

Franklin Had A Private School Back In 1840, Records Show

REVEAL PUBLIC EDUCATION NOW 76 YEARS OLD

Present Public School Here Goes Back To 1910

Earliest records of schools in Franklin date back to 1840, when a private school was set up somewhere in Franklin. No information on that school other than the fact that it existed has been found.

In 1849, a private academy for boys was established here.

A Methodist "Young Ladies' Academy" was opened, where the Methodist parsonage now stands, in 1854.

One teacher was in charge of the school. She taught the young ladies (many of them rode to school on horseback) such weighty subjects as Greek, astronomy, mythology, logic, philosophy, and four years of Latin.

The Masons erected their lodge, which is still in use today, on Church Street in 1870. Part of this building was used as a female academy until 1875, when a semi-public school was instituted there. Free public school was held for three months, and for the remainder of the year a subscription school was conducted. This is the first record of free public school of any type in Macon County.

First preserved records of the Macon Board of Education date back to 1885. Entries in the old minute book show that teachers' salaries ranged from \$20 to \$40 a month; assistant teachers—\$10 a month.

Grow Rapidly
A rapid build-up of schools in Macon was achieved between 1875 and 1885 because the records show there were 50 white schools and five Negro schools maintained in Macon County in 1885, while 1875 is the first year that public schools were operated in the county.

Most of these were one teacher schools. Private teachers were also paid by the board to tutor children in remote sections who could not reach a school.

The first county superintendent, A. D. Farnum, received a salary of \$2 per day. Records show that \$33 was appropriated to build a schoolhouse in Nantahala during that period.

Tuition \$1.50 Per Month
The Methodists organized another academy in 1888. Dr. J. M. Lyle deeded them the property where the Franklin Terrace is now located for the academy.

Another academy, the Saint Agnes School for Girls, was founded about 1890 and operated until about 1900. It was located behind the present Episcopal Church on Church Street.

A teachers' institute was established in 1885. It was conducted during the summer months at the courthouse. Normal schools were conducted on and off until about 1930. These classes were taught in churches and other buildings. After a course in teachers' training, a high school graduate could teach.

For several years prior to 1902, part of the public elementary school was held in a building near the old Baptist cemetery. The high school used the St. Agnes School for Girls building part of the year.

Rates for private schools about 1900 averaged \$1.50 to \$3 per month.

In 1902, all of Franklin School was moved to the building now occupied by the Franklin Terrace Hotel, which was previously used as a Methodist academy. The school was still semi-public, charges being made for school part of the year.

Then, in 1910, a brick building was constructed on a lot between

Students Tell Story Of Education Here

The first settlers here must have brought with them a respect for knowledge. Because education always has had a high place in their interests and their affections — they have always been ready to sacrifice for schools.

This is attested by several facts: First, Macon was the first North Carolina county to have a compulsory school attendance law; second, as long as forty or fifty years ago Franklin had the reputation of having the largest proportion of college graduates of any town in the state; and, more recently, this county has spent, out of its own funds, more than a million dollars for new school facilities.

The history of education here, therefore, is an important part of the history of Franklin. And who could bring greater enthusiasm to the task of collecting the facts and writing the story of education in Franklin than students? So the Franklin High School was asked by The Press to assign a group of students to this task.

The accompanying article was prepared, under the direction of Richard Stott, high school history teacher, by four students — Tommy Gnuse, Miss Joyce Gribble, Franklin McSwain, and Norman Smith.

the present Franklin High School classroom building and the new gymnasium. In 1919, this structure was destroyed by fire.

A temporary wooden frame building was erected and part of the students attended school there the following year. The others went over to the building on Harrison Avenue now occupied by Trimont Inn.

A new building was put into use in 1923. This building, which also housed the Franklin High gymnasium for many years, burned in 1954.

In 1925, there were 75 high school students and about 250 elementary school students at Franklin School.

There were 58 white and four Negro schools in Macon County at that time, with a total of 105 teachers. This shows how many one-teacher schools were in the county then. Teachers' salaries averaged \$75 per month.

The grammar school at Franklin was built in 1926. This building is still in use. A four-room annex was added in 1948.

2 Factors Cited

Two factors which increased school attendance in Macon County were the compulsory school law passed in 1905 (Macon County had the first compulsory school attendance law in North Carolina) and the introduction of school buses in 1927.

In 1952 a school building program was completed in Macon County. This program, and others in the previous 15 years, ended the era of the one-room school house in Macon County.

A modern, 15-room high school classroom building, equipped with a cafeteria, library, and office facilities, was built at Franklin in 1952.

East Franklin Elementary School was built in that year. This school absorbed students from several small county schools and decreased the load at Franklin Elementary.

This year, seven new classrooms were added at Franklin High, which in the last few years has become the only white high school in District 1. Graduates from eight elementary schools now go to Franklin High.

Constructing Gym

A new gym with a seating capacity of 2500 is now under construction. Four classrooms are also being added at East Franklin.

On the campus at Franklin School are an athletic field, with a press box, dressing rooms, and permanent seating; vocational agriculture building with barn, manual arts shop, and pasture; and a bus garage for servicing all buses in District 1; as well as the high school and elementary classroom buildings, and the new gymnasium.

Plans for the near future call for an auditorium and a new elementary school building at

2 Governors At Unveiling Of Monument

The monument on the Public Square, dedicated to the soldiers of Macon County who served in the Confederate army, resulted from a suggestion by Major N. P. Rankin.

At his call, a number of Confederate veterans met November 26, 1903, and formed the Macon County Monument Association. Major Rankin read a plan of organization and submitted a form of constitution; which was adopted. Nine officers were elected for the association—president, seven vice-presidents, and secretary and treasurer. Of the seven vice-presidents, one was chosen from each of the seven companies that served in the war.

In 1907, by an act of the General Assembly, the association was incorporated. In 1909 the General Assembly authorized the Board of County Commissioners to donate a plot of land in the Public Square, 68 by 83 feet, to the association on which to erect the monument.

The monument consists of 26 stones, is 25 feet high above the concrete foundation, and is built of fine marble.

The six-foot statue depicting a Confederate soldier was made in Italy of Italian marble. The statue cost \$600.

The entire weight of the monument is about 35,000 pounds; it was erected by the McNeel Marble Company of Marietta, Ga., at a cost of \$1,650.

The event of unveiling the monument in 1909 was attended by two governors — W. W. Kitchen, governor of North Carolina, and M. F. Ansel, governor of South Carolina. Governor Kitchen made the main address.

Six Tourist Courts Here Have 90 Units

Franklin has six tourist courts with a total of 90-odd units. In addition, there are many courts outside the town limits.

Franklin School. The old building is to be converted into a vocational training center.

Attendance at Franklin High is 650, Franklin Elementary, 415; and East Franklin School, 350.

Value of buildings and grounds: \$547,000 at Franklin School, and \$180,000 at East Franklin; or a total of \$727,000 inside the city limits of Franklin.

Teachers' salaries are from \$240 to \$423 per month in this county. There are eleven white schools and one Negro school in this county now.

THE FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

FRANKLIN, N. C.

M. D. Billings, Principal.

The Sixth Year Under Present Management.



The Fall Term, 1904, Will Begin September 5th, 1904.

Tuition Charges Reasonable.

A first class institution in which to prepare pupils for College or Business.
For further information, address the Principal, Franklin, N. C.

The reproduction above, of a page advertisement from an old Franklin booklet, speaks for itself. The building, known then as the "Academy", is now the Franklin Terrace Hotel.

She Remembers When . . .

By MRS. MARY L. WALDROOF

I was here when Franklin was still young. (I am not really an old woman; still I have been here quite a little while.)

Franklin was a much smaller town, as I first remember it, than it is now; and not many conveniences as compared with the conveniences of today. There were no telephones nor electrical appliances and water had not been piped into the homes, but was drawn from wells or carried from nearby springs; kerosene lamps or tallow candles were used for lighting the homes. There were no paved roads, so after rains the streets were really muddy — the sidewalks were made of boards.

I recall the old courthouse, with steps leading upstairs to the courtroom on the outside; another (probably the one that is here now) was built in the early '80's, if I am not mistaken.

There were no telephones and no hospitals, so when one was sick enough to need medical attention, some one came to town for a doctor, and he would respond immediately. My father was a physician (Dr. J. M. Lyle), and I have seen him go on horseback in rain and snow, on ice-covered roads, to relieve suffering humanity.

The Indians who lived at Qualla came often to Franklin with a lot of hand made baskets to sell to the white people, and the young ones would play ball in Mrs. (Timoxena) Sloan's meadow by the Tennessee river. Another thing I remember very well was the old covered bridge across the Tennessee River where now is a more modern structure. The old bridge was almost like a haunted house to us youngsters, since it was pretty dark inside. It must have

been there a long time; for it gave way one night and fell into the river, about the year 1883. A ferry boat was used for crossing the river, until a new iron bridge was made.

There were churches and schools, too; guess they were built about 1860. Most of the dwelling houses have been taken down and replaced by business houses. Very few of the old landmarks are left standing.

In those days, for recreation, there were quiltings, corn shuckings, and sometimes barn raisings or log rollings. These were a lot of fun as well as work, but they are "things of the past."

Another thing that always excited and pleased the younger set, was the little "one-horse" circuses that came to town with monkeys, an elephant or two, and possibly a few other animals. One show I remember was when "Tom Thumb" and his wife were along. They were so small they would remind one of a pair of oversized dolls. They were dressed in evening clothes; he in full dress suit, and she in gray silk with high neck, long sleeves, a bustle and slight train. They were a fascinating and interesting pair.

County Moved Promptly To Build Courthouse

After the organization of Macon County in 1829, the people started at once to build a courthouse and jail. In the minutes of the June, 1829, term of court is the record of the contract for the courthouse let to Col. David Coleman at \$3800. The contract for the jail was let to Col. Benjamin S. Brittain for \$2995. The bricks were made by Samuel Lyle and Dr. T. T. Young, of Washington county, Tenn. "The brick they manufactured were of excellent quality and the house they built would have stood for a century", but a more modern one was needed. So it gave way to the present one, which was built in 1880.

Franklin Has Had Free Library Since 90's

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following sketch of the early history of Franklin's public library, now some 60 years old, was written by the late J. S. (Jule) Robinson, always a loyal and enthusiastic library supporter. It appears to have been read at a library meeting about 1915. Unfortunately, Mr. Robinson, in preparing the manuscript, left blank the number of volumes then in the library. Before he left Franklin, he gave the paper, the only known history of the library, to Mrs. W. B. McGuire for safe-keeping. She loaned the manuscript to The Press.)

The history of the Franklin Public Library is one of varied experiences but from its start in the early nineties up till the present, its growth has been slow — steady but sure.

Most everyone here tonight knows of the ten public spirited young men and women who some 20-odd years ago decided that Franklin should have a free public library. So by voluntary contributions, by gifts, begging and by entertainments, a library was started. There was such a rush made by the loyal public to be the first with a voluntary contribution that the placards posted in conspicuous places bearing this startling announcement, "This library is kept up by voluntary contributions", had to be taken down and burned to prevent a too sudden decrease in the population. So the years passed on and the library was slowly gaining headway. Everyone knows of the disastrous fire in the spring of '94, which burned everything from the Jarrett Hotel block down to E. H. Franks' store and one block farther.

This fire swept away in a few minutes all that the library had worked years for. Part of the books were saved, but interest lagged for a while; but the loyal, faithful ten kept at work and pretty soon rented a room from Dr. Higgins—the one he now uses for his dental office—and moved the books up there and were again ready to accommodate the reading public.

Library Moves
The Library kept its quarters in this room till the fall of 1901, when we moved to our present quarters. The Masons very generously tendered us a home free of rent in the lower part of their hall (our present Library room) and a complete reorganization was made.

Officers elected, constitution and by-laws drawn up, committees appointed, new members elected, and the Masons' proposition accepted. Anything new always takes, so the Library Club was very popular and new members were added at each meeting till the membership had grown from the ten charter members to 40 or 50.

Our one room was altogether too small for our literary, social and business meetings; so we asked the Masons for the use of their large room which at that time was used by them as a storage room and wood house and asked them to state their terms. They said if the Library would build them a wood house with secure fastening, we could have the large room free of rent, so we spent \$65 painting and furnishing this room.

Benefits Given
The membership increased rapidly. On one occasion at a meeting, something like the one we are having tonight, 40 new members were enrolled. The ladies, young and old, of Franklin have always been the main workers for the Library and its most enthusiastic supporters. They have gotten up and given the plays

from time to time, the oyster suppers, and have canvassed for new members and collected dues. From the "Old Maids' Convention" alone over \$100 was added to our treasury. For the last year or so, while our book list has been growing steadily till today we have books on our shelves, the list of members has been growing rapidly less till today instead of 100 members as we had three years ago, we have 47. This is a little alarming and must be remedied at once. We must have more good substantial paying working members or we must quit business. The Library is today doing a work for the people of Franklin and Macon County that is far in excess of our fondest fancies. A literary spirit is being created which was the first object and intent of this free

HAS 11,000 VOLUMES NOW

The Franklin Public Library, for the very life of which J. S. Robinson found it necessary to plead 40 years ago, today has 11,000 volumes, and is supported by state, county, and town funds.

As a result of its tie-in with the Fontana Regional Library, the Fontana bookmobile makes 40 stops in this county.

Since the Masonic Hall, long-time location of the Franklin library, is about to be razed, the library had to move in May. It is housed in the West Main Street building formerly occupied by Miss Lessie Kelly's antique shop, pending erection of a library building.

public library. Don't let it be said of the people of Franklin that after having launched a free public library, they grew tired of it and it died a slow death from lack of interest and support. There is not a man or woman, boy or girl in this room tonight who cannot afford \$1 a year for the support of a free library. Most of us have books in our homes. That's not the question—we are by our dues furnishing reading matter for many who have no books and cannot afford to buy the new books as they come out.

Remember this, that there are few towns in North Carolina today with our population that support a free public library. Some with ten times our population that have no library at all. So let us rally to the support of our own library and be anxious to have our names on its honor roll.

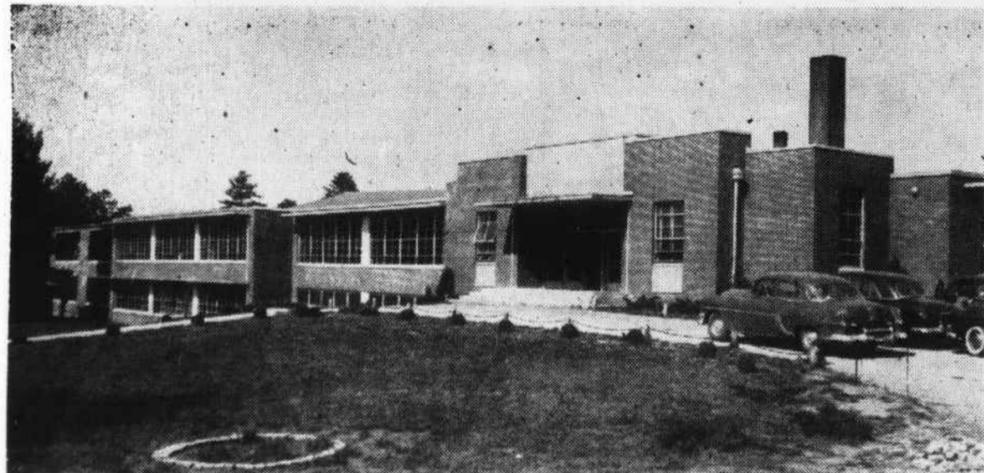
Barbecue Honoring Veterans Recalled By Mrs. Allman

Mrs. Myra Allman, who is approaching 91, clearly recalls the Confederate veterans' reunions that were held in Franklin annually for many years, and the honor paid the old soldiers by young and old alike.

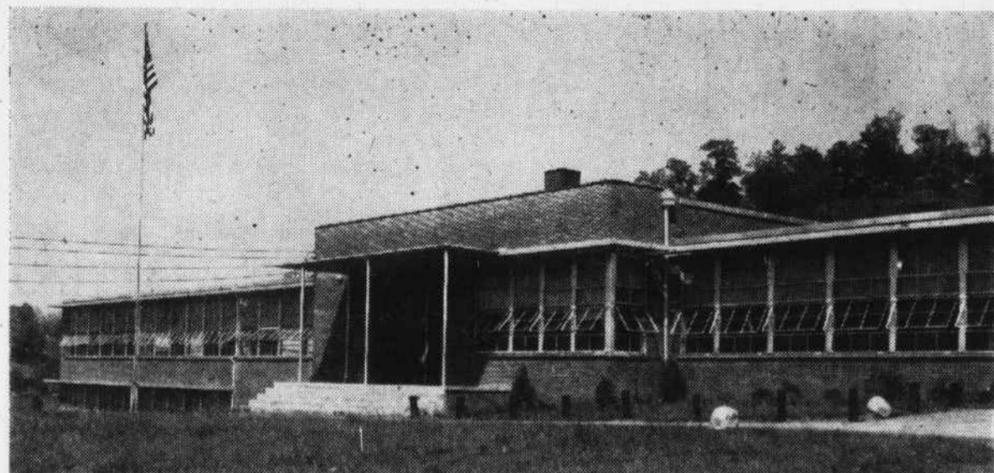
Especially vivid in her memory is a barbecue given for the veterans, at one of their reunions (perhaps the one pictured in this issue), at hers and her husband's home on the Georgia road.

Her husband, the late Lee H. Allman, was one of the Southern veterans of the War Between the States, and took a keen interest in the reunion.

In that day, a barbecue for a hundred or so persons was not the chore it would be today. First of all, there was plenty of help then; and, financially, it presented no great problem, because everybody had plenty of their own cattle, sheep, and hogs.



The modernistic Franklin High School plant came into being with the million dollar school building program undertaken by Macon County several years ago. A new seven-room annex is now under construction on the north end of the building. Also going up is a new \$157,000 gymnasium to replace the one that burned more than a year ago.



East Franklin School is the workhorse when it comes to outside activities for Franklinites. The modern school, built under the million dollar school building program a few years ago, is the only one inside the city limits with an auditorium. So, naturally, it is used extensively by civic and other groups for a variety of events.