

Offers Interesting Sketch of Forgotten Town in the County

Mrs. Josephine Nolan Copeland Writes Interestingly Of Once Thriving Town Of Dymond City

First Development By London Company Known As "Waring"

Grandfather of Mrs. Copeland Was Manager For Number of Years

By MRS. JOSEPHINE NOLAN COPELAND

It seems that one must start a sketch of this type by summing up the origins of Dymond City's leading families. Of course, this whole story will deal mostly with my own family, but first I shall tell a bit about the other families.

Mrs. Mattie Taylor, a widow, ran the hotel from the time I can first remember. They soon moved to Jamesville and then Captain and Mrs. Bissell moved into the hotel. Captain Bissell was conductor for the "Jamesville and Washington Railroad and Lumber Company." He was an Englishman, like several other men who came to Dymond City, married, and settled there. He and Mrs. Bissell had two children, Matt and Birdie, who were childhood playmates of mine and are still good friends of our family. They live near the site of Dymond City now and are widely known in that vicinity, Birdie having married Mr. Dave Daniel.

There was a carpenter, by the name of Lordley, who lived with his family about half a mile from us. One of his sons, Andrew, married Mrs. Bissell's sister, Emma, and they lived in a house in the village that a Mr. Ryan had previously occupied. Many English and Irish adventurers came through Dymond City, upon hearing of my grandfather's and father's being there. Some worked in the sawmill from time to time, and I remember one Mr. Gates, who was killed at work in an accident. Besides work in the saw mill, which was the main industry of the settlement, there were several workmen constantly employed at the railroad repair shop, which was large enough to house one locomotive and two of three cars.

Now I shall go back and tell the origin of the name of the settlement. It was called "Waring" at first, because the president of the company was named Richard Waring. It was during his presidency in the Jamesville and Washington Railroad and Lumber Company that a friend of grandfather's, Francis Lightfoot, surveyor for the company persuaded him (A. Fisher) to buy a farm near one of the two mills which had burned down. However, I think by this time the name of the village had been changed to "Dymond City" in memory of a bondholder, Mr. Dymond. On the southeast side of the railroad was the colored settlement known as Jacktown. It comprised a larger part of the population, which was in all only a few score.

It might be interesting to take a look at the spiritual opportunities of the town. I recall accompanying my old nursemaid to a service at the colored church, and being only a small child I held tightly to her dress because the bespirted "Amens" frightened me.

The only semblance of a place for worship among the white people was a large room made from the third floor of the company store, our home being on the second floor. This large room was called the Sunday school room, but we never attended services there. We went to grandfather's home, "Megessa", and attended friend's meeting in one of the little outhouses of suitable size.

Before I go too deeply into the memories of my childhood, perhaps I had better get my family to America and settled in Dymond City. Grandfather Abram Fisher first moved with his family to Alexandria colony in the Argentine Republic, and stayed there for three years. My father, then a young bachelor, was manager of that colony. He, as his name, Henry P. Nolan, indicates, was Irish, too. Farming proved too uncertain in South America on account of the enormous amount of pests, including locusts and strangely enough, paroquets that ate the corn to a large extent. Then too, mosquitoes, snakes, all kinds of wild animals, such as jaguars, foxes, etc., became too numerous for comfort. Indian raids caused several deaths and lots of excitement.

Finally, after three years of it, grandfather sold his farm to the English company that ran the colony and came to Dymond City with his nine children. Henry Nolan soon followed by way of England, and

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DYMOND CITY PIONEERS



Pictured above are the late Mr. and Mrs. Henry Nolan as they looked when they first came to this county to figure prominently in the pioneer development of Dymond City, the "lost" town that once was a community center in Griffins Township. Mr. Nolan and his wife, Maria, were the parents of Mrs. B. F. Copeland, who now resides in Guilford College, N. C., and who prepared the interesting sketch on this page.

Traces History Of Big Development At "Dymond" City

English Company Undertakes Huge Task Soon After The Civil War

Lying idle from time immemorial, the forty thousand acres of land embracing what was later to become known as the Dymond City area first attracted the attention of an English Stock Company. Just how a company that far away could learn about a swamp area of land is a matter of speculation. Possibly Northern soldiers recognized the vast timber resources available there, for about four years after the war the old Jamesville and Washington Railroad and Land Company was chartered by the State of North Carolina. The company came into possession of the John Gray Blount Patent, a grant made to him years before by the State. In 1872, a supplemental charter was issued the company, and it is believed that work on developing the project got underway about that time.

Records show that the company experienced many difficulties in the early years of its operations, and it was not until the late Abram Fisher, a native of Ireland, took charge, completed the construction of a passenger and freight railroad from Jamesville to Washington and apparently turned failure into defeat. With the timber supply partially exhausted, the original company sold its vast holdings to parties in Philadelphia. Shortly thereafter there were numerous heirs to the property, and ownership was vested in persons living possibly in several states. No one knew exactly who did or did not own the thousands of acres.

The Roanoke Railroad and Lumber Company came in possession of the land some years later, and in 1921 it sold out to the old Jamesville and Washington Land Company. During the meantime, various timber companies logged the vast wooded area, and ten years later, it was sold at a commissioner's sale to satisfy past-due tax claims. As commissioner, John C. Rodman, Jr., sold the holdings to H. A. Vogel on June 27, 1931. A month later Vogel sold that portion of the property—about 10,000 acres—lying in Martin County to Ethel Barnes, of Beuna Vista County, Iowa. Two years later she sold the approximately 10,000 acres to L. A. Thompson, of Waukesha, Wisconsin, and he is now in possession of the approximately 10,000 acres of land.

Thompson first considered developing the property into a ranch and while he has not abandoned that idea in its entirety nothing has yet been done in that direction. And so the old J. and W. land just merely remains idle, yielding a plentiful supply of valuable timber about every quarter of a century. Several logging firms are now completing a savage attack on the timber there. Ownership of the lands lying in Beaufort County has changed many times during the past half century. At the present time, local interests control the property.

Dymond City Once Had Largest Hotel In Entire Section

Thirty-two Room Structure in County Burned a Few Years Ago

That the old Jamesville and Washington Railroad and Land Company operated on a large scale when it came into this county and started the huge development centered around the now extinct town of Dymond City is evidenced in the old records which reveal that a 32-room hotel was built to serve the traveling public and a few families directly connected with the company.

The hotel, used in later years as a residence by the Bissell family, was burned about eight or ten years ago, according to unofficial records. After the town was deserted, forests moved in to reclaim a hold on the little spot where a thriving little community once stood. Forest fires, possibly started by a careless hunter, or by sparks from a train, followed in due course and the few remaining landmarks were razed.

To care for its employees and guests, the company built a terminal in Washington, and the building with its dormer windows still stands there just off Main Street, near the Taylor hospital.

Reports state that the building in Washington, now used as a private home, was used as a hotel and housed the offices of the company as long as it maintained operations in and around Dymond City.

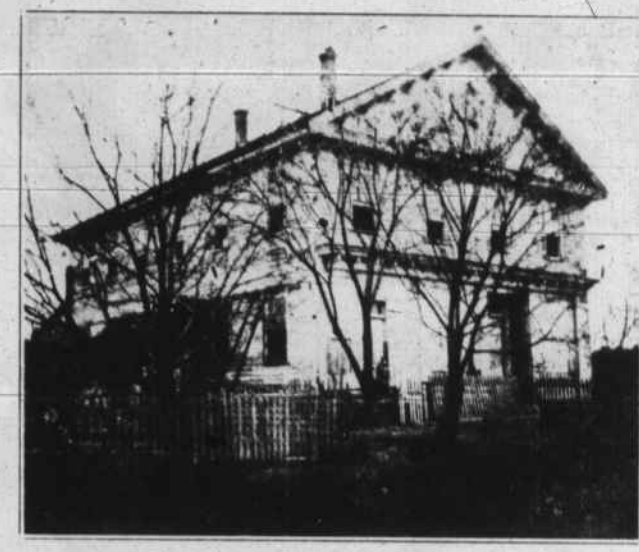
The buildings in Dymond City were well constructed, and while they were without repairs for a long number of years they were in a fairly good state of preservation when forest fires swept over the territory and burned them.

The old hotel was the largest ever built in the county, and while it does not compare with the present-day structure, it was built along modern lines for its day.

Early Railroad Stories Handed Down In County

Many interesting stories center around the old railroad that connected Washington and Jamesville in years gone by. First and second class passengers rode in the same car, according to the old tales that have been handed down. The only difference in fare was noted when the train started slowing down, the second class passengers were asked to get out and help gather fire wood for the engine.

CULTURE CENTER IN DAYS GONE BY



Housing the community store and postoffice on the first floor, the family of the late Henry P. Nolan on the second and the settlement's unday School on the third, the building above was one of the centers of culture in the county for a number of years during the development of the J. and W. Company, which was promoted by an English stock company.

Pioneer Influence Has Effect Today

Although material changes have left hardly a single trace of the old Jamesville and Washington Railroad and Lumber Company development in the Dymond City area of Griffins Township, this county the influence of those pioneers is still evident in that community today.

A kindly old gentleman, and a true Christian, Abram Fisher, did much to promote a basic religion along with the material development of that territory.

Most of the older residents in that community recall the sermons of the devout man, and refer to them as having possessed a guiding influence that has come down with the years.

The Society of Friends, the denomination to which Mr. Fisher and most of the other settlers belonged, never gained a foothold in this county, but the Christian ideals advanced by these people blended with those of other denominations to promote religion in general.

When the work of the company was finished, and the little settlement started breaking up, some of the little group was drawn by religious ties to Northampton County and others migrated to Pennsylvania for possibly the same reason.

MANAGER



Abram Fisher, an uprighteous and God-fearing Irishman, served the old Jamesville and Washington Railroad and Lumber Company as manager for a number of years, and completed the construction of the first railroad in the county.

In addition to his company duties, Mr. Fisher devoted much time to religious work in the community.

Timber Depleted, Old County Town Finally Disappears

Last of Dymond City Settlers Vacate Place in the Late 1890's

The supply of timber depleted on the tract of approximately 40,000 acres of land, settlers in the old Jamesville and Washington Railroad and Lumber Company development around Dymond City in Griffins Township started migrating to other parts of the county in the 1890's, the last moving away about 1895 or 1896. A few of the direct descendants of the early pioneers still maintain their residences in Griffins Township, but there is not a single marker to show where the once thriving little town stood. Mr. Mat Bissell and his sister, Mrs. Dave Daniel, continue to live in Griffins Township to maintain the closest historical connection to the development.

Recognized as one of the largest single developments ever undertaken in the county, the railroad and land company discontinued operation in the nineties, and when the migration activities were completed the town was left bare with the exception of two or three buildings which were burned in more recent years by sweeping forest fires. Two graces, those of Mose Hill, a faithful and able blacksmith, and his wife, are still discernible in the old town proper. In outlying territory there are graves of a few of the more prominent pioneers. Some of them have blended with the landscape during the years that have passed and it is likely that the last trace of the one-time little city will be lost eventually.

With a few of the early settlers are still living in various parts of the county. Numbered among those Mr. John Nolan and Miss Belinda Nolan of Malvern, Pa.; Mrs. Josephine N. Copeland and Mrs. Frances N. White, of Guilford College, N. C.; Mr. Walter Nolan, of Chester Springs, Pa.; Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Lordley, of Everglades, Fla.; Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Fisher, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Gramshaw, and Mr. Henry W. Fisher, all of Malvern, Pa.

Several of the former residents of the county correspond with friends in the county, but few of them have visited here in recent years.

Mrs. Josephine Nolan Copeland, author of the brief sketch on this page, is now recovering from a recent illness, and operation at her home in Guilford College.

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