

History Of The Early Life In The Town Of Ahoskie, N. C.

(Continued from page 1)

they detail the successive steps in the physical growth of the Ahoskie postoffice; and they are a part of the running account of an important period in the record of the postoffice, which, to a remarkable degree here as elsewhere, reflected the development of the town in other respects. Mrs. Stanley writes further:

The town was increasing in growth rapidly and was badly in need of a hotel, especially in the business section, as the only one in town was a combination hotel and boarding house operated by Mr. Robert Holloman, on Church Street.

Several citizens approached my father about building a hotel on the site left vacant by the fire. The Bank of Ahoskie then being organized, offered assistance, so my father decided to build. This came into being Ahoskie's first exclusive commercial hotel. It was built of brick and concrete, 48 by 80 feet, containing on the first floor a store room with postoffice in the rear on one side; and lobby, small wash room, dining room, and kitchen on the other. There were twelve bedrooms upstairs; and regardless of the fact that lighting was with oil lamps and there were no waterworks and sewage facilities, it was considered quite a modern hotel for so small a town. It was named Hotel Comfort. . . . The furniture was purchased from J. R. Garrett and he was quite pleased over what was then a large purchase. My father ran the hotel for a while, and then leased it to Mr. Holloman.

The new postoffice in the rear of the store had about fifty lock boxes, including other equipment which was all new and quite up to date, and fully adequate for the accommodations of the patrons of that day.

To complete the record of locations and changes in the Ahoskie postoffice, the next move from this Bazemore brick building was to the corner of South Railroad and Main streets, in the building belonging at that time to R. J. Baker; and from there, the office was moved to its present location, where it is to remain only long enough for the settling of a price dispute between the owners and the United States Government for purchase of the corner lot on South Mitchell and Main streets, and the construction thereon of the town's first government-owned postoffice, at a cost approximating \$60,000. This, exactly 50 years after the establishment of the office in Ahoskie, the government ceases to be a renter and prepares to build and equip its own home.

By late 1898, which winds up the period of the first real estate development and migration to the new incorporation, business building lots were selling as high as \$1.00 to \$1.50 a lot front, and residential property at considerably less; Ahoskie had become the railroad center of the surrounding country; the new school building at North and McGlohon streets had taken the place of the one and two-room, single-story affairs used until then in neighborhood locations in and around town; a small band of Methodists had begun periodic worship upstairs over the store at corner of Catherine and Main streets, while the Rev. J. K. Fani was the Baptist pastor and the new parsonage on Catherine Creek road was under construction; a half-dozen or so merchants were doing business, profiting from the recent breaking up of the "Big Store" operated by Cockey & Powell; there were at least two horse and mule sales stables, operated by Dr. Mitchell and E. L. Hayes.

Unlike most historical sketches, the record of Ahoskie then and even until this day was not at all bound up and based upon political considerations. In fact, during the first years of its life, little or no thought was given to politics except in a general way. It had none of its own, as the area within the settlement was divided between two townships, with political headquarters of each removed 7 and 9 miles, respectively. On the south side of the Winton road that ran through the town politics headed up at St. Johns, as that territory belonged in St. Johns township; and on the north side of the road voters went to Winton to cast their ballots and to get the lowdown on things political. There were other things to do around Ahoskie; and because there was a lack of interest in and control over county politics to divert their minds from the business of building a town, it is easier for those who study their lives, habits, and interests to judge the real and essential character of the people, since, after all, there are other things that have a more important place in the development of any people or group of society than mere political considerations.

Even as late as 1906 there was no Ahoskie township and Ahoskie's population of 500 or 600 had to go to St. Johns and Winton over unimproved roads and by slow travel to do their voting. One early settler of that day who took his politics seriously then as he does today says of his experience: "I rode a bicycle to Winton, 10 miles away, that year to vote, while my neighbor just across the street drove a mule to St. Johns, 8 miles, to cast his ballot there."

It was during this year, however, that Ahoskie received its first recognition in county government; but it can hardly be said that it was through the importance or influence of the little town, since it was Dr. J. H. Mitchell who was rewarded with a place upon the county board of commissioners. As a political maneuver following the days of the Populist Party and the era that accompanied it, the board was increased from six to eight members, and Dr. Mitchell, a Democrat, was appointed to represent St. Johns township, his residence being on the south side of the road.

This ends the first 10 years of Ahoskie's history, a period that holds few recollections for the present day population, and for which hitherto there has been no recorded history. If the complete record of the town were to be given in this newspaper account, many more pages of typed and printed matter would be required, and subsequent chapters would run something like this:

- The Coming of "The Big Mill."
Fires Destroy, Man Rebuilds A Better Town.
Schools Come and So Do Quarrels.
Second Retail Estate Boom.
Ahoskie Steps Out Ahead.
Ahoskie Is Tagged "The Metropolis."
World War Days in Ahoskie.
Municipal Improvement Bug Bites.
"Bigger and Better" Campaigns.
Ahoskie Has The Grab-all Fever.
A Bank Fails; A Depression Follows.
Ahoskie Recovers, and Consolidates Its Gains.
Ahoskie, The Hub of the Roanoke-Chowan.
THE END

MORTICIAN



JOHN ARTHUR HORTON

Mr. Horton, the son of the late George W. and Elizabeth Overton Horton, is a life-long resident of Hertford County, and who has successfully operated an undertaking establishment in Ahoskie for many years. He also operates a general repair shop.

THIS IS HOTEL COMFORT. AHOSKIE



Erected by A. G. Bazemore in the first decade of this century, it was the town's first brick hotel, and the first to have been operated in the business district of the town. Until it was built, the Holloman House on Church Street was the hostelry. Mr. Holloman leased this brick hotel from owner Bazemore. It is now serving as dental and insurance offices and for the "M" System store.

1930 CENSUS FIGURES FOR NORTH CAROLINA COUNTIES

Table with 4 columns: County Name, 1930 Population, 1920 Population, Gain. Lists 100 counties including Alamance, Alexander, Alleghany, Anson, Ashe, Avery, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Buncombe, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Camden, Carteret, Caswell, Catawba, Chatham, Cherokee, Chowan, Clay, Cleveland, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Davidson, Davie, Duplin, Durham, Edgecombe, Forsyth, Franklin, Gaston, Gates, Graham, Granville, Greene, Guilford, Halifax, Harnett, Haywood, Henderson, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Iredell, Jackson, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Lincoln, McDowell, Macon, Madison, Martin, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Montgomery, Moore, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Onslow, Orange, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Person, Pitt, Polk, Randolph, Richmond, Robeson, Rockingham, Rowan, Rutherford, Sampson, Scotland, Stanly, Stokes, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Tyrell, Union, Vance, Wake, Warren, Washington, Watauga, Wayne, Wilkes, Wilson, Yadkin, Yancey.

THE HISTORY OF MURFREESBORO BAPTIST W. M. U. Was Organized in 1889

ALTHOUGH there are no written records of the early proceedings of the Murfreesboro, Woman's Missionary Union, through the kindness of Miss Eunice McDowell, sister of Mrs. Day, the organizer, the following history of this W. M. U. has been revealed. The little group of nine, who were the charter members of this

noble work, have passed into the great beyond, but their work liveth. These are: Mrs. D. A. Day, president; Miss Anna Eldridge, later Mrs. Barnacastle; Mrs. Rockie Deloatch, Mrs. Lucy Freeman, Mrs. Dora Wood, Mrs. Ellen Carter, Miss Seila Williamson, and Mrs. Ellen Sumner.

The work here was organized in 1889, the year after the W. M. U. work was really begun by the women of the State, but it was not accepted then by the Baptist State Convention; the pastors were very much opposed to it, and at that time it was considered rather improper for a lady to speak in public, and of course Mrs. Day's mother, Mrs. McDowell, did not approve of it. When, however, the group of women met in Mrs. Day's home, her mother would always join the group.

All of the funds which were received through this W. M. U. were used strictly for missions, so these ladies formed a Dorcas Society, and they did service for people. In this way they paid the sum of \$1,300.00 for a parsonage, the place now owned by Mrs. S. C. Vann.

About fifteen years ago, Mrs. E. B. Vaughan was the very capable president, until Cupid stepped in, and as to the custom, the organization lost her. She is now Mrs. J. L. Josey of Scotland Neck. For two years after this Mrs. George Underwood filled the presidency. She gave it up on account of her school work. Ten years ago Mrs. Ola A. Chitty was elected as president and has been serving ever since. Mrs. Chitty has made a capable officer. The W. M. U., under her leadership, has been functioning quite efficiently.

Four years ago Dr. Bunn came to take charge of the church, and Mrs. Bunn, Mrs. George Underwood, Mrs. C. M. Forehand and Mrs. Ola Chitty were appointed as a committee to divide the W. M. U. into circles, of which there are four. The Ladies' Aid Society was merged

into the W. M. U. It is all now included in these four circles. Each circle has a leader, and the president meets with each group. The W. M. U. fosters all the other organizations and has been standard for three years. The society last year gave \$600.00 to missions including Chowan College, and within the last four years, has paid the debt on the parsonage. Mrs. Ella Pearce has been untiring in her efforts to raise this sum and deserves much credit. Mrs. C. E. Boyette (the mother of the president of W. M. U.) is the oldest member. She has been in failing health for some time. Her name should be mentioned as one of our most loyal members. Mrs. M. E. Wiggins, who passed away several years ago, was ever zealous and loyal. Under the leadership of Mrs. Chitty and the splendid pastor's wife, the Ruth McDowell Day W. M. U. has fulfilled the desire of the organizer, in whose memory the following poem is dedicated:

As we celebrate this golden anniversary Our hearts with fervor glow: To know that God has cast our lot Where living waters flow.

She is gone from our midst, To one who began this noble work; Yet her great spirit hovers near, And bids us ne'er a duty shirk.

It was her joy in life to find, At every turning of the road, Some loving deed of any kind To cheer a heart-sick soul with their heavy load.

In my mind's eye I see her, Treading softly down the aisle, Her gentle manner each one did stir, And too, her beaming smile.

In memory of this blessed one Who served her Master well, And ne'er did think her task was done Until His message she did tell.

We pledge anew to do your best, To proclaim His word with greater zest; And when our work on earth is o'er May we enter into eternal rest.

AHOSKIE'S OLDEST RETAIL STORE

DEALING IN GENERAL MERCHANDISE

A Dependable Store, Carrying A Complete Line of Staple Merchandise of Finest Quality for the Home and Farm.

SINCE 1903 UNTIL 1939

HOGGARD AND STOKES

C. C. HOGGARD H. W. STOKES AHOSKIE, NORTH CAROLINA



Through All The Changes Of 36 Years

J. A. Horton

Picture intended for this space—Horton's Funeral Home—will be found on Page 6 of regular news section of this issue. Engraving was received too late for printing in this section.

A dependable servant of the public—earning the friendship and confidence of the people of this territory through service well rendered.

Funeral Service : Embalming

Modern Funeral Home : Lady Attendant : Ambulance Service

Phone 143-W

Ahoskie, N. C.

In time of sorrow, it is the sympathetic understanding and helpful service that can be given only by proven friends that the bereaved ones need. Through thirty-six years of serving the people of this territory, in time of sorrow and as a public servant to the living, J. A. Horton is known as a dependable friend who will understand and will handle with sympathetic understanding all the details of dignified funeral and burial service. This understanding of the problems of those who look here extends to the matter of cost, and the charges for complete funeral service, with the best of modern facilities, will be found moderate and reasonable.