

THE KINGS MOUNTAIN HERALD KINGS MOUNTAIN, N. C. FIFTIE II ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Early History Of Kings Mountain Most Interesting

(By Mrs. F. R. Sumners) It is a commendable trait for any community to be proud of its past...

Before the Revolutionary War, this section had been settled by the Scotch-Irish and German pioneers.

1. John Hesselberger - August 12, 1787-200. conveyed in 1799 to Humphrey Parker.

2. Isaac Kimball - October 13, 1783-160 A. three years ones to Robert Falls.

3. Alexander Dickey - 200 A. Jan 26, 1796.

4. James Blythe (from King) to Geo Potts 1773 to James Muggins (Potts Creek).

5. Solomon Benson (from King 1744) to Joseph to Solomon Benson - 450 A. (Benson Creek).

Before 1780 the post road from Burke County to Charlotte, S. C. traversed this section probably following the general direction of the present Cherryville and York roads.

Mr. Robert Falls is mentioned in an account reported in "Carolina Gazette" of Rutherford County - in 1836, as one of six representatives from the Southwest portion of Lincoln County who met with a like number from Rutherford County for purpose of arousing sentiment for the formation of a new county parts of two above named counties.

At that time he is known to have owned a greater part of land upon which Kings Mountain is located.

In 1844, Dr. James Wright Tracy and family moved from Spartanburg County, S. C. to this locality and bought from Robert Falls or Solomon Benson a tract of land in what is the Southwest portion of the town.

Mr. Briggs, Mr. Dickey and others are known to have been landowners here by 1840-1850.

Humphrey Parker owned land in central part of section long prior to the formation of Cleveland County. His deed called for 200 acres, covering where Kings Mountain Mfg. Co. Dilling Mill, High School, Lutheran Church, etc. now stand.

Between 1870-72 the railroad was being built thru this community - from Charlotte to Atlanta. In 1872 R. T. McAden of Charlotte, visioning the probability of a future town in the vicinity of the Kings Mountain gold mine, bought 25 acres of land from Robert Falls - with the idea of division into lots. Soon after he released his holdings to John H. Clegg, who made sales to various land owners.

A map of the property covered by the town now would have looked in 1872 like this.

In May 1872 Capt. Frenco Dilling moved his saw mill from Cherryville to the site of Kings Mountain Mfg. Co. In the fall of the same year, the first railroad track was laid by this piece. The well at the saw mill furnished water to the railroad engine.

Late in 1872 A. V. Falls, from White Plains section, W. A. Mauney, from Muddy Fork, Section, Cleveland County bought two acres each from Robert Falls. Mr. Falls' two acres was the land on which A. R. P. Church and manse now stand straight west to Railroad Avenue.

Mr. Mauney's part was the home place of the late W. A. Mauney and J. S. Mauney. On April 14, 1873 (Easter Monday) W. A. Mauney and brother, J. S. Mauney came to build homes and go into mercantile business. Their first store was located in a part of the present little house directly east of the overhead bridge. At that time the only store operating here was Crow and Beam's bar-room on the present site of Cleveland Motor Co. but soon after Crow and Beam opened a store house on the corner of Mountain and R. R. Avenue (Gulf Oil Co. now located). In 1874, Mauney Bros moved their location to the present site of Keester's store - in 1878 replacing the wooden building with the town's first brick structure (two story). A. P. and M. M. Carpenter, brothers, moved here in 1874 opening a mercantile business joining Mauney Bros. on the South. About the same time P. S. Parker and Jacob McGinnis came and built a store on the corner of King and Railroad Avenue (Luther Harmon's). When the railroad was ready to open a depot the officials asked Mrs. ...

been waged eight miles away. Soon after - the post-office which prior to this time was called "White Plains," located first near El Bethel church and later at the home of Dr. Tracy (who was then residing near where Mr. W. A. Williams now lives) was changed to "Kings Mountain" and moved to Mauney Bros. store with W. A. Mauney, the town's first postmaster, serving 17 years.

White Plains Muster Ground was just south of El Bethel Church. Here in 1861 Co. 9 49th Regt (Capt B. E. Dixon) trained. Also the Cleveland Clues which was absorbed by Co. D. 14th Regt.

The town was chartered February 11, 1874. The commissioners named in the charter were Dr. J. W. Tracy, W. A. Mauney, F. Dilling, D. C. Peason and W. F. Hills. From this number, W. A. Mauney was chosen the first mayor. The charter covered about one letter-size page of type-writing - the longest section of which provided for an election with a 30 days on notice. It is interesting to know what the town voted "No" on the liquor question.

During the building years of the 70s the Garrett Bros. - Messrs I. W. Garrett, Richard Garrett, John Garrett and Dr. Frank Garrett had come from Edgecombe County and bought large tracts of the mountain land from the Briggs estate, paying on an average of 50c per acre.

The Garrett Bros. and their kinsman, Capt. R. S. Suggs built two store buildings on the corner of West side of Railroad Avenue and Mountain Street - the former a general merchandise and the latter a drug store. These buildings were later converted into a hotel which still stands and is known to all of us as the Mountain View Hotel.

Mauney Bros. had earlier built a cheap hotel where postoffice is now located. Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Mauney were the first keepers. This building is now standing on Cherokee street opposite the Bonnie Mill Store. R. G. C. Love, who came in the later 70's and built a roller mill, which is now a portion of the present Ware's Roller Mill, completed the industrial picture of Kings Mountain in 1880.

All of the brick business houses have been erected since 1890 - except the present Keester's Department Store. The fire of 1890 wiped out stores from the corner of Mountain Street and R. R. Avenue, south to Mauney Bros. Those destroyed were Williford's Dry Goods, Russell Houser's Grocery, the Beatty Millinery and Dress Making Shop, Caslers Grocery. The fire was caused by lightning which struck the Williford Building.

Other industries in town before the turn of the century but which are now out of existence were: James W. Cornwell Buggy Factory; Ben Huff Wagon Factory; Guthrie's Shoe Factory - which made ladies shoes.

In 1888, F. Dilling, Mauney Broad and others built the first cotton mill. The Kings Mountain Mfg. Co. and thus began the industry which was to mean most in the development of the town. The other mills followed in order named:

Enterprise (Klothe, Mason, now Mauney) - 1892; Dilling, 1893-94; Co. No. 1900; Lutz 1900; Bonnie 1900; Smith's 18-90's; Phillips 1910; Margrace and Patricia 1914; Sadie 1920;

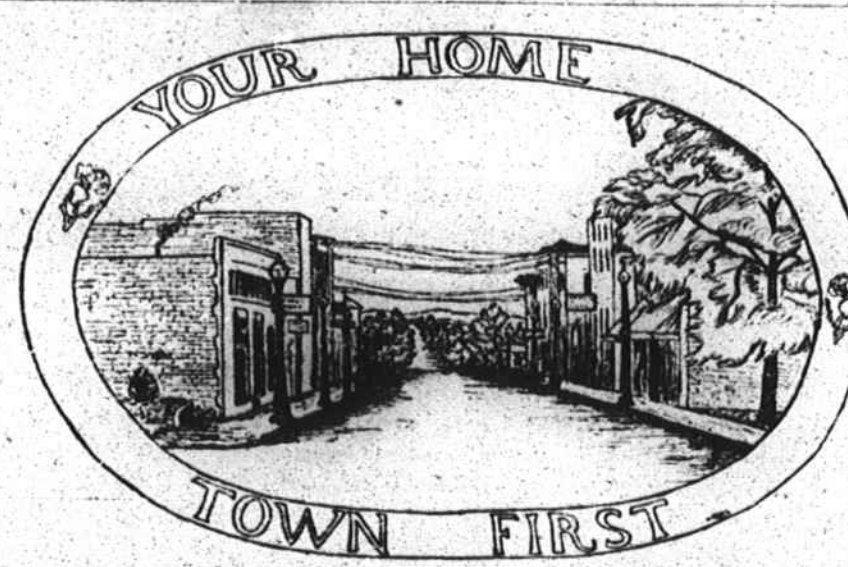
I have not been able to learn why Captain W. T. R. Bell selected Kings Mountain for the location of his military and High School, 1876-1886. Capt. Bell was a native of Virginia and was a handsome man of a very winning personality. His school attracted many young men from this section of North Carolina and South Carolina, who in later years became prime movers in their respective fields of endeavor. The site of the present Central High School was the location of his academy. This building served as the town school after Capt. Bell discontinued his school until it was destroyed by fire in 1910.

Tracy Street between Mountain and Gold street with its double row of trees was originally the lane that led from the Shelby road to the Tracy house on lot where Mr. John Plunk, now resides. To west of Tracy Street where Miss Carlyle Ware, Mr. Leroy McGill and others have homes was known as Tracy's grove. Here the Kings Mountain Military School held its early commencements which were eventful and exciting occasions not only for the students but for many local and visiting damsels.

The first public school for the town was built on corner of King and Piedmont Streets, where Mrs. J. G. Hoy's residence now stands. It was a small one-story structure and was used also as a place of worship before any churches were built.

The first denomination to erect a church in town was the A. R. P. - located on King Street where Mrs. Crawford now resides. It was a wood

building surrounded by many large cedar trees, which proved rather confusing to many younger folks who heard the older people speak of the A. R. P. as "Seceders."



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The oldest church building in town, however, is the Lutheran which was built in 1870 - the congregation having been organized in 1876 and preaching services having been held during these years in the town school house.

It would be impossible to give a resume of all the early families who lived here. There are two, however who figured most interestingly in the early affairs of the town and who now have no descendants in this locality, whose names therefore will be completely lost in the future development of the town.

The first - I shall mention, and likewise first in prominence - is the Tracy family. Dr. James Wright Tracy and his wife Miss Regina Minerva Stone, were both of highly cultured and intellectual stock. Natives of Spartanburg County, S. C. they moved to this section in 1844 where Dr. Tracy began the practice of medicine. He was thoroughly and highly respected citizen and his wife was beloved and honored by all. The family true marriage of their daughter was linked with the Durhams and Dixons - their illustrious grand sons in more recent years having brought additional glory to their names - (Robert, Plato and Stonewall Durham - Ben (killed in World War) and Wright Dixon - twins. Dr. L. F. Dixon, father of the latter two was one of most illustrious sons of this section - Capt. in Civil War - a doctor and a preacher - also served his state as State Auditor.

The old Tracy home was burned, but many of the younger generations can remember the beautiful old trees and the profusion of flowers - especially the daffodils in the spring - which surrounded the old homestead.

An interesting incident in the life of Dr. Tracy is related by Mr. Robert Durham (Beverly Vista Seminary, Buena Vista, Va.) his grandson. In 1845, 65 years after the battle of Kings Mountain Dr. Tracy with the aid of an old Mr. Harmon who had lived near the battlefield, located the grave of Col. Patrick Ferguson. There had long been a tradition that a woman had been buried in the grave with the commander. Dr. Tracy excavated, found the two bodies and from his knowledge of the human anatomy was able to verify the tradition one was the body of a woman. He carefully reburied the bodies and left the grave just as it was beforehand.

Swinging just as far as possible to the other extreme, lacking education and culture, opposed to progress and improvements, frugal to the point of denying themselves often times the actual necessities of life, were the Parkers, Humphrey Parker, the first member of the family about whom there is any record, had two sons and two daughters. Nicholas went to Tennessee. Sam lived in the hollow west of the depot, his maiden sisters, Nancy and Hettie, in a small house farther west. Sam married and reared one son, Sam, and five daughters, Nancy, Hettie, Polly Sallie and Rachel - none of whom married and all of whom are now dead. None of them departed from the ways of their forefathers, wear

ing home made clothing and shoes, split bonnets and aprons, using primitive methods of cooking, never allowing an innovation to enter their life or home. (Rachel, the youngest,

would have writhed and enjoyed the comforts of life. She did get spectacles when her eye-sight became poor. She and Sam rode on the train one time to Charlotte.) Their home consisted one two one-room houses about 30 feet apart. It was surrounded by a large pasture which was enclosed by a split-rail fence.

Kings Mountain was endowed with a beautiful situation nestling at the foothills of the picturesque range of mountains known as Crowders (the Kings Mountains) - and commanding a superb view of the Blue Ridge in the distant West. In these nearby mountains, rich springs of mineral waters, which, in the earlier days when modes of travel were slow and uncomfortable attracted many people - some seeking rest and recreations, others benefiting from the medicinal properties of the water. Two such resorts were Sparrow Springs on Kings Mountain and All Healing at the foot of Crowders Mountain. Dr. Frank Garrett was one of the promoters of the latter. Here in the earlier days of the town

we find a spacious resort hotel with swimming pool, bowling alley and other amusements. Later this site was converted by the A. R. P. into a girl boarding school - Linwood Junior College. It is now owned by the Greeks and used for school purposes.

Embedded in the rocks beneath these mountains is an untold variety of mineral wealth - the most common being limestone, mica, koolin, iron ore, tin and gold. These natural resources have given impetus to the development of the community. Linked with the early history and antedating the birth of the town, we have the romantic story of gold mining at Kings Mountain.

One of the largest landowners in this section more than 100 years ago was Ben Briggs. It is said his holdings included more than 11,000 acres of land in the section which is now known as Yellow Ridge, extending to the foot of Crowders Mountain. Mr. Briggs was engaged in iron mining. His vast forests provided the wood for charcoal necessary in the iron smelter which he had in operation near the present Mountain View Mill and the Old Pisgah Church (before 1856). The ore was mined from the Yellow Ridge ore bank (between Kings Mountain and Crowders Mountain.) A large number of men, mostly negroes were engaged in this work. Mr. Briggs maintained a saloon and commissary for his employees and others of the community at a site near the center of the block in town - now enclosed by Ridge, Gaston, King and Carpenter Streets. This location was chosen probably because it was on the post road from Lincoln County to Charleston.

Gold was accidentally discovered by Mrs. Briggs when she dipped a bucket of water from the spring near her home. The shining sediment in her bucket caused a furor in the neighborhood, and upon analysis it was found to be the finest grade of gold ore.

Briggs was the first operator of the gold mine. A foreigner, Mr. Langford, made the bucket that pulled the first gold ore from the mine. Mr. Logan Huffstetler (father of Jeff Huffstetler) "ironed" the bucket. This mining was done without machinery by the method known as the horse wheel.

(Langford lived in El Bethel section. He murdered his wife and hid her body in a fence corner. He was tried and hanged in Shelby. Logan Huffstetler lived in Oak Grove Section, called "Pigeon Roost.")

Between 1834 and 1895, the mine changed ownership and management many times, but its operating on a large scale during this time was almost continuous. Since then no mining other than tribute work has been done. This has been profitable to individuals doing this work - they receiving 9-10 of gold panned. It has been estimated that during its active period the mine yielded \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 in gold, however, the mine was not considered profitable due to the enormous expense

from this mine was marketed at the U. S. mint in Charlotte.

Many of the promoters of the mine were Englishmen - among whom being Messrs Beckwith, Macy, Richardson, Dorsey, Coolidge Horton and Talcott. The Richardsons to Horton period was the most colorful and flourishing. Under Mr. Richardson's management, a large two story boarding house and a 30 room apartment for families were built. As is

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Sixteen Years Of Operation SIXTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY We have just completed sixteen years of service to our community and can say with sincerity that we have played an IMPORTANT part in the development and progress of Kings Mountain. Many of the homes in our town and community, some modest and simple, some more pretentious, stand as a MONUMENT to this institution. If you have plans for BUILDING a new home or REMODELING your present one, see us about financing the project. In addition to home financing we have taught THRIFT by SYSTEMATIC SAVING. Begin your SAVING ACCOUNT with us in the APRIL Series. Home Building & Loan Association J. E. Anthony, Pres. J. B. Thomasson, Vice-Pres. A. H. Patterson, Sec'y & Treas.



A LETTER FROM HOME IN THIS NEWSPAPER Welcome GIFT to the Former Resident