

# Old Story Tells About Williamston In The Year 1860

## Brink Of River Hill Was Center Of Town

### There Was No West Main Street Until Fairly Late Years

Article Written Forty Years Ago By The Late Miss Hattie Thrower

While there may be a few discrepancies in the facts, an article written, presumably by the late Miss Hattie Thrower, in 1902, offers a fairly good picture of the town of Williamston in 1860. The story, found in the State library files, is reprinted from the November 14, 1902, edition of The Enterprise as follows:

In the year 1860 the corporate limits of the town were stretched no further from the river hill than the street crossing Main above J. K. Carstarphen's residence. This street was then a county road. The Episcopal Rectory stood in a field the only house above the home of Elder C. B. Hassell on Main Street.

The Station residence, combining architectural design with beauty of finish, was situated on the lot now occupied by the Slade home, and marked the limits of the town in the Northwest. This whole section was a grove of magnificent oaks, presenting a very different appearance from now. That part of the town known as "New Town" occupied the same space as at present. The most noticeable residence in this part being that of Duggan's built in 1849 by Mr. Friely Moore. The business houses were of small dimensions, that of Elder C. B. Hassell, a large three-story building, was the largest and stood on the corner now occupied by J. H. Ellison and Co. The only brick building was on the lot now occupied by N. S. Peel and Co. In this was kept a general merchandise store by John C. Lamb who raised the first company of volunteers in the county. He was promoted to the office of Colonel of the 17th Regiment, and gave up his life for the Confederate cause.

Mr. Amelick Williams in the building now occupied by T. C. Cook and Mr. Doctrin W. Bagley in a store situated on his residence lot, were two of the most prominent merchants. Capt. John Lanier occupied a store in the corner of his yard which was removed just a few years ago. W. H. Carstarphen occupied a building (since burned) situated on the present site.

The merchants went to New York to purchase goods—frequently driving to Plymouth, and taking a steamer to Franklin, thence by rail to the North. This was considered quite a journey. Goods were brought by sailing vessels. The vessels went North laden with shingles and naval stores. Three of the prominent of these were the "Alice Gibson" owned by Henry P. Gobson, the "Martha Moore" and "Coenine" owned by Messrs. F. and G. Moore. These vessels were built at the shipyard about a mile above the wharf on the Bertie shore. A trade with the West Indies was carried on by these vessels, cargoes of salt and molasses being given in exchange for naval stores. Two steamers came up the river—daily—the "John G. Styles," Capt. Moore, and the "Alice of Windsor," Capt. Lafayette Thrower.

The goods displayed by the merchants were calicoes, 10 cents the yard; French calicoes, 15 cents the yard; gingham, organdies, silk tissues, berages, etc. The materials were not so different from those of the present day only in quality.

Mails were carried through the country—the route through here extended from Halifax to Plymouth. People received mail once or twice a week. The political situation was discussed as portrayed in the Raleigh Sentinel and Richmond Examiner.

The Bar was represented by Jesse Stubbs, William Eborn, Asa Biggs, and Col. Caraway. Hon. Patrick Winston, of Windsor, and Judge Henry Gilliam, of Edenton, were the most prominent lawyers attending court at that time.

The court house and jail which stood at the brink of the river hill marked the center of the town at a still earlier period. The medical fraternity was represented by Drs. Halsey and Yates.

The Episcopal and Methodist Churches were the only ones in town. A large number of the citizens were Primitive Baptists and worshipped at Skewarkee as now. Rev. Alfred Watson, who is now Bishop of East Carolina, was Rector of the Episcopal Church. He lived at Plymouth, and frequently walked the entire distance. The Methodist pastor was Rev. Mr. Chaffin. Elder C. B. Hassell was pastor at Skewarkee.

Two good schools flourished in the town. The Male Academy at the present building and the Female Academy in which is now Mrs. Alex Smith's residence. Prof. Chase, of Vermont, was principal of the Male Academy. Northern women were employed to teach as it was considered degrading for a Southern woman to do any work outside of the home. Boys studied Greek and Latin and were prepared for Chapel Hill and other colleges. The girls were usually sent to Salem, Greensboro, St. Mary's and Murfreesboro.

## Pays Fitting Tribute To Memory Of The Late Elder C. B. Hassell Of Williamston

By CHAS. SMALLWOOD

When I first began visiting Williamston as a child, Mr. Cushing Biggs Hassell was yet among the living, though I have no direct recollection of him. When I went there to live, not so many years later, he had departed for the higher sphere of continuous life among all reapers for good deeds done during their earthly short sojourn. That his rewards were of angelic, multitudinous, and righteous hue, lingering earthly associates held no doubt; as evidenced, not so much by words, as by expressions of countenance, whenever being reminded of him.

He was preacher, teacher, statesman, author, merchant, humanitarian, and Martin County's greatest citizen. His ministerial devotion to his God, his church, and his people was the dominant chord in his life, and which mingled a Christian spirit in 'mongst his every-day deeds.

Such a man was the father of such worthy scions as Elder Sylvester Hassell, Mr. Walter Hassell, and station, and on out South Houghton Street, are a doctor's office, Marco Theatre, another filling station, the A.C.L. railroad station, and Martin-Elliott Wholesale Co. There are several other business houses scattered here and there over the town.

## Trailer Thresher Solves A Problem

The "trailer thresher," light in weight and an "all crop" machine, is helping to solve farm problems, the U. S. Department of Agriculture reports, in areas where "one crop" farming has been the rule, even though farmers recognized it as a bad rule. Designed by TVA engineers, the new machine makes it practical to diversify by growing small acreages of various crops that would not be profitable without this aid in harvesting.

By acting together in buying a thresher, 25 neighbor farmers in the Claxton Community, Anderson County, Tennessee, were able to thresh small fields of grain at small cost. The baby thresher is mounted on rubber tires. Hitched to the back of an automobile it can be moved over a paved highway at 50 miles an hour, and is so light it can be set up in places inaccessible to the ordinary machine. The thresher is of hammer-mill type, because crops cut with a mower and raked with a dump rake often include rocks and roots that ruin cylinders with rigid parts.

Martin farmers have no trailer threshers, but there are quite a few regular harvesters.

He resigned his body to its mother dust, and his spirit to God who gave it, confidently expecting a happy reunion beyond the grave.

## HOW THE New War Conservation Order Effects Telephone Service

To conserve vital war materials, the War Production Board has limited replacements or additions to existing telephone plant equipment.

As a result, some types of equipment and services normally provided by the telephone company will not be available to civilians as heretofore.

The order is expected to save many thousands of tons of vitally needed rubber, copper, zinc, lead, iron, steel

and other scarce metals. Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Co. is complying with the order by doing its utmost in every respect to achieve the desired results in saving materials.

Within the limitations imposed by the order, the Company and every man and woman in its organization will continue in every way to furnish you dependable, efficient service.

We know that we may depend upon your wholehearted cooperation.

## C. W. SESSOMS, Manager

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