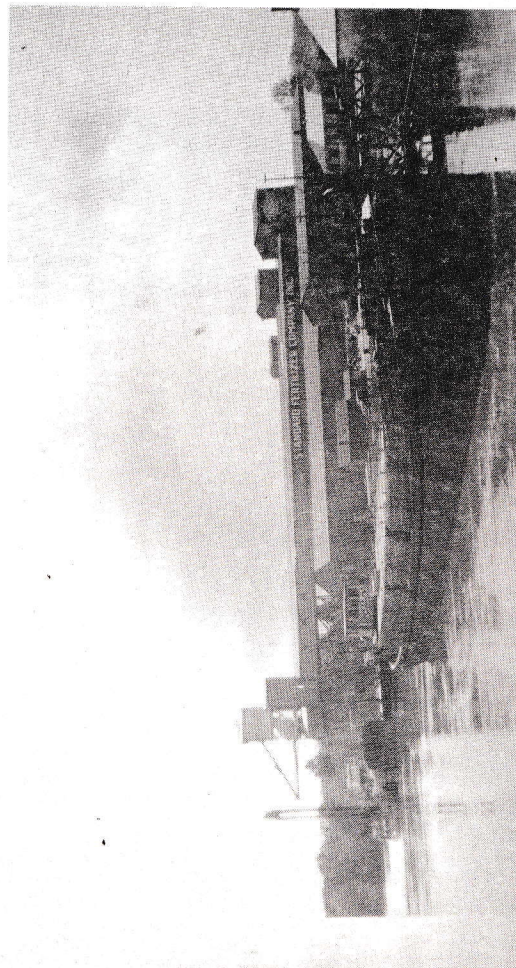
The land that Hogtown was located on is on the Rainbow Farm, owned and operated by Mr. Henry Winslow. He has found old objects on the land as well as some from the bottom of the river around the landing. These artifacts help confirm the fact that Hogtown really existed. Hogtown was a thriving landing for several years, but now is gone. The Roanoke River is still here though, and will never stop helping the people of Martin County.



Hog Town Landing as it looks today.

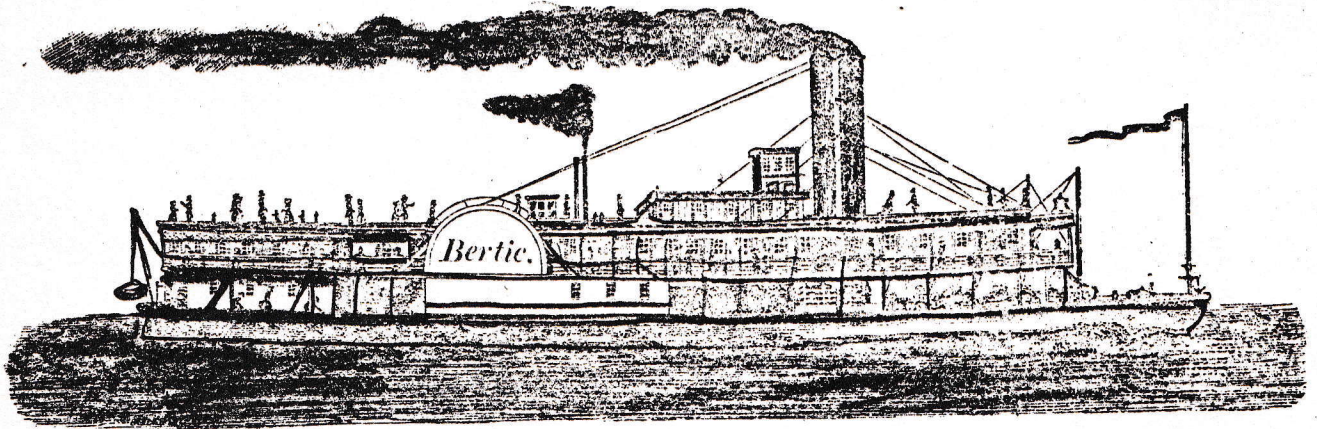


The new bridge over the Roanoke River was finished in early 1920's.



Lumber barge as seen at Williamston dock in 1937.

EXCURSION.



Go to the Commencement of the **WESLEYAN FEMALE COLLEGE** at **MURFREESBORO N. C.** all who are interested in pretty girls, music and flowers. The

ST'R BERTIE

will make a special trip for the occasion on **TUESDAY,**

JUNE 16TH, 1874;

Touching Plymouth	at 6	A. M.	Fare for the Round Trip	\$5.00
" Edenton	at 8	"	"	5.00
" Colerain	at 10	"	"	3.00
" Harrellsville	at 11-30	"	"	2.50
" Gatesville	at 12	M.	"	2.00
" Wynns	at 12-20	P. M.	"	2.00
" Winton	at 1-30	"	"	1.50

Arriving at Murfreesboro at 3-30.
Thursday morning at 6 o'clock.

Returning leave Murfreesboro

W. F. ASKEW,
Captain.

Baltimore, March 2d, 1846.

We are now receiving our supplies of Spring and Summer Dry Goods, of Foreign and Domestic Fabrics, and shall be adding thereto, constantly during the season; in part we name,

Cloths of all colours,
Cassimeres, newest styles,
Merino Cassimeres,
Croton Coatings,
Drap d'Ete,
Drillings, fancy and plain,
Cotton Pantaloon Stuffs, of great varieties
and prices,
Vestings, new styles and all prices,
Kentucky Jeans,
Tweeds,
Brown and Bleached Shirtings and Sheetings, of all widths;
Brown and Bleached Drills; Cotton Osnaburgs; Plaids; Apron Checks, &c. &c. &c.

Printed Lawns, new styles,
Organdies, " "
Ginghams, " "
Mous de Laine. " "
Alpacas,
Prints, great variety,
Cambrics and other White Goods,
Corded Shirts,
Bustle Shirts,
Ariel Shirts,
Grass and Hair Shirts,

By the time you next visit our market, we shall be fully prepared to offer for your examination one of the most complete stocks to be found in this or any other City, and on such terms as cannot fail to give satisfaction.

Soliciting a continuance of your patronage, we respectfully invite you to give us a call when in our market.

Your obed't servts, &c.

Pittman, Phillips & Co.

No. 256 Market Street.

of the century, roads in Williamston were in very poor condition. A 1906 issue of the ENTERPRISE states that in town the sidewalks were being built up and that the weeds were finally being cut down, but Main Street was almost blocked with wood and trash. It also told of the pleasure of driving out to Skewarkee Church on the new clay road that had replaced the deep sand that had almost made travel out there impossible.

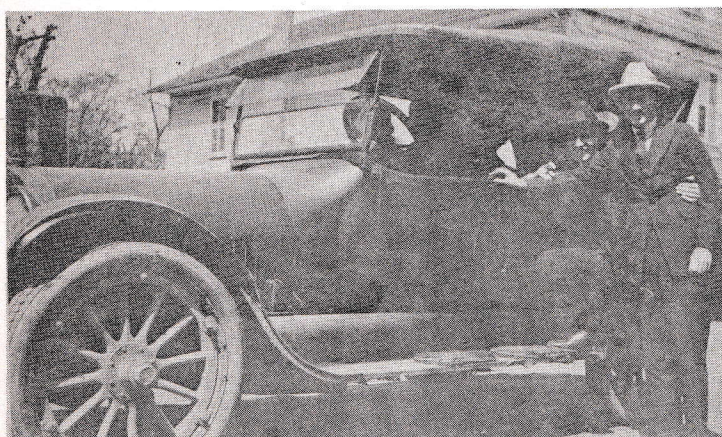
The first automobile in Martin County was purchased by Harry Biggs in 1907. He and T. Clyde Tilghman went by train to Wilson to pick it up. Mr. Tilghman had to go with Harry since he didn't have his driver's license yet. It took the better part of the day for them to travel the 55 miles to Wilson, but it took them 2 1/2 days to get back! It had been raining and the roads were in terrible condition. All the way home they kept getting stuck and had to get different people to pull them out of the mud. They spent the first night in Tarboro and the second night in Robersonville.

The first automobile wreck occurred sometime after that when Mr. Frank Barnes, A.W. Roberson, and Surry Parker were traveling into

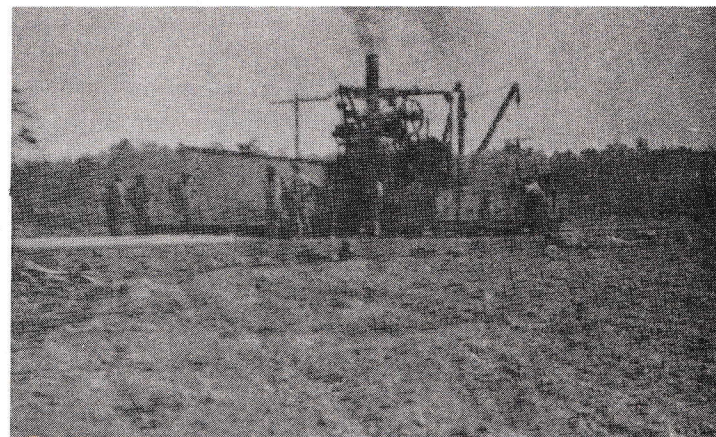
Barnes stated that Mr. Roberson passed by him, literally sailing with ease, landing some feet away. After hitting the stump, the machine crashed into a porch of a small tenant house on the farm. Jim Nicholson, who was sitting on his steps, couldn't move from his seat as he saw the contraption headed right in his direction. He was eating a pear at the time and when he saw the car barreling toward him, he simply opened his mouth wider and wider. Mr. Barnes declared later that it was the biggest mouth he had ever seen hung on a human being!

Someone who was passing by was sent to the home of Mr. W. Joe Witaker to telephone for a doctor. Mr. Witaker, who was so excited from all this activity, called Warren Biggs at the Biggs Drug Store. He said to Mr. Biggs, "Quick! Send a doctor. We've got a man dying out there. No wait! Send two doctors. We've got two men dying. One's in the tree and one's under the house!"

As soon as word got around about the wreck, people loaded up into wagons to go out and see what had happened. Fortunately no one was seriously injured, but it gave people a lot to talk about for days to come!



The first automobile in Williamston



Paving Highway 64 near Williamston- 1924



Main Street was unpaved as shown in this photo taken in 1901

Emily Nicholson and Lara Hoaglan

Many of you may not know that there are many ghost stories in Martin County. One of these stories is about a house in Williamston. The man who lives there has experienced many strange happenings.

His first sighting was a black spot about the size of a half dollar moving up one of the walls in his utility room. He has a fuse box on the wall there with some of the wires partially exposed. When he saw the spot he first thought it was a large black spider, but as he got closer to it, he saw that it was just a round spot that seemed to be pulsing in and out. Suddenly it started moving back and forth and then just disappeared in a crack in the wall.

Sometimes he finds closet doors or cabinets opened that he has closed, or hears noises like footsteps in the hall, or he sees things moving out of the corner of his eye. Sometimes he misses his personal belongings. One day he searched all over the house for his belt only to find it much later right in the middle of his bed in plain sight.

One night he said he got out of the shower and he distinctly heard a woman laughing, as if at him! Sometimes at night he can hear the voices of a man and a woman arguing somewhere in the house. When they get too loud and really disturb his sleep, he will yell at them to stop it, and they usually do!

The only time one of "them" has materialized in front of his eyes occurred one night when he was lying in bed. He had been asleep and woke up to look at his clock which was up high on an overhead shelf. As he looked at the digits 4:4:4 on the clock, he realized that he was not only looking at the clock, but was looking right through the figure of a woman! She was standing over his bed with her arms folded. She was wearing a white high-necked blouse with no collar and had on a long skirt. Her hair was pulled back in a tight bun and she had a very stern expression on her face. When he finally allowed himself to blink, she disappeared!

Sometimes he can even hear someone calling his name. One night he heard a loud noise in the house as if something had fallen. He got up to look, thinking that his dog had knocked a lamp over, but when he went into the room where his dog was, nothing was out of place and the dog was just sitting there. There have been some nights when he has heard someone rattling the door knob as if they are trying to get in.

There is one particular room in the house that his dog does not like to go in. When he passes the door of that room he stops and growls and will only go in the room if dragged in there! The owner of the house says that whenever you walk down the hall past that room, you always feel like someone is walking beside you!

One of the most recent things to occur was the breaking of one of the

knocked over and had its head broken off. His son bought him another one that was almost identical. Last week when he returned home from work, that statue's head was also broken off, identically the same way as the first one, with the head placed right beside the other one! It couldn't be explained because no one else had been in his house.

He has speculated about the origin of this presence in his house and in doing some research he found out that in 1911, a man died there. He was a rather disreputable character and somehow had been shot. The doctor came to the house to remove the bullets and operated on him in the front bedroom of the house.

A lady who lived next door remembers that day. She was a child, at the time, at the time, full of curiosity, standing outside while the operation was in progress. She says she still has vivid memories of the pans of bloody water being thrown out of the windows of that room. The man did not survive the operation and died that very night.

No one knows who or what causes the disturbances in this house, but one thing for sure is that "someone" or "something" is there. Since "they" obviously plan to do no harm to the occupant of the house, the man will continue to share his home with them!

"WHEELING TO SCHOOL"

by

Cedric Johnson

One of the Negro citizens who contributed much to education and religion in Martin County was George Thomas Hill. He was born in Washington County on February 8, 1872 and he and his family moved to Williamston in 1909. His parents had little money to spend for his education, so he worked his way through public schools and State Normal at Plymouth.

After finishing school, he taught in Tyrrell, Halifax, Pitt, and Martin Counties. His school in Martin County was in Poplar Point near Ballard's Bridge. He is remembered by many as the professor who rode his bicycle to school every day. It was said that you could set your clock by him since he passed by at the same time every morning, no matter what kind of weather they were having.

In 1911, the local paper gave an account of the closing of the Roanoke Seminary in Williamston. Professor Hill was its president and it was considered to be the best of its class in North Carolina. It helped train many of the black people in this area, having an industrial department which trained girls in sewing and dressmaking skills. Its aim was to establish the principles of decency and thrift among its pupils.

Professor Hill was also a minister and in 1925, served as pastor of Mount Shiloh Baptist Church. On June 25, 1972, Professor Hill died, ending a life of service to others. He was an humble servant of God, serving as teacher and pastor to many.

by
Catherine Revels

"Several homes were saddened during the past few days in this county when it was reported that the jolly old gentleman, Santa Claus, had died a few days earlier. Every death brings sadness, but the death of Santa Claus would bring a great sadness to a world of children.

Economically, Santa Claus is probably on the brink of death, but he isn't dead and will visit in the several homes where the saddening news was told, it was learned from local church workers who will see that Santa visits those homes.

Every effort was made to assist the old gentleman to visit every home in the county. In some homes his visit will be unbelievably short, but it is hoped he will get all the way around Christmas Eve." This was the situation in Martin County as stated in a 1931 issue of the ENTERPRISE.

My aunt, Elizabeth Williams Revels, was about my age during the Depression and she recalls that the church had a Christmas party and that each child received a bag with an apple, an orange, and maybe a piece or two of candy, and one gift. She told about walking in the woods and cutting down their Christmas tree and holly to decorate with. At the time they lived on Railroad Street, where the Sunshine Center Laundromat is now, and they walked down the railroad tracks out behind where Lawrence Eason Lilley now lives. Decorations on their tree were paper chains made from notebook paper that she and her brothers and sisters had colored and they strung the tree with holly berries. Aunt Elizabeth said, "It

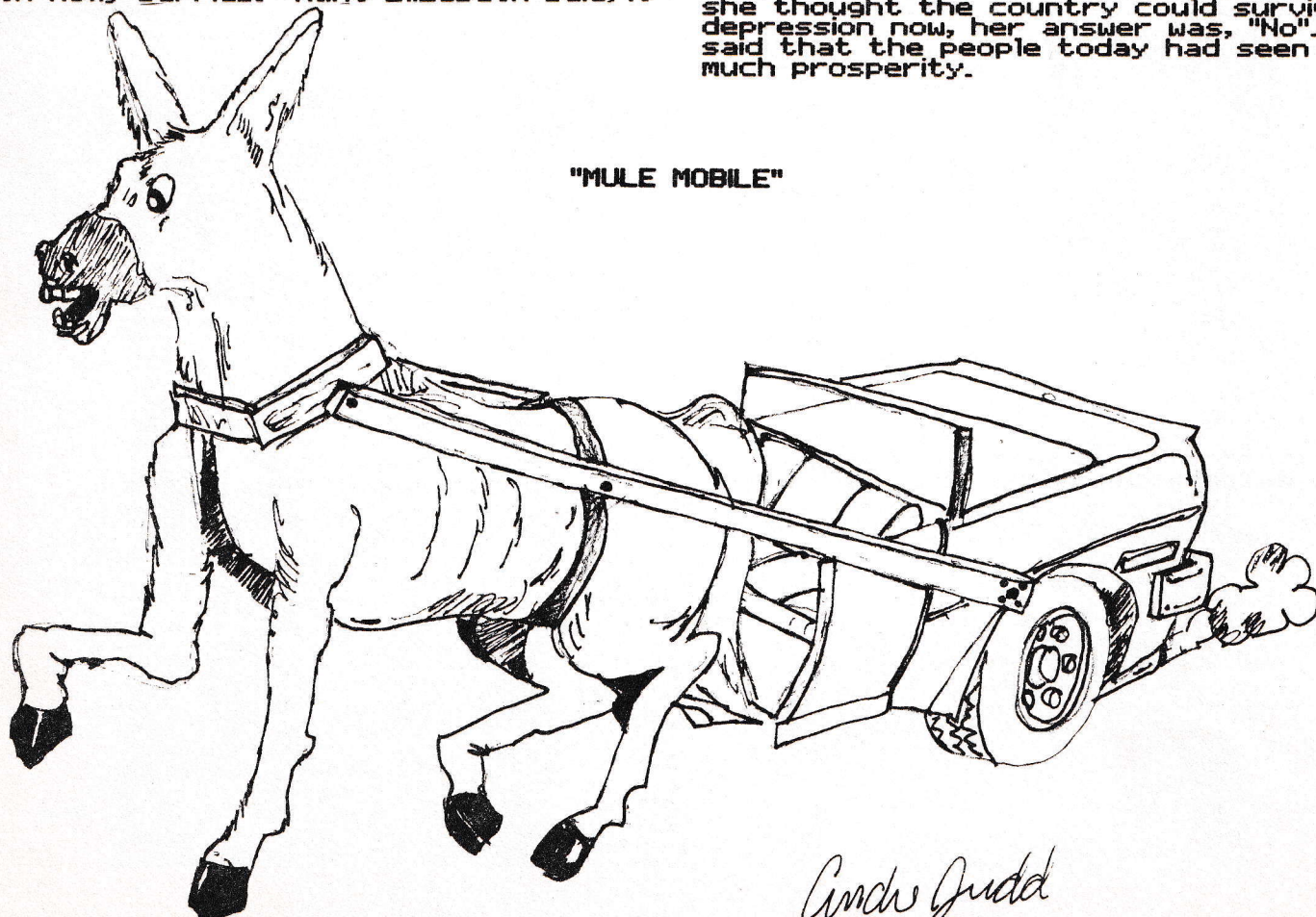
mother went uptown with only \$4.00 and bought gifts for all the family. That year she got a little doll bed about six inches long with a penny doll in it and she said she was just as proud of it as if had cost \$100!"

Miss Estell Coltrain Corey had been married about four years when the depression started. She was living on Ray Street, having moved to town from the Farm Life area. She remembers that there were several houses on the street at the time, but the sidewalks and street was not paved. Her husband, Joe Gray, worked at Williamston Motor Company and he sold right many cars, but the people had to finance them. She has an old pedal tyhpe Singer sewing machine that she got because someone could not pay for his car, and he gave the machine to her husband for payment.

Farmer's in this section found a way to have transportation even though they couldn't afford a car or the gas to run one. They invented what was known as the "mule-mobile", a contraption that was half mule and half automobile! By using the mule for the motor and using the rear end and wheels of the old family car, the farmers eliminated the cost of gas and oil and substituted hay and water. Most of the vehicles were of the cart type. Occasionally a four wheel touring mule-mobile complete with cushions, soft upholstery and everything, could be seen bringing a family to town!

During this time, the people raised most of their food and what they couldn't raise in town, they had families on the farm to raise it for them. It was noted that people were not as wasteful then as they are now. When I asked Mrs. Corey if she thought the country could survive a depression now, her answer was, "No". She said that the people today had seen too much prosperity.

"MULE MOBILE"



Andre Gude

by
Catherine Revels

The years between 1933 and 1942 were known as the Great Depression. It was a time of widespread unemployment and hardship. To help relieve this situation, in 1933 President Franklin Roosevelt moved Congress to create the Civilian Conservation Corps, better known as the CCC. It was composed of young men between the ages of 18-25 who were unemployed. Their job was tree planting, soil conservation, road building, and fire control. The workers received \$30. a month, \$25. of which was sent back home to the needy families. They received their food, lodging, and clothing free. If a member of a family was already employed, another member of the family was not eligible for the program.

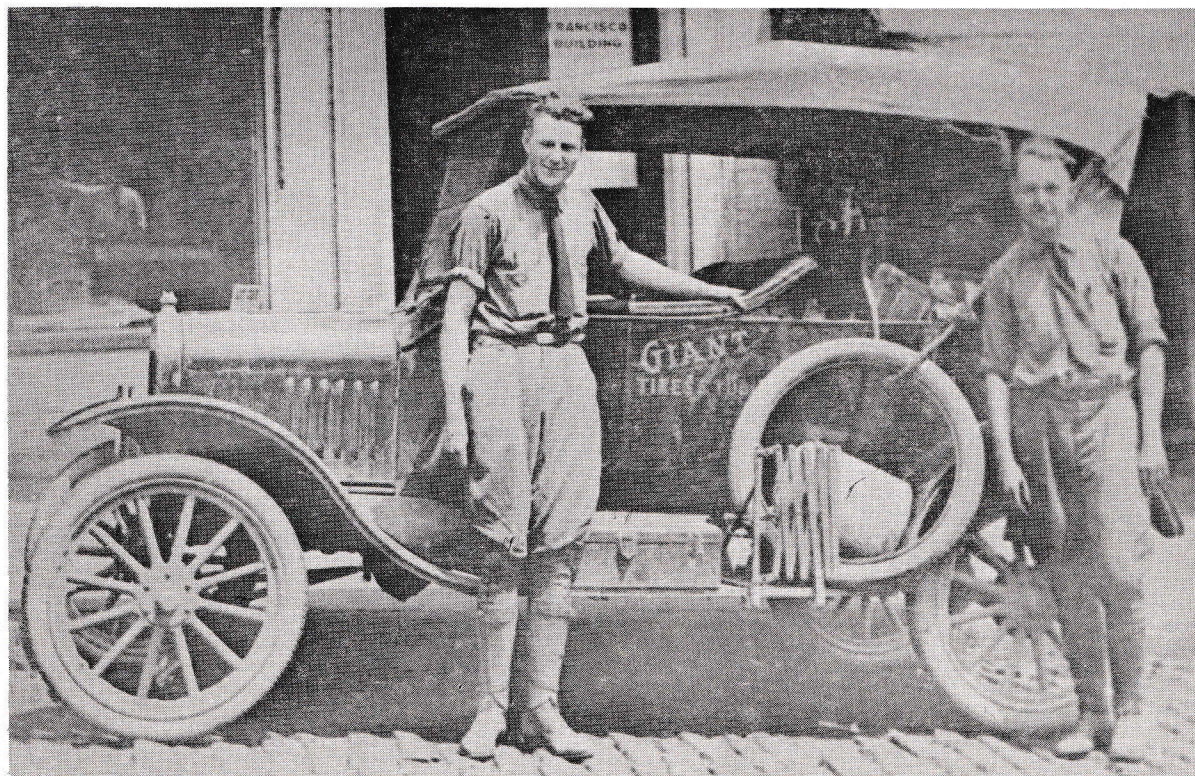
Even though Martin County did not have a CCC camp, several men from here signed up for the program. They went to various camps around the state including one in Windsor, Durham, Manteo, and somewhere in the mountains. According to the May 5, 1933 issue of the ENTERPRISE, 29 men from Martin County had been accepted for the program. They were William Gurkin, Grady Modlin, Charlie Warren Norris, Joseph Thomas Phelps, Wesley Williams, Felton Daniels, Jeremiah Peele, and Pilmon Boston who were from Jamesville. The Williamston boys included William Howard Cherry, Linwood Roberson, Raymond Williams, Robert Lee Dickerson, Walter Jones, William Henry Barber, Jim Staton Godard, and James Lee Cherry. From the Robersonville-

Russell Rawls, and William O. Council. Two boys from Dardens, and Robert Earl Reason were also enrolled. More than 3 million boys and young men, included 60,000 from North Carolina were enrolled in the CCC from 1933 to 1942. It was one of the most popular programs of Roosevelt's New Deal.

My grandfather, T.T. Todd, was a young man living in Windsor at this time. He joined the CCC and was sent to a camp near Durham and from there he went to Manteo. He helped clear land and build roads. He doesn't remember whether Martin County had a camp, but said that the one in Windsor was located where Dr. Jordan's house is today. Harry Smith, who later became sheriff, was the leader of the Windsor camp. The training was very similar to Army training, and the first four weeks the boys were not allowed to go to town but once and then only as a group.

He remembers being sent to Manteo where he had to help plant the grass on the dunes. He couldn't remember where the grass came from, but said that it was brought in on trucks in bundles and that it looked much like rye grass. In 1941, he received a honorable discharge with good recommendation.

Most armies destroy, but this peacetime army helped conserve our resources and brought beauty to our land. These veterans are now in their 60's and 70's, but their work is still visible from the Blue Ridge Parkway which they built in the mountains of North Carolina, to the grass covered sand dunes at the Outer Banks.



In 1885, before this school was operating, the Amherst School served the children of the district and it was located near the present day Farm Life School. It was only about 16ft. by 20 ft. At that time there were 64 school age children in the district served by this school and the money appropriated for operating expenses for that first year was \$72.32!

A fifteen year controversy followed as to the area the district covered, the location of the school, and the overcrowded condition existing there. In 1910, this school was built at Kelley's Hill with the local school committee consisting of J.L. Coltrain, James A. Roberson, and John D. Mizelle. The land was purchased from the trustees of the Williamston Methodist Church.

There has been much speculation concerning the architecture of the building. Some say that the high pitched roof and the star in front were put there because the land was purchased from a church. Other people say that one of the carpenters who helped build the school was a preacher and he wanted to leave his mark on the building. There's even another story that the school was completed near Christmas time and that accounted for the star in front.

The school year usually began sometime around July or August when the crops were laid by. It would then close about the middle of September so the children could help pick cotton. After the crops were harvested, school would re-open. Christmas time was a very special time at the school and some people remember local people coming in to build a stage for the Christmas play. Even today, Christmas decorations are still hanging on the walls of the old school where they were placed so many years ago. Mr. Asa Hardison who is 91 years old, says that he remembers helping make those wreaths by tying pine cones, holly, and evergreen branches on them with tobacco twine.

The school day began at approximately 8:00 when the teacher would stand in the front of the school and ring a large hand bell. The day ended at 4:00. School was only in session between 4 to 6 months a year.

To qualify to be a teacher in those days, you had to have at least a fourth grade education. Also, a committee of 4 to 5 men on the local school board would examine your moral character. For example, they considered whether you drank spiritous liquors, smoked cigarettes, attended church regularly, and how you conducted yourself in the community. There were many teachers and substitutes mentioned who taught at Kelly's Hill. Some of them were Allie Roberson, Victoria Roberson, Betty House, Myrtle Bailey, Lizzie Griffin, Tom Getsinger, Doc Hardison, and Betty Mizelle.

The subjects taught here were reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, English, literature, geography, North Carolina history, world history, and sanitation (health). One of their favorite things to do was to have a spelling bee. Mrs. Katie Hardison proudly remembers attending the spelling bee that was held at the courthouse in Williamston where she

simply began in a book and when you finished it you progressed to the next one. Even though there weren't any grades as we know them today, when you finished your education here it was equivalent to the completion of the 7th grade.

The methods of teaching varied. Having only one teacher, she would call a group who was in the same book to the front of the classroom. While she worked with them, the others would study at their seats. Another method was to have them work problems on the blackboard. While some students were working at the board, the rest of the class sat on wooden benches, made from one long slab of wood with wooden pegs for legs. In class, they had slate boards and pencils to write with. For homework assignments, they used a paper tablet and a pencil that cost one penny.

Discipline wasn't a big problem in those days because the children knew that if they were punished at school, they would get even more when they got home. Punishment at school might mean standing in the corner, getting a "pop" on the hand, or a good "switching".

It was sometimes difficult to complete the homework assignments because it had to be done in front of an open fireplace. As things became more modern, however, lanterns were used. For some of the wealthier families, carbide lights were available.

Transportation to the school was very simple. You either walked or you stayed home! On rainy days or when there was very severe weather, a parent or neighbor would hitch up the mule and cart and pick up all the children on their road and take them to and from school. Only one person was reported to have ridden to school daily and that was Annie Roberson who had been born with a crippling disease. She rode in a cart pulled by a billy goat.

School sanitation and utilities in those days left a lot to be desired! In later years, the girls had an outdoor toilet, but as for the boys, someone told me, "You just hit the woods!" The water for drinking came from an underground spring and the children would drink from a dipper made from half a coconut shell. In the winter, water was carried into the school in a bucket and everyone would use the same dipper to drink from. In later years, a well was dug on Charlie Roberson's property next door, with benches all around to sit on. When it was real hot, the children could not only get a drink of water, but could also wash their faces.

Air-conditioning in the summer months was simply a raised window. Heating in the winter was furnished by a large wood heater in the center of the classroom. Some of the men remember when they were in school, going out in the woods at recess collecting lightwood knots to start fires with. For lights on dark days, they used kerosene lanterns hanging from the ceiling. At Christmas time, they used real candles for tree lights.

When the school door opened and the children began to file in to take their seats, the only name brand clothing you might have seen was either Red Camel or Blue Bell bib overalls. The boys sometimes wore knickers and in the winter time, boys

made of sateen, covered by flannel petticoats. In those days there were no sweaters, so the next best thing was a homemade flannel coat. In the summer, the dresses were made of a lighter weight material called calico and most of the time in hot weather they went to school barefooted. When the weather got cold enough for shoes again, some of the children were fortunate enough to wear store-bought shoes, but for many all they had was a pair of homemade brogans.

One lady remembers Mrs. Louinda Corey making shoes out of tanned cowhide. She also half-soled bought shoes as well.

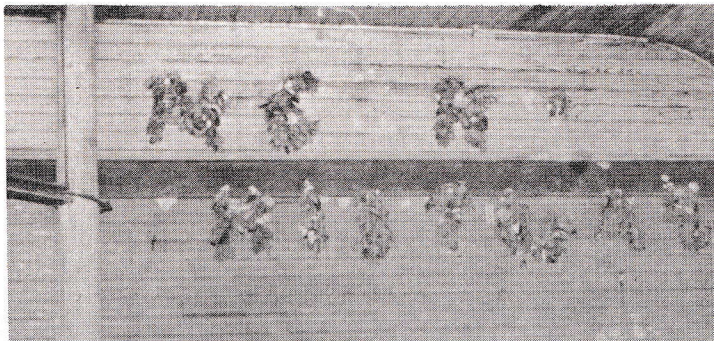
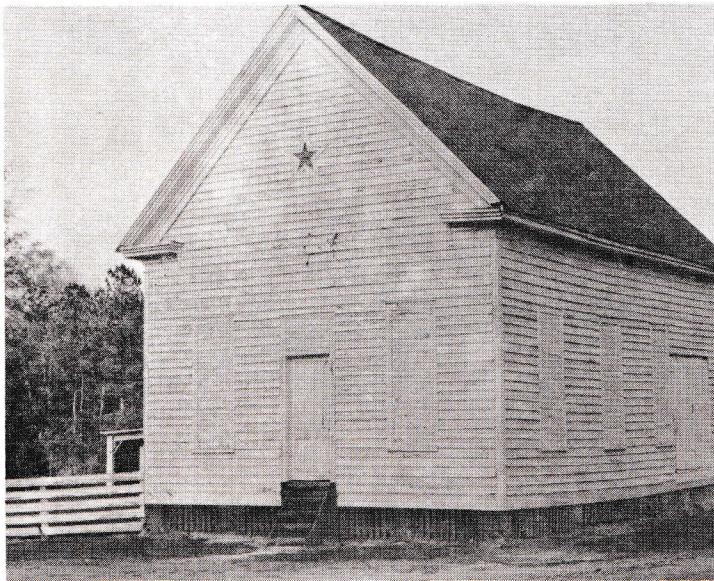
Kelley's Hill School didn't have a cafeteria, but some of the lunches that were taken to school sounded very tasty. They included ham biscuits, fried herring, baked sweet potatoes, boiled eggs, fried chicken, sausage, and molasses cake. Families who had more than one child in school packed their lunches together. Mrs. Marie Manning remembers one family coming to school with a large square bucket the size of a lard stand. She said that a short time before lunch, they would put the bucket on top of the wood heater to warm it up for lunch. She still remembers the smell of hominy, seasoned with cracklings, simmering in that bucket, with a little bag of sweet potatoes and a spoon for each child to eat out of the bucket with. She also remembers one

pickie your pork. For an added treat, some of the children would take a raw sweet potatoe for a snack.

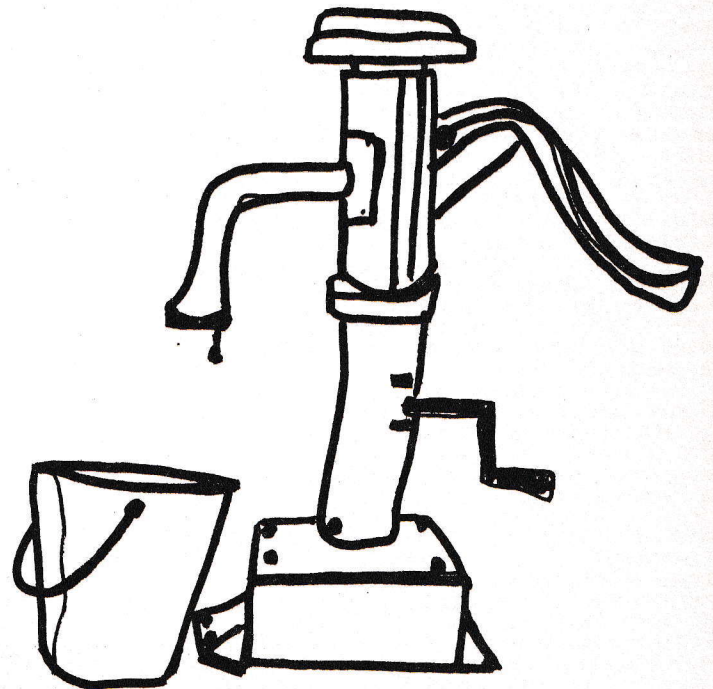
At recess, the children played all kinds of games. Their baseball game was very similar to ours, except their baseball was made out of tobacco twine and their bat, a stick cut out in the woods. While the little ones played "ring-around-the-roses", the older ones were playing games such as "Leading Den", tag, "Sling the Biscuit", and "Hail Over."

All the senior citizens I interviewed who attended school at Kelley's Hill were very proud of their school. They all remembered their commencement day when they had the chance to go to Williamston and compete with other schools in the marching competition. Asa Hardison would pick the banjo while the other children marched in step. They were all dressed alike. The girls wore navy blue pleated skirts with white middie blouses and blue caps. The boys wore navy blue pants and white shirts. They won first place two years in a row, and the prize was \$25.00 in cash and a United States flag. Other activities on commencement day included essay contests, sack races, games, speakers, and a picnic to be remembered by all.

These one-room schools are a thing of the past, but the quality of the students they produced attest to the fact that they did a super job!



These are the remains of the wreaths that spelled out the words MERRY CHRISTMAS. They were hung here in about the year 1900!



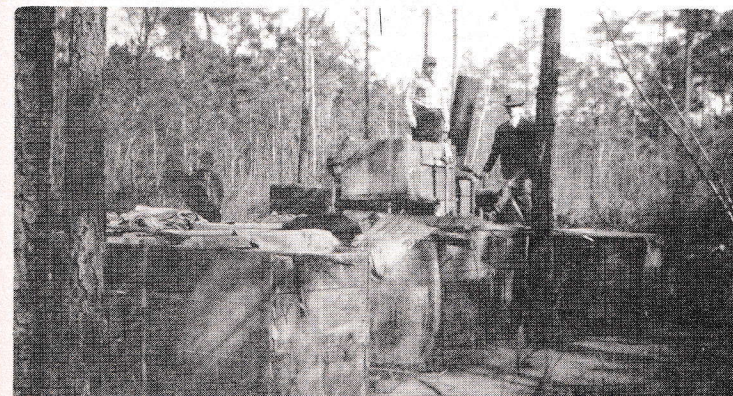
by
Deedee Mills, Hope Robinson,
and
Kristal Holliday

Bootleg whiskey, sometimes known as "moonshine" or "white lightning" is unlawfully distilled liquor. The history of moonshine goes as far back as the year 1260 when the Arabians used a distilled beverage called "aquavita." They taught its manufacture to the Spaniards and the Spaniards in turn, taught it to the monks of Ireland. As Ireland was at that time under the rule of England, it wasn't long before the Irish and the neighboring Scotch people began to operate small whiskey stills in their homes and hills in an effort to evade the English tax. Even today the Irish illicit whiskey is called "potheen" from the Irish word "poitin" which means a small pot such as was commonly used in cooking the mash.

In 1919, Congress passed a law prohibiting the manufacture and sale of distilled spirits for drinking purposes. This was the beginning of the famous Prohibition Era which would last until 1933. It was at this time the illicit liquor trade began to flourish with the absence of legal whiskey. These distillers became known as "moonshiners" and that name has carried down to the present time.

Making moonshine is a relatively easy job. The ingredients are basically corn meal, sugar, and malt. For each barrel in the still, you need 3/4 of a bushel of coarsely ground corn meal and 50 pounds of sugar. You then pour scalding water over this mixture to "cook the mash". To this mixture you add 1/4 bushel of malt and more water. This is left to stand from 2 to 6 weeks and allowed to ferment, after which time it is ready for distilling.

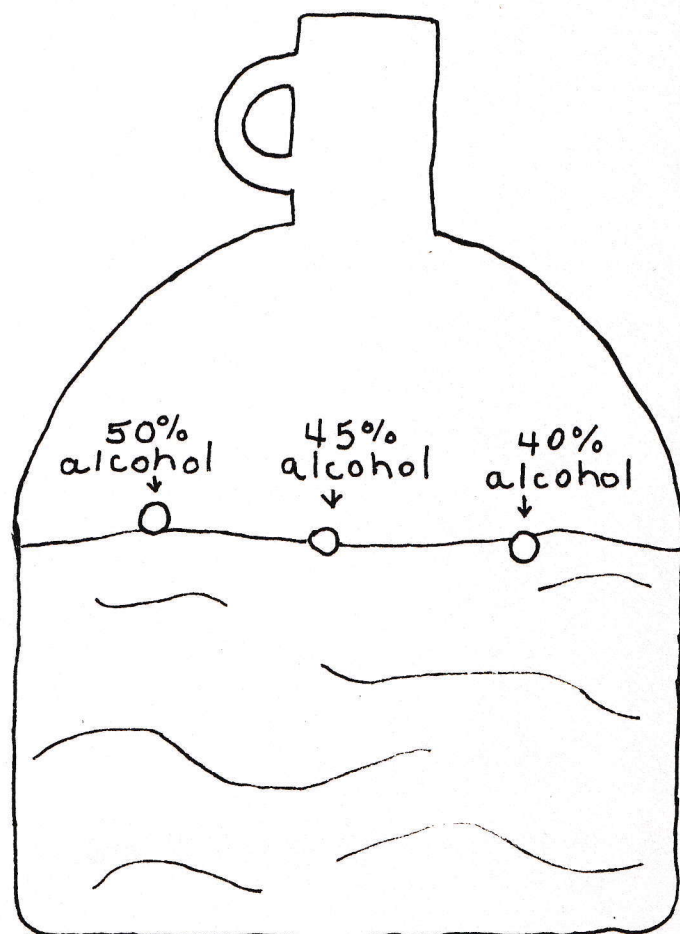
The liquor still is made of copper kettles, a coiled tube called a "worm" and several wooden barrels. In order to get the copper to coil as it should, sand is put inside the tube which is then coiled around a tree giving it the desired shape. A fire is built under the copper kettle which contains the "raw mash." As this begins to steam, it goes through the worm leading into another barrel where it is cooled. This turns it back to liquid again and it drips into glass jugs or the large five gallon jars called "demi-Johns." Six barrels of mash will yield about eighteen gallons of liquor. This sells for about \$25.00 a gallon. Making this liquor is a dangerous operation in more ways than one. The March 31, 1925 issue of the ENTERPRISE told of a man being killed in the county by flying bricks when the boiler of his still burst.



Liquor stills in operation in Martin County in the 1940's.

remedy and was guaranteed to "knock out" a cough! Farm animals have been known to develop a taste for moonshine also. Sometimes pigs or cows would discover the discarded mash from a still and would eat it, becoming intoxicated. Others, like those of J.J. Roberson, however, died from eating the mash. In the March 13, 1925 issue of the ENTERPRISE a description of this event is given.

Through the years, Bear Grass has had the reputation of making some of the best "white lightning" in the country. It started back before prohibition when there were many government-licensed stills operating in the Bear Grass district. This was between the years 1880 and 1908. At that time, the distillers were noted for making excellent brandy from grapes, apples, peaches, and plums. When prohibition came, the stills were simply moved out of the yards and into the woods and swamps. Reliable reports have stated that "Bear Grass Booze" has been served in bars as far away as New York City and Washington, D.C.!



When the alcohol dripped into the jugs, the "bootleggers" needed to know when they were getting too much water in it. When it got real hot and the water started boiling, you didn't want it to go over the sides because then you would have weak whiskey and you couldn't sell it.

So they would get a bottle and shake it up until the bubbles would rise to the top. When it sits and gets still, if that bubble is above the line, it's above 100 proof, which is 50% alcohol. Most people wanted it split between the line which was 90 proof or 45% alcohol. If it was below the line, it was 40% alcohol which is only 80 proof, and considered to be too weak.

almost caught the boys who were there splitting wood for the fire. The boys escaped, but the still was destroyed. From there, the agents went to a site near the Daniel Staton millpond where 12 barrels were discovered. They found parts of the still submerged in the pond to avoid detection.

According to the August 7, 1928 issue of the ENTERPRISE, that was a hard week for moonshiners. That week alone, 2 copper stills and 6000 gallons of beer were destroyed. They were found on Reedy Swamp and in the Biggs School District. As recently as 1964, 7 stills were seized in Bear Grass and in September of 1965, 8 stills were seized. As late as 1970, 968 stills were destroyed in the state.

Gold Point, another town in Martin County, had a reputation as a leading legal whiskey manufacturing center before \$1.10 tax stamps were put on each gallon of whiskey they manufactured. After the distillery stopped its operation, whiskey was shipped into the town by railroad. One man of the area said he remembered seeing as many as 100 barrels of whiskey at the depot in Robersonville bound for Gold Point saloons.

dollars. As these men would approach a still, people would warn each other in a variety of ways. Sometimes they would blow horns or shoot three times in the air. If you were caught and it was your first offense, you would usually be put on probation and just pay a fine. However, if this was your second offense, the judge would normally give you a year and a day in the federal penitentiary. If you were not around the still at the time the revenuers discovered it, they could find ways of telling who it belonged to by fingerprints on empty bottles nearby or by matching a broken piece of an ax handle with the remaining piece found in the suspect's woodshed. After the still was discovered, the agents would blow it up with dynamite.

Putting the whiskey on the market presented another problem, but the ingenious bootleggers would smuggle their product in extra gas tanks in the car. Other times they would just load up the trunk of the car with the jugs, but whenever a car passed by the revenuer with its back end hanging down lower than the rest of the car, he usually knew he had caught another one!

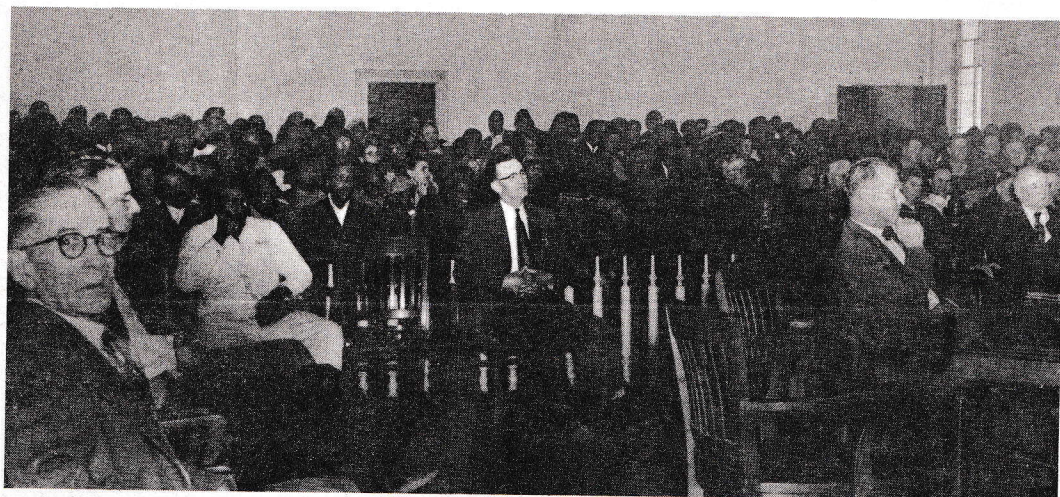


Unique liquor still found in Martin County in 1951. Shown in picture left to right: John Hassell, Joe Roebuck, John Roebuck, & Charlie Moore.

house converted into a still. They said it fairly shone from her daily polishing and they hated having to destroy it! Another one tells about the woman who was making whiskey, but they could never catch her with it so they could have proof enough to prosecute her. Everytime they would raid her house, she'd pour the whiskey in the sink. One night, unbeknowing to the woman, the revenue's disconnected her sink pipe on the outside and put a bucket under it. When they knocked at her door, she ran to pour out her whiskey and it ran out, right into their bucket. They got her that time!

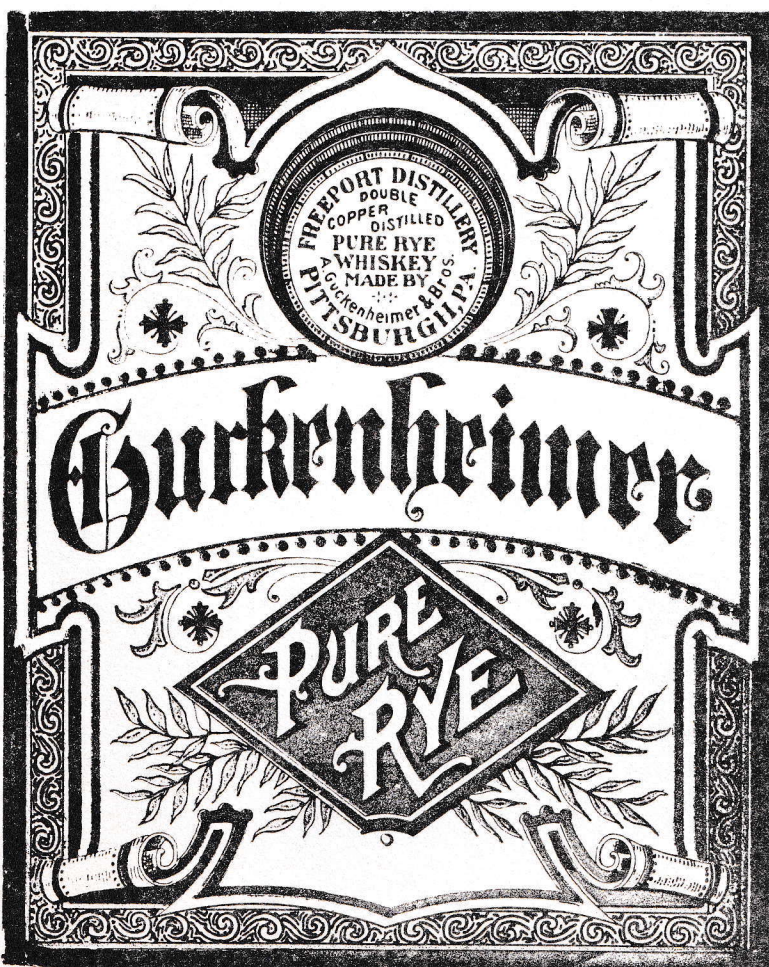
out, then they'd have to get it out themselves. They said that if that was the way she wanted it, they would get it out, but when she saw the stick of dynamite that they planned to put in her kitchen floor, her defiance faded and they said they never saw anyone ladle whiskey out at fast as she did!

The home-made liquor business has declined through the years and one seldom hears of a still being destroyed these days. With its demise however, it is being replaced with the growing of marijuana which may in time have some stories of its own to tell!



Bootlegger's trial in Williamston -Feb.1953





Labels that were actually used on bottles of bootleg whiskey manufactured in Bear Grass in the 1940's.

BEHIND THE MURAL

The son of the artist of the Williamston Post Office mural shares a part of his life.
by
Mimi Courtney

High on the walls of the Williamston Post Office is a beautiful mural of the Wright Brothers and their first flight at Kitty Hawk. It shows Wilbur and Orville Wright with their newly constructed plane. It also shows many interesting onlookers, an older man dressed in a business suit, several young boys, and a boy riding a bicycle. This mural is so familiar that most residents don't give it a second thought, much less wonder who painted.

One day as I was looking at the painting, I did begin to wonder who was responsible for its being there and that's when my search began. My inquiry led me to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. which provided me with the name of the artist's son Malcolm, who is now living in Castine, Maine. From correspondence with him, I was able to write this article.

The mural was painted in 1940, during the Great Depression. The word "depression" means "hard times" and it certainly was hard times for many people in the country. When Franklin D. Roosevelt became President, he promised a "New Deal" for the American people. His plans provided many jobs for men and women and through the WPA, the Works Progress Administration, lots of workers were given jobs to do, including artists. The government held a contest to decide which artists would get the privilege of painting murals in various public buildings throughout the country. Philip Von Saltza received the commission to paint a mural in the Williamston Post Office.

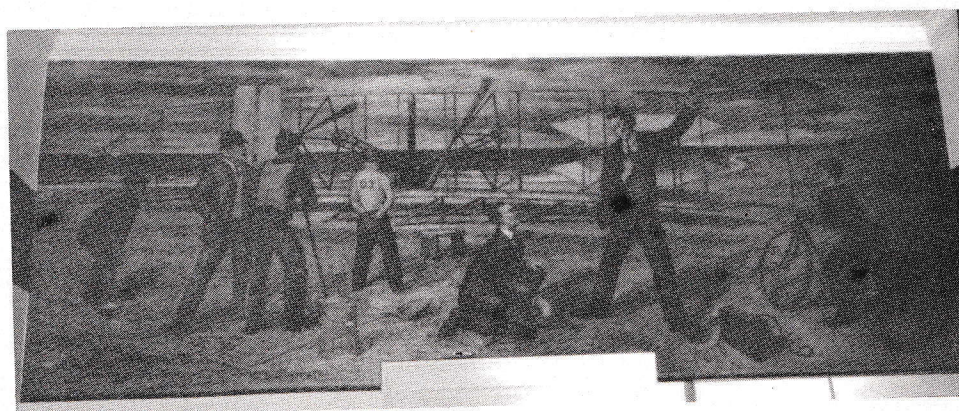
Philip Von Saltza was born in Stockholm, Sweden on March 9, 1885. His family moved to the United States when he was seven years old. At first he had a difficult time in school, because he could speak very little English. He learned how to read by reading the comics in the paper which had a picture to accompany

the written words. Also, his father, the kids to him every night after supper. The kids at school teased him unmercifully because of his difficulty in speaking English and also because he had such blond hair, they called him "Whitey". In spite of all this discouragement, Philip went on to college at Columbia University where he studied mining engineering. While in college he was an All-American football player and was captain of the rowing crew.

After working as a mining engineer for several years, Philip decided to become an artist. This interest in painting was due in part to the fact that his father Carl was also an artist. His life in Maine was difficult because he had trouble making a living as an artist. This didn't very accurate in every detail. Orville sent him a letter describing that first flight at Kitty Hawk and a picture of himself and Wilbur with their airplane. Using this as a guide, Philip began his painting which he set up in an old barn that he had remodeled for a studio.

When the mural was completed, Philip and two of his sons drove to Williamston to hang it on the post office wall. Some of these artists sent their murals to their final destination letting someone else mount them on the wall, however, Philip had taken so much pride in his painting that he wanted to see that it was mounted properly and that it looked right hanging on the wall. Philip's son, Malcolm, stated that the money received for this painting aided the family through a most difficult time. Philip Von Saltza died in 1980 at the age of 95 and his son said that he would have been so happy to know of our interest in him today.

Other murals painted during this period can be seen in Beaufort, Chapel Hill, Louisburg, New Bern, Wake Forest, Warrenton, Weldon, Whiteville, and Wilmington. These paintings, that weren't particularly valued at the time they were painted, are now valued highly by art collectors. We have a real treasure here in our midst and hopefully the next time you go to the post office and stand in line for a stamp, you will look up at that mural on the wall and remember Philip Von Saltza, who left us this work of beauty.



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The "FIRST FLIGHT" mural in the Williamston Post Office

Railroads and trains were becoming important as a new method of transportation in the 1800's. Up until the time they came into use, the only type of transportation was by horse and buggy. The trains could now transport freight as well as people from town to town.

Trains started running in Martin County in the latter part of the 1800's. Major depots were located in Parmele, Robersonville, Hassell, Hamilton, Williamston, and Oak City. Parmele had one of the biggest depots, because there the tracks crossed, running not only east and west, but also north and south. As many as five passenger trains entered the town each day from Williamston, Tarboro, Wilmington, and Weldon. One of the passenger trains was called the "Shoefly." It brought in ice cream from Hines in Kinston, drinks from Greenville, and ice and fish from other places. Ice had to be packed into the cars carrying the ice cream because at that time there was no such thing as refrigerator cars.

From my interview with Mr. George Coburn from Parmele, who had been a station agent at the Parmele depot, I found out many interesting things. His job was to push the mail in carts from one train to another. Before doing this, he changed worn-out tee-irons and cross ties on the railroad tracks. He told of how the trains used to use wood instead of coal. Racks loaded with wood would be stationed along the tracks. When the train would run out of wood, the train would stop at a wood rack and re-stock its supply of fuel. Some people have even told of how at times when the wood gave out, the passengers would have to get out and find wood along the track to help fire the boiler again! After the wood burners were no longer used, the wood was substituted with coal, which had a special car to hold enough coal to take them to the next town.

The first record we have of building a railroad line here in Martin County was in 1831, but it was not until sometime in the 1880's that it became a reality. The first line was built between Tarboro and Williamston.



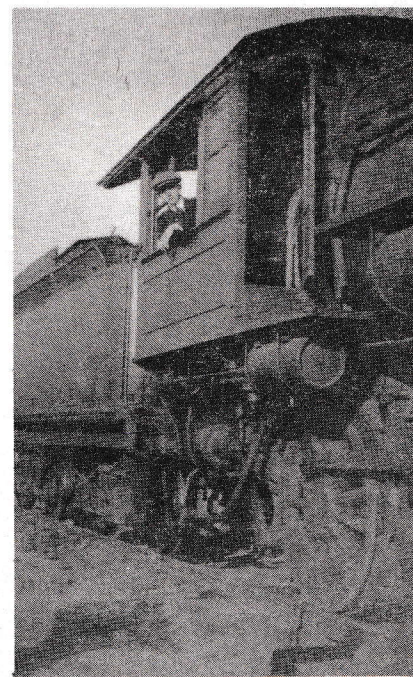
One last trip was made by a passenger train through Williamston on a Sunday morning in April, 1961. The crowd is shown here at the depot waiting for the 12 coach train to arrive from Plymouth to take them to Rocky Mount for a day in the park.

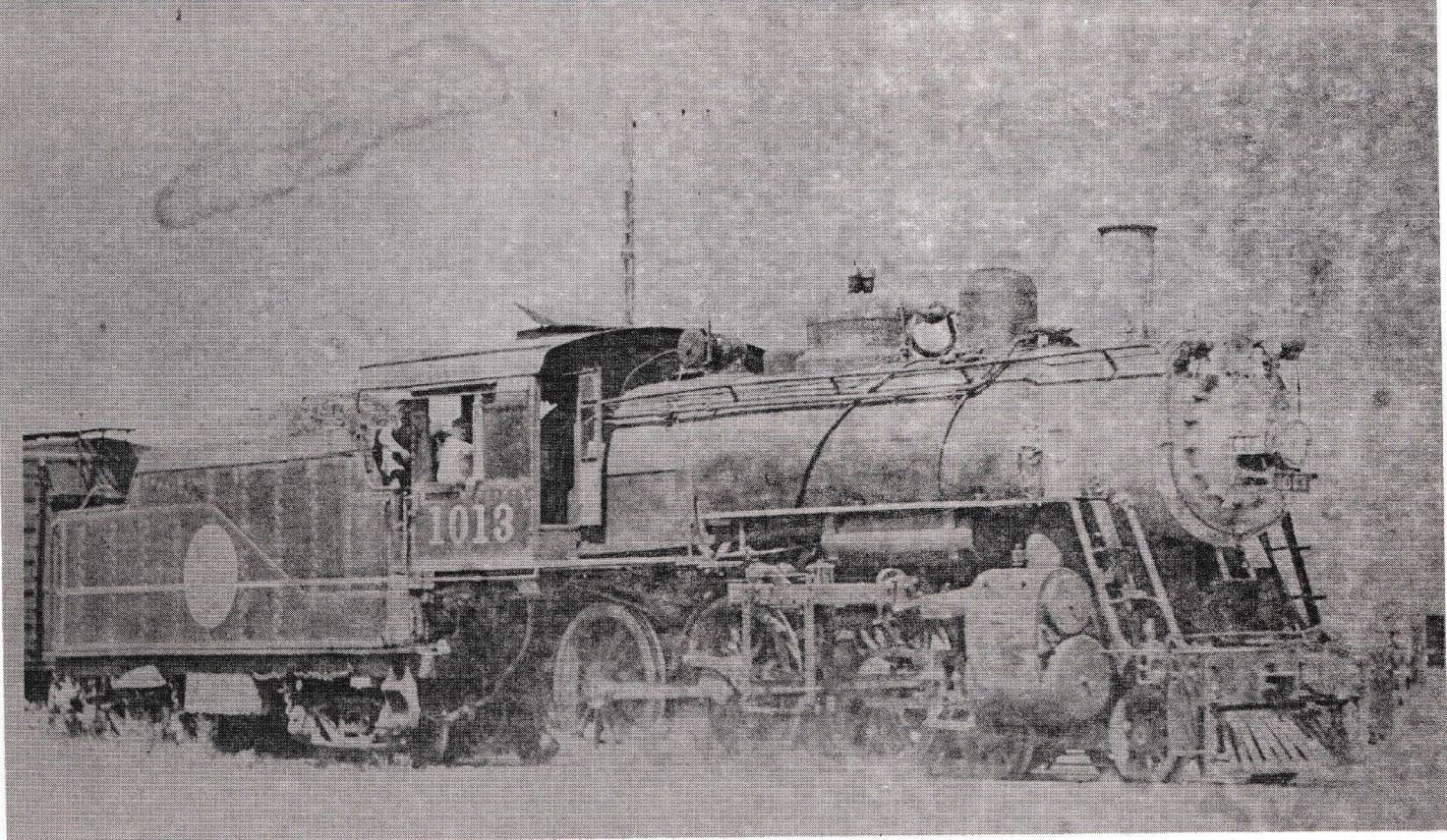
engine for a passenger grain arrived on the river by barge. It was called "Engine No. 2". The first conductor was Graham Guliford of Robersonville. The engineer was Mr. Rand and the first railroad agent was Capt. John Lanier.

The railroad line's original name was "Williamston and Tarboro", but was later changed to the "Seaboard and Raleigh". It was eventually to be known as the "Albemarle and Raleigh."

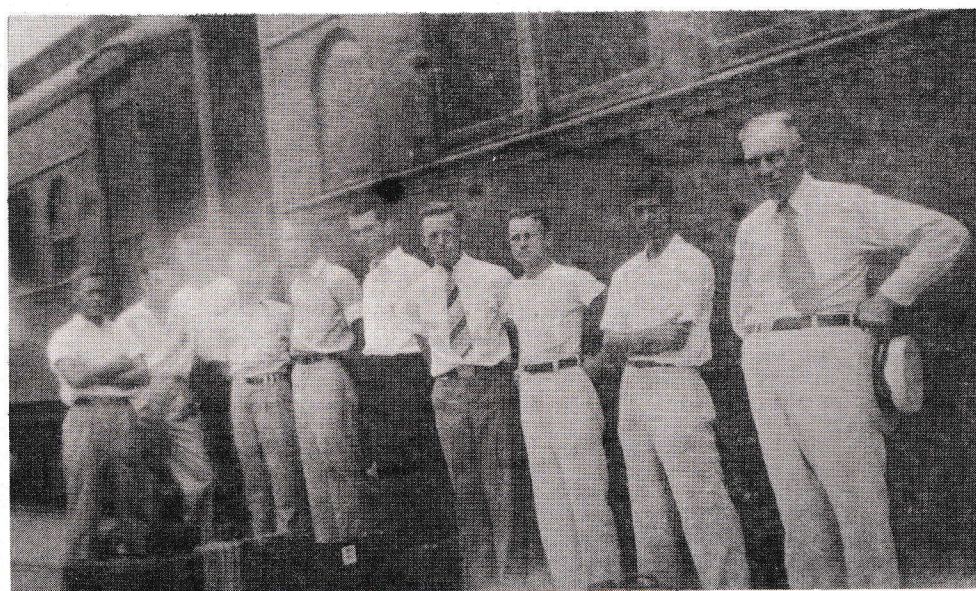
Going to the Tarboro Fair was the first big event scheduled by the railroad and the people of Williamston bought round-trip tickets for 95 cents.

There are still a few freight trains operating in Martin County today, but no passenger trains at all; the last trip having been made in the 1930's. Most of the tracks have been taken up now, and soon the cabooses on the trains will be taken off. This will truly mark the end of a colorful era in our history, and future generations will never know the thrill of sitting at a railroad crossing watching the train go by and having the engineer wave as he passes by; nor till they know the anticipation of waiting for the sight of "the little red caboose". There is nothing like the sound of a lonesome train whistle in the night, but it is a sound we in Martin County may soon hear no more.

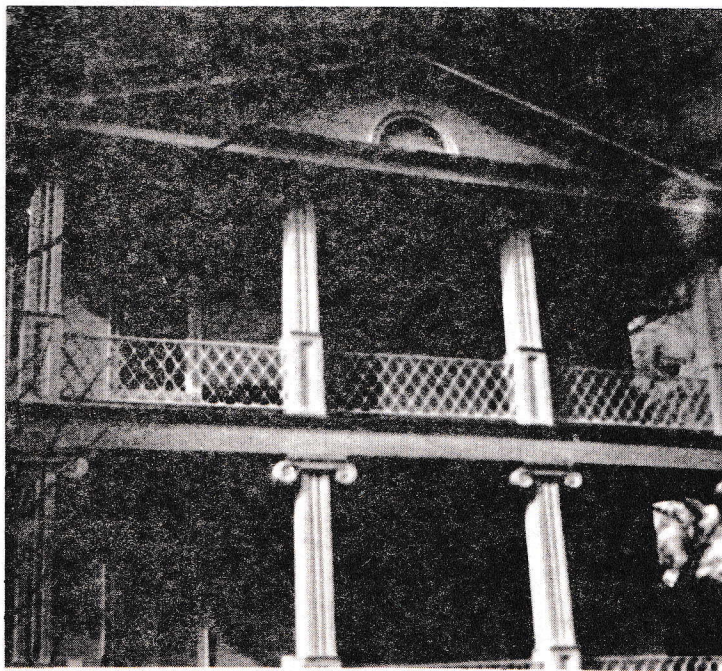




An Atlantic Coast Line steam engine that operated in Williamston in the 1940's.



The last regularly scheduled passenger train to run through Williamston in the 1930's



Hamilton is a small town on the Roanoke River in northwestern Martin County. The town was known as Milton before it was incorporated in 1804. It was renamed Hamilton to honor Alexander Hamilton, a former United States Secretary of the Treasury. It is believed that the location for this community was chosen to take advantage of the Roanoke River for its trade and transportation.

During the Civil War, Hamilton was a center of wartime activity because of its position on the Roanoke River. The river was heavily patrolled by troops who were trying to destroy the Confederate installations at nearby Fort Branch.

At one time during the Civil War, Union troops attacked Hamilton and occupied the town. During that time, the town was accidentally set on fire, doing much damage to the beautiful buildings there.

The period after the war was a prosperous one for Hamilton. The Hamilton Academy was established at this time and the town boasted four doctors. Business was booming and three steam ships regularly stopped there.

Hamilton was reported as being the largest town in Martin County as noted by a Raleigh newspaper in 1884. The article stated that Hamilton would have become the county seat if it had not been located in the extreme northern section of the county.

Many of the 19th Century buildings in Hamilton have been restored and are in use today. Two very interesting ones are the Hamilton House and the Conoho Masonic Lodge.

Because of the steady growth and increased travel and trade on the Roanoke River, there was a need for an inn. The Waldo-Darden Hotel was built sometime between 1820 and 1840 by Joseph Waldo, a shipping agent and businessman. Through the years the inn has been known by various names, including the Waldo-Darden Hotel, the Darden Hotel, the Conoho House, and most recently, the Hamilton House.

times after the war, but continued to be used as a hotel or boarding house until 1913.

From 1913 to 1917, the ownership changed six times until the Historic Hamilton Commission bought it. During this time it was sometimes used as a multiple family residence. In 1976, it was purchased from the Commission by Mr. and Mrs. William P. Riley, Jr. who have restored it.

A most attractive part of the house is its basement which was once used as a kitchen and dining room when the hotel was in operation. When the Rileys purchased the house, the basement was covered with sand that had been put there to help control water leaking in. By means of a wheel barrow and hard manual labor, they removed three truck loads of dirt and installed an electric pump to control the water problem. Today the Rileys use this area for a den and kitchen.

Another interesting feature in this area of the house is the large fireplace with its unusual beehive oven on the side. This oven is different from most because of its construction and shape. It is made of wood with bricks layered over it. It was heated by the fireplace beside it. The fireplace has a beautiful brick hearth that was found under the sand, and over the fireplace on the side that served as the dining area, the decorative plaster can still be seen.

The Hamilton House is a classic Greek Revival temple-form building. The front portico has square, parallel pedestals and wooden pillars. The latticework balustrades were created with tobacco sticks. The house has two stories, a full basement and an attic. It is said that when the hotel was really crowded with guests, they would sleep half a dozen to a room and if need be, they would sleep in the attic.



Decorated plaster arch above the dining room fireplace in the basement of the building.

cut from one tree. The markings on the beam are from a master carpenter who was trained in the Northeast. This

connecticut and trace the major wood found in its construction. The Hamilton House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

"THE CONOHO MASONIC LODGE"

by

Wyndi Manning

The Conoho Masonic Lodge is a two story, Greek Revival style building. It was used as a meeting hall in the 1850's by the Masons of this area. The first two officers were P.B. Clements, master and T.W. Ward, senior warden. The building was also used by the Sons of Temperance, the Hamilton Female Institute, and the local Episcopalian congregation. The Conoho Lodge served as a center of Hamilton's social and cultural life for several generations. The building was originally located at the intersection of Waldo and Front Street.

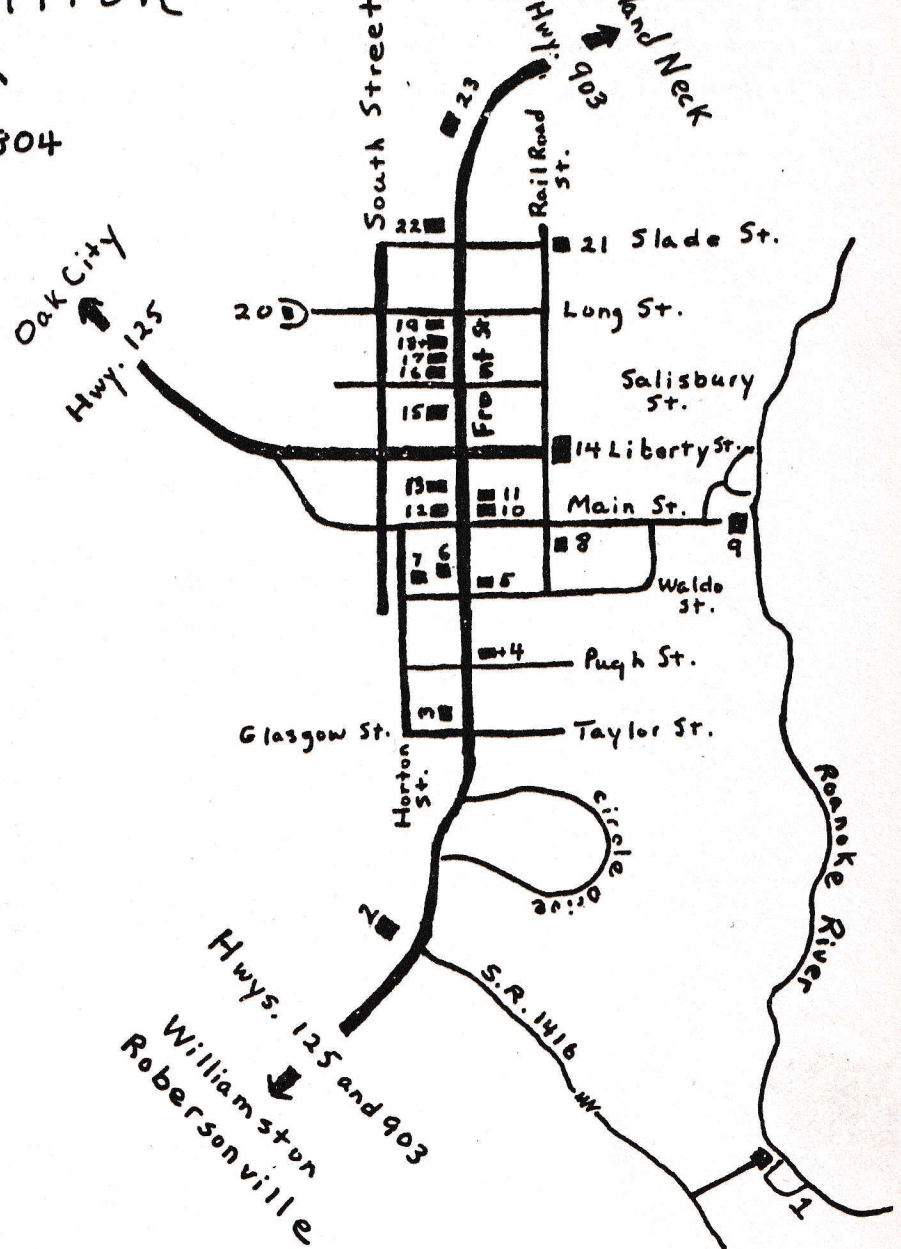
Conoho Lodge No. 131 was granted a charter on December 3, 1850. In 1884, the charter was arrested because of delinquency in paying dues for two years. In 1886, it was re-chartered as Conoho Lodge No. 399. It consolidated with Skewarkee Lodge in Williamston in 1944.

The building was moved to the corner of Waldo and Horton Streets in 1951 and was used for storage until 1978 when the Historic Hamilton Commission moved it to its present location on Liberty Street.

This building now houses a wholesale bakery which deals in quality home-baked breads and pastries.



Incorporated in 1804



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| * 1. Fort Branch | *12. Civil War Cannons |
| * 2. Sherrod Grove | 13. Larchmont |
| * 3. Waldo-Haislip House | *14. Old Methodist Church Site and Cemetery |
| * 4. St. Martin's Episcopal Church | 15. Horner Academy |
| * 5. Gladstone House | *16. Salisbury-Etheridge House |
| 6. Martin-Everett House | 17. Pippen House |
| 7. Conoho Masonic Lodge | *18. The Methodist Church |
| 8. Hitch Railroad Depot | *19. Long-Haislip House |
| 9. Steamer Depot-Warehouse | *20. Hamilton Cemetery |
| *10. Hamilton Town Hall | 21. The Hamilton Institute (Academy) |
| *11. DARDEN HOTEL (VISITOR CENTER) | 22. Weatherby-Anthony House |
| | *23. Hickory Grove |

*An asterisk denotes the points of interest which will be open to the public for the Hamilton Tour on September 29, 1974.

of Concho Lodge No 399 A F & A M -
Hamilton N C July 1/86

Gentlemen -

Being prompted by a favorable opinion conceived of the Institution, unbiased by the improper solicitation of friends and influenced by mercenary motives, I voluntarily offer myself a candidate for the mysteries of Freemasonry to be conferred in your Lodge.

If elected, I promise cheerfully to conform to all the ancient usages & established customs of the Fraternity. I am by occupation a

Merchant. Age 28 years and without any mental or physical defects which, as I am informed, would preclude my initiation.

I submit my character to your investigation and ask your suffrages in my behalf.

I am respectfully -
Your obedient servant

Recommended by

Jos W. Waid

W. S. Hyman

Members
of the
Lodge

This petition is accompanied by the sum Ten dollars.

Molasses making was always a special event for adults and children alike in Martin County not too many years ago. This process did not take place on every farm however, because of the work involved. Friends, relatives, and neighbors shared the work and equipment necessary for the task.

My grandmother and her family used to make molasses. The process started with the planting of the molasses cane seed in March. They would plow and cultivate the cane as you would corn. In July they would pull the fodder, the green leaves or blades, off the molasses cane, which grew to be about 8 or 9 feet tall. They would then cut the cane with a machete and put it on a tobacco truck, where it would be taken to a tobacco barn for storing. The cane had to be kept in the shade so it wouldn't sour or spoil. After this, they would be ready to start making molasses.

The mill would then be set up and the wood gathered for the fire. Pinewood was used and even-sized pieces would be selected so that the fire would remain steady and even. After that they would hook a harness to a mule and the mule would walk around the mill in a counter-clockwise direction. While the mule walked around the mill, someone would feed the cane through the wheels which squeezed the juice out of the stalks. The juice would run down a little funnel into a cooker. Cooking the juice until it became molasses took a lot of time, usually from 8 to 10 hours and it had to be stirred constantly while it was cooking. They knew it was cooked enough when it came to a bubbly boil and the bubbles burst. As the juice cooked, it would form into the thick liquid we call molasses. The molasses would drain into wooden buckets where someone stood to stir it as it came out of the cooker. A thick foam would be left on the top of the molasses and since people at that time lived by the rule "Waste not-Want not", this foam was used to feed the livestock.

When the molasses cooled, foam free, it was stored in jars and placed on the pantry shelves. This supply of molasses was usually enough to last a year, just long enough for the next molasses-making season to come along.

The molasses making process wasn't just another job that had to be done, but was a time of fellowship for families and friends. Just ask anyone who has had homemade molasses to describe to you the taste of a hot homemade biscuit with a hole punched in the side and filled with this delectable treat!

The first man to be executed in Martin County in the electric chair was a black man named Brad Bagley. Very little is reported about the facts and circumstances surrounding this case much is left to speculation. It was reported that on August 15, 1911 a white man named William B. White, Police Chief of the town of Williamston, North Carolina was walking down a public street in Williamston headed toward his home located across the street from the now Martin County Governmental Center at about 9:00 pm when as he passed a gate, someone shot him from behind. There were no witnesses to this shooting. A doctor was summoned to Chief White's bedside and there was evidence tending to show that the doctor told White that he was in critical condition and was likely to die, and if there was any message he wanted to leave, he had better do so. The doctor informed White directly that he could not live and that it was then that White said that it was Brad Bagley who shot him; and that he saw his outline very distinctly as he ran down the street and he was certain that it was Bagley. Mr. White made this statement to several different persons as they would come into the room and he repeated it only 15 minutes before he died.

Bagley was arrested immediately. He was tried in Superior Court of Martin County at the September 1911 term of court before Judge Cooke. He was represented by attorneys Winston & Mathews. A jury of twelve white men were chosen to hear this case because neither blacks nor women were allowed to serve on juries at this time in history. The jury returned a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree and Bagley was sentenced to death. Witness at the trial stated that White's mind was clear so long as he had the sense to talk and the case went to the jury relying basically on White's dying declaration. There is no mention as to Bagley's motive to kill White's and there is much speculation as to this factor today. Some say that there was a disagreement between the two as to some money that Bagley claimed White owed him, plus some say that Bagley was paid to waylay Chief White, and some even say that Bagley was innocent and took the blame for something someone else committed.

The Bagley case was appealed to the North Carolina Supreme Court. On March 6, 1912, Justice Brown wrote the opinion for the Supreme Court in this case and the decision of the lower court was upheld. The court ruled that the dying of Chief White was competent evidence. And so that it was that Brad Bagley became the first man to be executed in Martin County, and as of this date, the last man to be executed from Martin County.

This case is reported in 158
North Carolina Reporter p 608

Teisha Slade and Chareasee Alston

There are many "unsung" heroes in who are right in our own communities whose names will never appear in a history book, yet who have had a tremendous influence those whose lives they touch.

One of these people was Mrs. Mary S. Gray. She was born in Oxford, North Carolina and was one of four children. She received her early education in Granville County and went on to finish college, after her marriage to James D. Gray, she moved to Williamston where her husband owned and operated a dry cleaning business. She became the first supervisor of instructions for Black schools in Martin county.

Through her work in the public schools, Mrs. Gray was able to encourage and inspire many boys and girls to further their education who might never have gone on without her help. Her own personal motto was "It is better to give than receive." Having this attitude, endeared her to everyone she met, white and black alike. She lived in a neighborhood in Williamston in which hers was the only black family, but she was well liked by all her white neighbors whom she called her friends.

As supervisor of the schools, Mrs. Gray saw a great need for supplementary

W.C. Chance, E.O. Hayes and Edna Andrews, principles of Black schools in the county. She also included in the meeting, Cleo Tyner, the county Home Economic agent and William Slade, a progressive business man and farmer. This group formed the first board for the library.

Now that the idea was formulated, the problem was where to get the books. The first books were donated by various teachers in the county and later when the BHM library was organized, they helped. The first home for the library was a small house in Mrs. Tyner's yard and the librarian was Mrs. Nell Brown Slade. They soon outgrew this building and moved to the W.C. Bunch Building on Elm Street. Miss Minnie Chambers was the second librarian and remained there for fourteen years. The third librarian was Mrs. Ann Marby, who is currently active at the present site on Sycamore Street.

Mrs. Gray died in 1962 and since her work in the schools was so beneficial to the children she served, the library was named the Mary S. Gray library in her honor. In this way, her memory could be kept alive.

Mrs. Gray's friend, Mrs. Sullie White of Williamston, says that if Mrs. Gray were here today and could speak to the young people, she would say, "Go to school. Stay in school and learn all you can, because you will surely need it some day."



"A Landmark in the County"

by
Bobby Davis

No. 90 Station is one of the oldest gas stations in Martin County and maybe even in North Carolina. It was built in 1924 by two brothers, Gothee and Golden Godard.

The station has been an outlet for Texaco gas for more than 60 years. It was in business even before U.S. 64 was created in 1933 and still bears the name of the old road that ran in front, Route 90.

They operated it for several years, but eventually sold it to the oil company that supplied their gas. Their nephew, Grady Godard, my grandfather, rented it from the oil company and he and my grandmother, Pauline, ran the store for more than 42 years. Someone asked my grandmother one time what her hours of operation were. She said, "From the time you got up until the crowd let you go to bed. That's the best I can tell you. From sunrise till bed time!"

In the first years of its operation, neighbors from far and near came in mules and carts to buy their groceries, such as the bananas that hung from the ceiling like they would if they were growing on the tree. They would also come to buy cheese in the large round cheese boxes that my grandma would cut for them, and the salted meat that was kept in the old wooden box in the corner.

For heat, there was the old pot belly stove that burned coal. Many a story was exchanged around that old heater, and when my grandparents got a television set, it was one of the first in the area. That really packed in a crowd! The only channel they could get was from Norfolk and they said it looked like it was a snowstorm somewhere between here and wherever the show originated.

Some nights everybody would gather at the old station to play cards. My grandma Pauline said, "we never had any gambling out there. We just played mostly Rook and not much Setback, if any."

Many times on Wednesday or Saturday mornings in the fall, the deer hunters would meet at the station to talk about what had happened on the hunt and to dress any deer they might have killed.

In 1970, my grandmother decided to close the station since she was unable to maintain the long hours it required. After it had been closed for some time, my mother Brenda Davis, decided to take it over and try her luck with it. After about three years, she in turn decided it was too much and closed it again.

Today, the old station is still standing and when it is my turn to take over old "No. 90", I hope I can carry on the tradition and keep part of my heritage alive.



Grady Godard in front of the station.

With our modern technology, clockmaking as a craft is not widely practiced anymore. Few people know how to make clocks, but Martin County has two men who are quite skilled at it. They are E.D. Harrison of Bear Grass and A. C. Bailey of Williamston. Even though these two men practice the same craft, their styles are quite different. The differences exist mainly in the materials they use for the clocks as well as the styles they choose to make.

E.D. first started working with clocks when he was working in a garage where he did welding axle work and soldering. His girlfriend, Nellie, asked him to repair a clock that had belonged to her grandfather. It required a bit of soldering on it's works and he took it to the garage where he was able to fix it. Encouraged by his success with the clock, after he and Nellie were married, he ordered a book on building clocks and clock repair. He started to build his first clock in 1970 when a pecan tree had to be removed from his yard. He cut the tree down and had it dried. Not having worked with this kind of wood before, he found that it was very hard to work with and that he had to drill holes in it before he could hammer nails into it. It took him almost a year to finish the clock and when he did, he gave it to his oldest son.

At this time, he had three sons and the next to the oldest asked him to build him a clock. This time E.D. chose southern pine to work with because it is so much softer. After finishing this clock, the youngest son also wanted one, which E.D. got busy and built. Thinking that he now had all the boys taken care of, another son arrived, requiring that one more clock be built.

E.D. makes all his clocks from pine because it is easier to work with and is quite plentiful in this area. He says that it takes stain well and can be made to look like hardwoods. E.D.'s clocks are not "fancy", by his own admission, but are the utilitarian ones that our colonial forefathers doing!

Our other clockmaker, A.C. Bailey, differs from Mr. Harrison in that he prefers to work with harder woods like mahogany or walnut and cherry. He got started at his hobby when he was in a hobby shop and he saw a clock on the wall that cost \$69.95. He thought that was a fair price for the clock until he got real close to it and found out that it was only made of plastic. That very day he bought \$50.00 worth of clock parts and went home to build himself a clock. He had been working with wood for about five years prior to this, so he could build the cabinet without any trouble. He soon finished the clock and even though he has made many more clocks since that first one, he still has it hanging in his

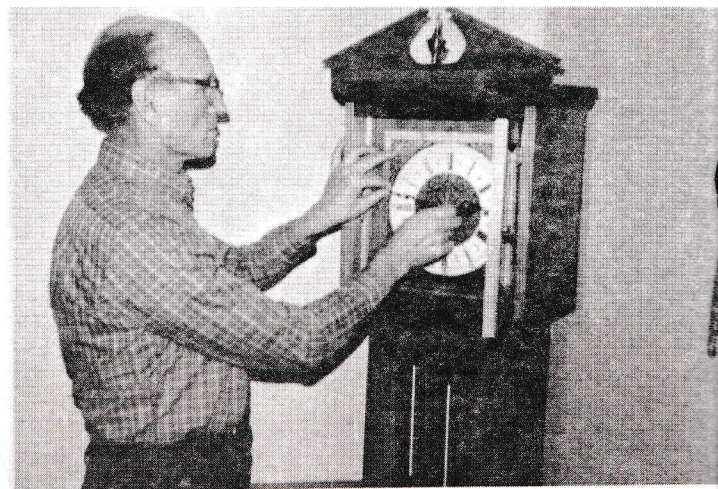
clocks. He made wall clocks of all sizes and shapes, grandfather clocks, and mantle clocks. Some are shaped like the state of North Carolina. Others have the North Carolina state flag on them and one is even on a "Frisbee".

The wood that his clocks are made from are most interesting. George Weyerhaeuser, a friend of Mr. Bailey's, sends him many different kinds of exotic woods like Honduras mahogany. The walnut, cherry, and oak that he also uses comes from local sawmills.

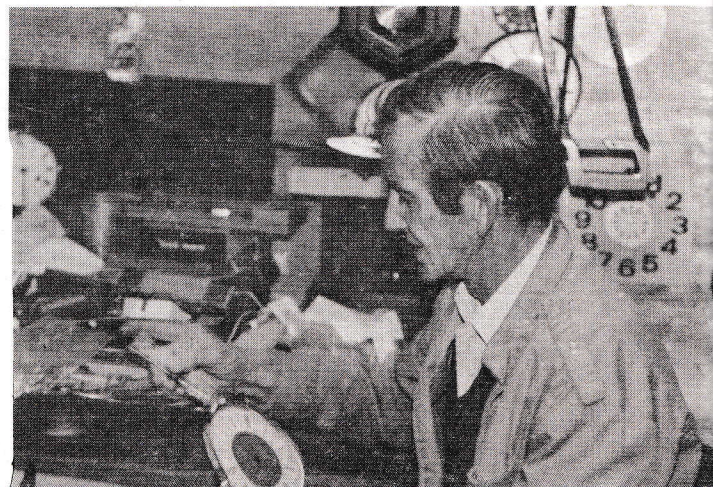
Everything in his clocks are handmade. For the ones that require weights, he makes them himself and for the glass doors on the mantle clocks, he uses window panes from old houses that have been torn down.

Since he made that first small clock, Mr. Bailey has made over 200 clocks, one of which President Ronald Reagan and another by former Governor Jim Hunt. Mr. Bailey's clock collection can be seen in his workshop in his backyard and he welcomes visitors with whom he can share his hobby.

We in Martin County can be proud of these two men who are keeping alive this ancient and time-honored craft of clock-making!



E.D. Harrison with one of his "creations"



A.C. Bailey at work in his shop

as "Butch", was born on June 19, 1958 in Williamston. As a child, he always liked sports. While he was a student at Williamston High School, he played football, basketball, and baseball. In 1975, he won the state Triple-A baseball championship trophy. Other trophies he has won include the Senior Athletic Award for football, baseball, and basketball. In 1976 he won the Best All-Around Athlete and the Most Valuable Player Award in the Gaylord Perry Tournament.

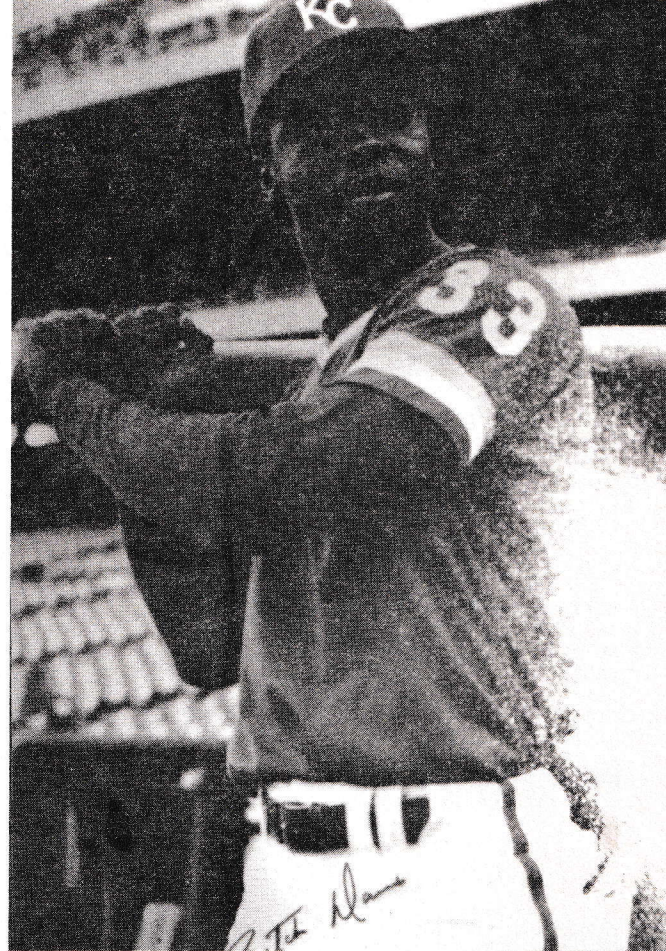
While Butch was in high school, he was very active in the Key Club, the Monogram Club, the JU Varsity football club, the Varsity Football Club, the JU Basketball Club, and the JU and Varsity Baseball Clubs.

Butch graduated from Williamston High School in 1976 and then went to East Carolina University where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1980. During his college career he won four trophies; two for the Most Home Runs, one for the Most Triples. He also won the Best Hitter's Award in 1980 when he came in fifth place out of twenty eight players.

After East Carolina, Butch joined the Gulf Coast League where he was given the Most Valuable Player Award at the All-Star Game. In 1983 when he was playing in the Southern League, he was given Player of the Month Award.

Butch's big break came in 1983 when he was offered a position with the Kansas City Royals. His career really "took off" and in only a few months his picture was seen in such publication as SPORTS ILLUSTRATED and STAR NEWS. Among the many awards he has been given, probably the most prestigious one was making the Kansas City Yearbook as "Lucky 13."

In 1984, Butch married his childhood sweetheart, Sassandra Lee. Today they call Raleigh home when ball season is over, but spring thaw comes, Butch heads to Omaha, Nebraska for spring training. Fame has not changed Butch at all, and he is still the good guy we all remember when he was living in Williamston.



"A SPECIAL DOG"

by
Kristal Holliday

In 1946, a brave little dog, by the name of Snowie, saved the lives of his owners when the chimney of their house caught on fire early one morning. About 3:00 one morning, Snowie smelled smoke and started to bark loudly, waking up the family. When they realized that the house was on fire, they ran out into the street calling for help. The firemen were able to get there in time to save the house. If the dog hadn't warned the family, they would have all been burned up in the house.

After this happened, the family treasured the dog for having saved their lives and three years later when he was run over in front of their house, they were grief stricken.

The ladies who owned the dog were known as the "Lamb sisters", Miss Mayo and Miss Annie. Their family had been quite prominent through the years but lost much of their wealth during the Civil War and in the years that followed the

members of the family had a very modest income. Even though they couldn't afford it, the two sisters purchased an expensive child's coffin in which to put Snowie. They then took him to the Woodlawn Cemetery and buried him in their family plot where he rests today. They purchased a nice tombstone for his grave and had all his attributes listed on it, taking both sides to include it all. The inscription reads as follows: "To my beloved little dog, Snowie, three and one half years. Beautiful, Intelligent, and adorable little pure white long fur Eskimo Spitz dog. Brave, Courageous, Faithful, and Devoted Dearly Loved and Cherished pet of Annie Lamb Lilley. Rest in Peace. 1945-1949"

Miss Annie was laid to rest next to her pet in 1977 when she died at the age of 87.

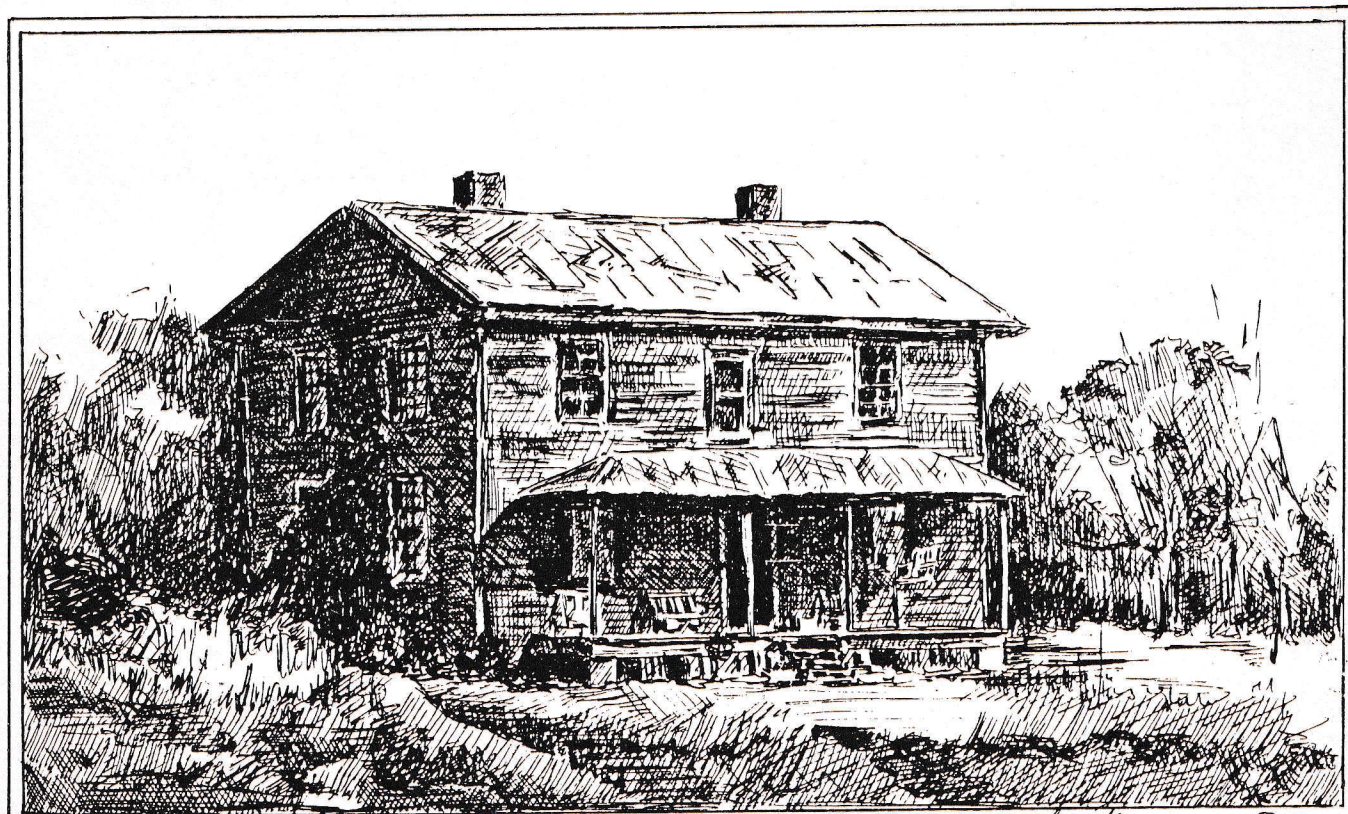
Catherine Revels

The Harrell home was built about 1820 by A.S. Mooring. Mr. Mooring, who later became Sheriff 1845-1850, was from Bertie County. He owned a large number of acres as he sold a lot in the corner of his field to build the Female Academy (later known as the Smith home) on what is now Watts Street. While Sheriff he brought about 500 acres of land (known as the Marshall Wilson farm) located in and adjacent to the eastern part of the town of Williamston along the Roanoke River. According to an entry in a Hassel Diary he paid \$800 for the property and in nine years sold it for \$9,000 a profit of \$8,200.

there for many years. This house went with the known as Salisbury farm and at one time was owned by Mr. Burroughs. The two story house was said to have been used as a "hospital" for Union soldiers during the Civil War. The late Warren H. Biggs said that the soldier patients wrote their names and addresses on the wallpaper. How this house was picked to be a hospital and who the doctor or doctors were not recorded in any of the books that I have used.

Christine Rodgerson Goddard, whose family lived there years ago, told me that the dining room and kitchen that were in the back had torn off. She didn't remember seeing any names on the wall.

Martin County History Volumes 1&2.



HARRELL STREET HOSPITAL

1/29/50

May 4, 1981 ©

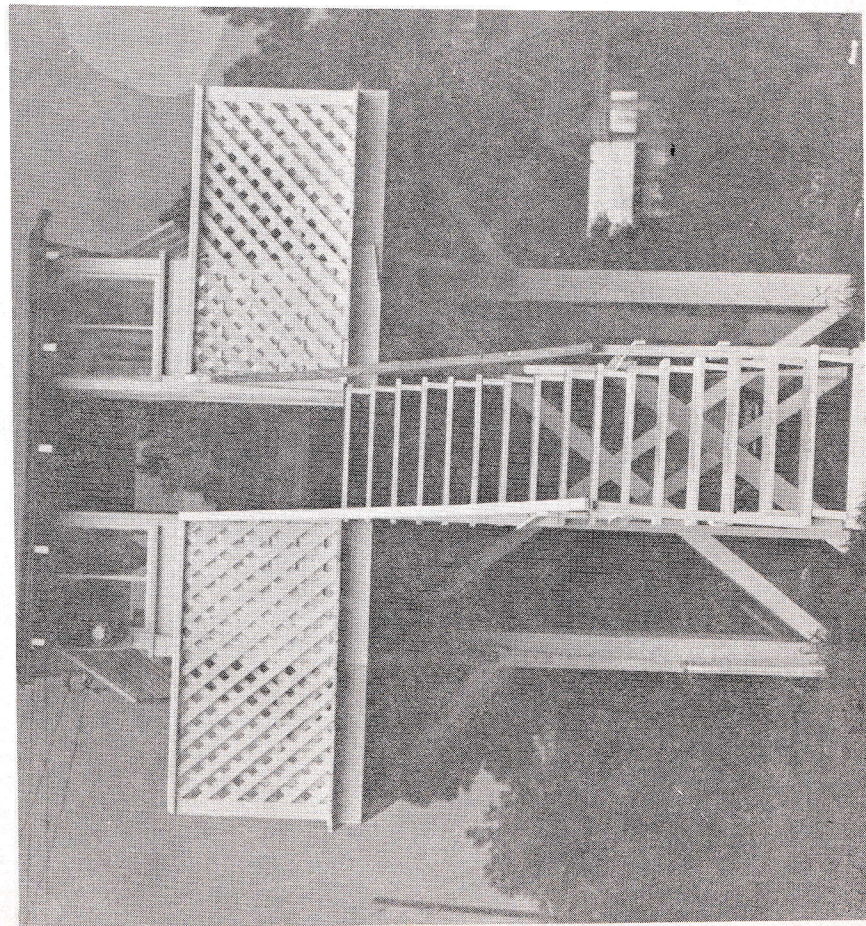
May 4, 1981

"WORLD WAR II IN MARTIN COUNTY"

by
David Haddock and Danny Moss

This B-17 bomber was built by the Boeing Aircraft Company in 1943. At that time, communities "purchased" these planes by participating in the War Bond Drive. Martin County raised enough money for the war effort to be honored in this way.

This observation tower was located in Williamston during World War II. It was used to spot enemy aircraft that might have passed over this area and was manned by volunteer helpers.



Joey Griffin

Located seven miles up the Roanoke River, near Jamesville, a large tree stands on an island surrounded by water on three sides and by Devil's Gut on the other. It's not just any tree, but one of the largest trees east of the Mississippi River.

The people named it "The Big Cypress" for obvious reasons. It's taller than a twelve story building, is thirteen feet in diameter, and is said to measure about forty-one feet in circumference. It is surpassed only by two other trees east of the Mississippi, one of which is in Bertie County and the other in the state of Mississippi itself.

If it is not the biggest tree, it is said to be the oldest living plant life east of the Mississippi River, dating back to the time of Christ's birth.

The cypress has been in danger of being destroyed not only by man but also by natural causes. In the 1960's, the Georgia Pacific Corporation which owns the land on which the tree grows, was about to cut it down, when several clubs around the area petitioned the timber company to spare it. Their wish was granted.

In 1983, it was struck by lightning and the top part of the tree was completely torn away. A fire resulting from the lightning burned out almost all of the tree's interior.

The Big Cypress still stands on that small island on the Roanoke River, just as tall and proud as ever. Jamesville



Joey Griffin standing beside "THE BIG CYPRESS".