

Hertford County Herald

THE AHOSKIE ERA OF HERTFORD COUNTY 1889-1939

"A PAPER WORTH WHILE"

IN THE YEAR 1939

AHOSKIE, NORTH CAROLINA

NEGRO SECTION 6—6 PAGES

HERTFORD COUNTY NOTABLES

ROBERT L. VANN



Born in Ahoskie and moved to Harrellsville while still in his infancy...

His record as citizen and lawyer won for him national renown...

Replying to a letter from the publishers, in search of authentic information about his life and works...

To begin with, I should establish my place of birth. Somewhere on what is known as "Old Dr. Mitchell's Farm..."

I have little or no recollection of Ahoskie because I was taken to Harrellsville when I was very young...

My earliest recollection is that of living on the old Slaughter farm, owned by Joseph Slaughter and located near Pitch Landing...

I shall never forget the things I learned in the big yard at the Askew home. There I was surrounded with the luxury and aristocracy of the South...

Across the road at Harrellsville—or should I say, the street—lived the Thomas Williams family...

Then there was Dr. Askew, Abner was his name, whose lovely wife was Mrs. Agnes Askew. The doctor was a brother to John O. They had no children, but they had a beautiful home...

I remember very definitely Mr. E. M. Wooten. He was a traveling salesman and actually commuted between New York and Harrellsville...

Then there was the Sharp family. This family had three boys: Aubrey, Willie and Baintry. This may be more phonetic than accurate with respect to Baintry...

Then there was another Sharp family, John Sharp. As I remember him, he was a real character. He had a large farm and always kept many horses and mules...

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THE NEGROES' PART IN THE GROWTH OF TOWN OF AHOSKIE AND HERTFORD COUNTY

RECORD OF THE NEGRO RACE IN THE TOWN OF AHOSKIE

(By ELEANOR MITCHELL)

ON THIS the fiftieth anniversary of the town of Ahoskie, the Negroes watch with grateful pride the progress they have made during the past fifty years...

EDUCATION

Three years after the Civil War the county gave one acre of land on which a one-room school house was built for Negro boys and girls of this small crossroads community...

The school remained about thirty-five years on the same site. Later the old building was discarded and a better one was erected.

Mary E. Sills, being interested in education, advocated better school facilities. With the cooperation of the citizens and the county, the building was moved on the five-acre plot where the Ahoskie

AUTHOR OF "RECORD OF NEGRO RACE IN THE TOWN OF AHOSKIE"



ELEANOR MITCHELL, a descendant of a family of early settlers in Ahoskie before the days of incorporation...

Colored High School is now located. The old site was sold to the New Ahoskie Baptist Church.

After being moved, the school was changed to Hertford County Training School. C. S. Yeates served as principal of this school for several years.

C. F. Wilder succeeded C. S. Yeates as principal and worked diligently for a better school building, since the old building was condemned.

H. D. Cooper, the present principal, succeeded C. F. Wilder. Under H. D. Cooper's supervision the school has made rapid strides toward progress and now has three schools consolidated with the elementary department.

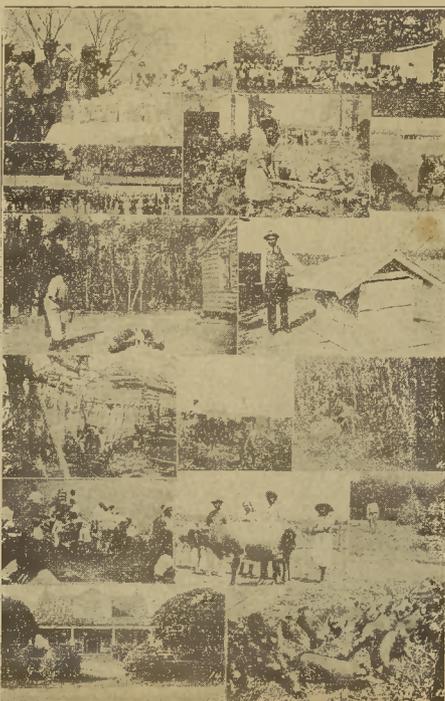
Years of untiring efforts have changed the one-room building of long ago to the present high school of Ahoskie with two brick buildings, fourteen elementary teachers, five high school teachers and an enrollment of about eight hundred Negro boys and girls.

RELIGION

The first Negro church was organized in 1866. Rev. Emmanuel Reynolds was the pastor. This church was made with the weatherboards put on straight up, with the door, four windows, no steeple, and a seating capacity of two hundred.

The Methodist Church was organized by Rev. John Wesley Wood, of Edenton, N. C., in 1901, years after the New Ahoskie Baptist was

Scenes On The Negro Farms of Hertford County



As the scenes above indicate, the Negro farmers of Hertford County keep abreast of all the modern trends in agriculture and are adopting a program of diversification that will help to put them in the forefront in agricultural progress...

organized. It was located on the corner of what is now Catherine Street. The church still stands on the original plot. The same building is still being used.

The Calvary Baptist Church was organized by Rev. Armstead Cooper. This church was located on the corner what is now Catherine and First Streets.

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AN AHOSKIE LEADER FOR FORTY YEARS

REV. JAMES SOLOMON SILLS, 324 Maple Street, Ahoskie, born in Louisiana, N. C., Franklin County, July 11, 1869. Father, Joseph Sills, dead; mother, Sallie Sills, dead. He married July 27, 1897, to Miss Mary Emily Ellison, of Jamesville, N. C. No children born to this union. He is a member of a family of twelve children, five brothers and six sisters, all of which he survives.



He moved to Hertford

white and colored friends, and worked for the construction of an accredited State School in this community, for the physician and moral training of girls' and boys' future helpfulness to themselves, and service to the human family in their social contact.

Ahoskie Colored School Is Monument To Struggling Pioneers

By H. D. COOPER

(Note: For many of the facts dealing with the early education of Negroes in Ahoskie, we are indebted to Mr. W. H. Jenkins, who served on the School Committee for 41 years, being chairman for 30 years.)

Ahoskie's educational center for Negro children was not swept into its present high state of serviceability by the surging tide of development of this fast-growing community.

BEGINNINGS

During the last quarter of the previous century, while present-day Ahoskie was budding, Miles Hall, a rugged pioneer teacher, held up the banner of education in a small, low-roofed log cabin, which was located in a thickly wooded section...

COUNTY SUPPORT

Great was the day when, in 1892, under the superintendency of Lawyer John Vann, the county assumed full responsibility for the operation of the Ahoskie Colored School.

At about this time the school was governed by a committee headed by Richard Hayes, white, and Jobe Newsome and March Holloman, colored. When the school was placed under the County Superintendent an all-colored committee was named, consisting of W. H. Jenkins, Preston Newsome, and James Jenkins.

The few years that followed 1892 brought a wave of building schools at different points in the rural sections of the county; and 1899 saw a two-story structure placed at Ahoskie. It was not long, however, before the stairway had to be taken out of this building and placed on the outside, in order to provide additional classroom space.

COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL

At the time of the participation of the United States in the World War, the Department of Education of North Carolina was conducting a vigorous campaign to develop schools in the State.

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