

To Hertford County on Its 200th Birthday:

## The Herald Presents a Milestone Year Edition . . .

This is Milestone Year for Hertford County.

This is Milestone Year for The Herald:

Two hundred years ago, the General Assembly of the colony of North Carolina passed an act (reproduced below) establishing the County of Hertford.

Fifty years ago, a community newspaper started its publication in the county.

For the past half-century, the county and the newspaper have grown together.

This year, 1959, both county and newspaper are observing a milestone in their history. For Hertford County, it is the year in which its people can look back on 200 years—and more—of life and growth. For the newspaper, it is

another year of striving to live up to its proud motto: "An Institution of Community Service Since 1909."

This Milestone Edition of The Herald is an effort to commemorate and observe these twin birthdays.

In it, readers will find a collection of articles telling of the achievements, of the trials, of the memories, of past times. In it also can be found a record of present-day life in Hertford County, the story of a modern people making a modern-day contribution to the economic, social, educational, and recreational life of eastern North Carolina.

The Herald proudly presents its Milestone Edition, joining Hertford County people in observing the 200th anniversary of our county, at the same time celebrating this newspaper's own birthday.

### Laws of North Carolina, 1759

#### CHAPTER IV.

#### An Act for Erecting Part of the Counties of Chowan, Bertie, and Northampton, into a County and Parish.

I. WHEREAS the large Extent of the Counties of Chowan, Bertie and Northampton, renders it grievous and burthensome to many of the Inhabitants thereof to attend the Courts of Justice, and other Public Meetings appointed therein: For Remedy whereof,

II. BE IT ENACTED, by the Governor, Council, and Assembly, and by the Authority of the same, That from and after the First Day of May next the said Counties be divided as follows, to-wit; Beginning in Bertie County, at the first high Land on the North West Side of Mare Branch, on Chowan River Pocoson; running thence by a direct Line to Thomas Outlaw's Plantation, near Stoney Creek; thence by a direct Line to Northampton County Line, at the Plantation whereon James Rutland formerly lived; then along Northampton County Line to the Head of Beaver Dam Swamp; thence by a direct line to the Eastermost Part of Kerby's Creek; thence down the Creek to Meherrin River; then up Meherrin River to the Virginia Line; thence Easterly along the Virginia Line to Bennet's Creek; then down Bennet's Creek to Chowan River; then across the River to the Mouth of said Mare Branch, and up the Branch to the Beginning: And all that Part of the said Counties included within the said Bounds be thenceforth erected into a distinct County and Parish, and called and known by the Name of Hertford County, and Parish of St. Barnabas.

III. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED by the Authority aforesaid, That John Edwards, John Brown, and John Baker, Esquires, be appointed Commissioners; and they or any Two of them are hereby impowered and directed to run the said dividing Lines between the said Counties, agreeable to the Directions in this Act before mentioned, and to return a fair Plan thereof to the Court of the said County of Hertford.

IV. AND FOR THE DUE Administration of Justice, Be it Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That after the aforesaid First Day of May, a Court for the said County of Hertford be constantly held by the Justices thereof at Cotton's Ferry, on the South Side of Chowan River, upon the Fourth Tuesdays in May, August, November and February, in each and every Year, as by the Laws of this Province is provided, and shall be by Commission to the Justices of the said County directed.

V. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, by the Authority aforesaid, That from and after the passing of this Act all that Part of the Parish of North West as shall lie to the Westward of the aforesaid Counties of Bertie and Hertford, shall be added to, and united and consolidated with the Parish of St. George in the said County of Northampton, and shall remain one entire Parish and be called and known by the Name the Parish of St. George.

VI. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, by the Authority aforesaid, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to debar the Sheriffs of the Counties of Chowan, Bertie, and Northampton, as they respectively now stand undivided, to make Distress for any Levies, Fees or other Dues, that shall be Due from the Inhabitants of the said Counties on the said First Day of May, in the same Manner as by Law the said Sheriffs might or could have done if the said Counties had remained undivided; and the said Levies, Fees and other Dues, shall be collected and accounted for in the same Manner as if this Act had never been made; any Thing herein contained, to the contrary, notwithstanding.

VII. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, by the Authority aforesaid, That all Sums of Money which shall be owing due, and belonging to the said Parish of North West, at the passing of this Act, shall be paid and satisfied to the Vestry of the Parish of St. George; and the said Parish of St. George shall stand chargeable to every Person and Persons whatsoever for all Demands they may respectively have on the said Parish of North West, at the Time aforesaid.

VIII. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, by the Authority aforesaid, That after the said First Day of May, the said County of Hertford shall be, continue, and remain Part of the District of Edenton: And the Sheriff of the said County of Hertford shall, from Time to Time, account for, and pay to the Public Treasurer of the Northern District for the Time being, all Public Levies by him collected or wherewith he shall stand chargeable, in the same Manner and under the like Pains and Penalties, as other Sheriffs.

IX. PROVIDED ALWAYS, That nothing herein contained shall be construed, deemed or taken, to aiter or derogate from the Rights and Royal prerogative of his Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, of granting Letters of Incorporation to the said County, and/or ordering, appointing, and directing the Election of a Member or Members to represent them in Assembly, and of granting Markets and Fairs to be kept and held in the said County; but that the said Right and Prerogative shall and may at all Times hereafter, be exercised therein by his Majesty, his Heirs or Successors, in as full and ample Manner to all Intents and Purposes whatsoever, as if this Act had never been made.

Hertford County: 200 Years Ago:

## The Story of County's Beginning . . .

1759-1959

### Hertford County . . . THE HERALD 1909-1959

Hertford County's formation came about as a natural result of the growth of population beyond the Chowan River into the big precinct of Bertie.

Bertie's formation in 1722 had signaled a migration westward. Within ten years, the precinct was the most populated in the colony.

In 1742, Northampton County had been formed, comprising the western portion of the Bertie precinct, and including the area north of Meherrin River that was to become the town of Neck section of Hertford County.

Fifteen years later, North Carolina had grown to a large colony, with its Piedmont becoming heavily populated with settlers moving down from Pennsylvania.

During this period, a struggle between the newly-grown Piedmont and the older eastern counties developed. Westerners claimed they were not getting representation in the colonial assembly. When representation was granted, often as not, the eastern-dominated Assembly would also form a new county in the east, thus assuring continued representation in favor of the east in the legislative group.

This may have had something to do with the formation of Hertford,



carved a way was from three existing counties.

Travel Difficulty

But, according to the historical record, it was the difficulty to travel to the Bertie, Northampton or Chowan county seat which caused a great number of people in the area to want a new county, with a more convenient court site. At that time, the Bertie court was still at Saint John's. Northampton courthouse was located at present-day Jackson. Chowan courthouse was at Edenton.

Thus it was that inhabitants of the areas farthest from the three

court centers in 1758 petitioned the General Assembly that a new county be formed.

The original petition, signed by many well-known Hertford names, is in the State Department of Archives and History.

John Campbell, a member of the Assembly from Bertie, presented the petition to the House of Commons on December 12, 1758.

It included names of people from the upper corner of Chowan (now Gates), many from along Meherrin River in Northampton, and some from the area around soon-to-be Winton.

A year later, despite the fact that another petition, signed by an almost equal number, had been presented to the Assembly opposing the formation of a new county, the bill to set up Hertford was introduced.

Benjamin Wynns, member of a family which had been in Hertford area since the early years of the 18th century, introduced the bill. Wynns was a colonial Assemblyman from Bertie.

Wynns introduced the bill in the Assembly upon order after another petition had been introduced. See COUNTY, Page 4

A Newspaper's Life History:

## The Herald: 1909 Saw It Start . . .

(As Hertford celebrates its 200th anniversary The Herald is observing a milestone, too. The newspaper is 50 years old this year. The senior owner and 30-year employee of The Herald in this article, tells, in personal terms, of the story of The Herald, "An Institution of Community Service since 1909.")

By J. Mayon Parker, Printer  
This piece about printing and newspapering in Hertford County will be as much autobiographical as historical.

Others may delve into the records and make researches and write of the dim past. I am going to write about the lively record of the past fifty years and history of The Herald since it was established in the bysh young sawmill town of Ahoskie fifty years ago.

Of The Herald's first year of existence, I have no recollection. It was first established in 1909, fifty years ago, with the name of Ahoskie Patriot by two enterprising young men. Their names were James White and D. E. Greene. It was purely a commercial venture, devoted principally to advertising. It carried little local news and had no editorial purpose. The paper had no printing plant and the printing was done by Raleigh and Norfolk printers.

Without editorial purpose or a stable, paid subscription list, the Ahoskie Patriot of 1909 was little more than the unsolicited and unwelcome, circulars that today

crum the mail boxes of rural residents on the rural mail routes. And it was as ineffective for sustained results for its advertisers as are such advertising circulars today. Its publication was suspended by the Patriot's promoters after several months, the cream having been skimmed off the new milk of the advertising pail.

But there came to Ahoskie about this time a newspaper man with purpose. His name was W.

G. Smith. He came to Ahoskie as a buyer for the Imperial Tobacco Co. on the newly established tobacco market at Ahoskie. But he had likewise had newspaper experience in his home community of Wilson. Moving to Ahoskie in early 1910 to make his home, he saw opportunity to serve the potentialities for growth and higher civic standards in the self-conscious young town that had sprung up here alongside the Ahoskie Swamp and where the

newly-built Atlantic Coast Line Railroad crossed the old Halifax wagon road from up-state North Carolina and Virginia to the Albemarle country and the coast.

The new town of Ahoskie was vigorous and uninhibited. It was challenging the position of the older communities with their traditions rooted in the manners and customs and business methods of a vanishing era—the agricultural and business pattern of See HERALD, Page 2



FORMER HERALD OFFICE—This Railroad Street building, now the rear end of several Main Street firms. The building served until the 1920's as quarters for Ahoskie's young newspaper. It rattled not only with the business of printing equipment, but with the quaking of many trains which thundered by on the busy tracks (in foreground).