

POLK COUNTY NEWS

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SOME POLK COUNTY HISTORY

HISTORY OF POLK COUNTY.

(By W. H. McFarland.)
An Act of the General Assembly of North Carolina of 1846 and 1827 to lay off and establish a county by the name of Polk.

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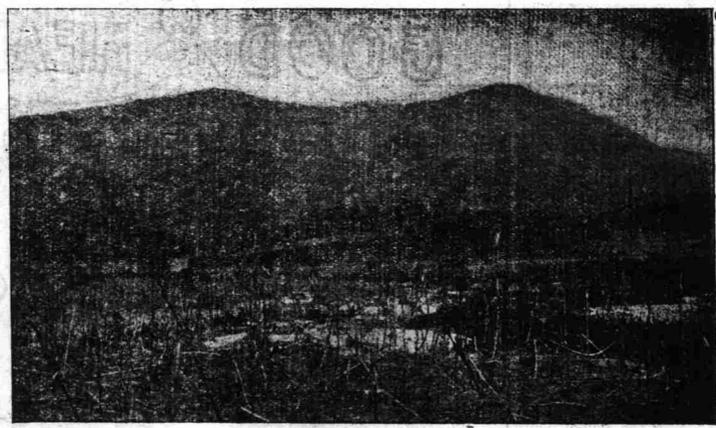
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County Court House, at Columbus



Blue Ridge Mountains in the Distance

the war of the revolution, and in the capacity of Major and Lieutenant-Colonel rendered distinguished service in the battles of Germantown, Brandywine and Eutaw, in all of which he was wounded, and,

Whereas, This General Assembly is desirous of testifying their respect for his memory by calling one of the counties by his name, therefore,

Section 1. Be it enacted, By the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by authority of the same, that a new county by the name of Polk and the same is hereby laid off and established of parts of Rutherford and Henderson: That portion of Henderson which originally belonged to Rutherford, beginning on the top of Sugar Loaf mountain, at the Henderson corner, and running nearly east down to the ridge between the waters of Green and Broad Rivers, and with said ridge to Gray's chapel continuing the same ridge down to the lands of Thomas Millers, thence nearly east, including said lands to Broad river; thence with main Broad river to Poor's ford and from Poor's ford with the old road to the South Carolina line; thence with the South Carolina line to the old Buncombe corner, and thence with the old Buncombe line to the original point on Sugar Loaf mountain, which shall have all the powers, authorities and immunities of other counties of the State.

The act further provided and made the house of Marvil Mills the court house until the county seat was established. It also appointed Wm.

for the county seat. After a careful and accurate survey the center was located, which was shown to be three and a half miles northeast of Columbus, the present county seat. The act provided that the county town should be within five miles of the center. It was found that the most suitable place for the town within the prescribed limits was a point on Cowpen's ridge, three and a half miles east of Columbus, which was given the name of Schuyucha. The next thing in order was to make surveys lay off streets, lots, etc., for the town, consequently three competent surveyors were employed, viz: Chesterfield McKinney and Adam Camp of the county and William Thornhill of Greenville, S. C.

In February '47 the first court of Pleas and Master Session was organized at the residence of Marvil Mills.

The old justices of the peace who constituted this court were Ambrose Mills, Joel Cloud, John H. Alley, Luke Waldrop, Wm. Dimsdale, Thos. Egerton, E. G. Foster and Richard Allen, and at this Session Wm. S. Mills, David Porter, John W. Hampton and H. M. Earle came into open court and were sworn in by the chairman of this body.

At this session also the county officers were elected, viz: E. G. Foster, Chairman Select Court; Ambrose Mills and John H. Alley, Associates; Wm. Wilkins, Clerk of Superior Court; P. B. Williams Sheriff; Thomas Jefferson, Register of Deeds; C. McKinney Surveyor; Wm. Tabor, Coroner; Wm. S. Mills, Treasurer; Jason H.

set apart for the sale of lots at Schuyucha, but as there was some trouble existing with some of the citizens of the county with regard to the

Jonathan Newman. Dr. Columbus Mills, being a man of influence, and one of the strongest advocates of this point, did much in having the county site located at this place, and in honor of him the name of Columbus was given the town. The commissioners were engaged fourteen days in discharge of this important duty, for which they were paid \$2 per day.

The commissioners appointed to superintend and look after the public works were: Dr. Thompson Simms,

Wm. S. Mills, J. W. Walker, J. T. Ephriam Clayton and George and John Shackelford of Asheville, N. C., and an examination of the work today proves that they were contractors

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Shunkawaken Falls, near Columbus.

S. Mills, James Blackwell, Jonathan King, Dr. C. Mills and Wm. F. Jones commissioners to lay off and locate the county seat at or within five miles of the residence of Marvil Mills, Esq.

Carson, County Solicitor. The same court appointed Jas. McD Carson, Geo. J. Mills, Wm. F. Jones, Dr. C. Mills, Henry M. Earle, Wm. S. Mills and Luke Waldrop, commission-

ers to sell lots at Schuyucha. The next in order was the tax levy of 1847. The county tax on the \$100 valuation was 8 cents, on white polls 25 cents, and black 25 cents. The poor tax on the \$100 valuation was 3 cents, on polls 9 cents. Common school tax on \$100 valuation 2 cents, on polls 6 cents.

In September, 1847, was the time when the county was organized. The first court of Pleas and Master Session was organized at the residence of Marvil Mills.

The first clerk of the court was R. S. Abrams, elected by the people August 1855, and held the office 31 consecutive years; E. L. Allen, sheriff, Thomas Egerton, treasurer, Jerry Jackson, register of deeds and John Littlejohn, entrytaker.

The county was now in a prosperous condition and was regarded as having as many progressive citizens as any for its size in the state. It gradually improved until the year 1861, at which time the news of the war between the States was sounded, the excitement of which seemed to stop all further plans of business and a large number of the county's best citizens went to war for what they then believed to be right, many of whom never returned to their native county which they loved so well.



Hemlock Falls, Near Columbus.

court of the new county were held in the residence of George J. Mills, at Mill Spring, the first being held December 3rd, 1855, His Hon. Methias Manley, judge presiding; Augustus Burton, States' attorney; R. S. Abrams, Clerk; E. J. Allen, Sheriff. Second

term, June 1856, His Hon. John L. Bailey presiding. The first court at Columbus, the county site, was held first of December, 1856. His Honor John W. Ellis, presiding, afterward elected Governor of the State. Held in a temporary building erected for that purpose, which is now used as a stable at the Chevalier House, at this place. The bar was there represented by able and learned attorneys, such as the Hon. William M. Shipp, Burgess S. Gaither, John Gray Bynum, B. F. Edney, C. T. N. Davis, and others.

(Continued on next page.)