

REDISCOVERING OUR TOWN OF EDENTON

(Written by G. Bowen Barrow From Notes Compiled by Wm. C. Bunch, Jr.)

It's the old theme—you don't appreciate home towns until you've grown a little older, traveled much farther and compared them with "back home." Then it becomes contrast and, too, comes the desire to "dig in and find out." True, we studied the whole locale in history but in those days we were young enough to study to pass. The why of studying embedding itself to take its proper place when needed in later years.

Yes, Edenton has its place when we recall some of the people and events that occurred here in the earliest days of our country. It is located on the Albemarle Sound—there are streets bordering the sound and others ending at water's edge where we can pause to look out over the expanse of the sound and dream about pirates and sea-going vessels coming and going, dropping anchor or docking at the very spot on which we're standing.

This area was first settled by colonists who drifted from Jamestown in 1658—almost three hundred years ago. Of course, the Chowanoke Indians could be called the first true settlers since they were already occupying the banks of creeks and rivers. Anyway, the territory was called Chowanoke after them and Edenton is now the county seat of Chowan County taken from that name.

Soon after the settlers arrived from Virginia, news that the Albemarle Sound afforded an excellent harbor spread abroad. Ships began to arrive. The name of the settlement was changed to "Town in Matecomak Creek" but was referred to in other parts as the Port of Roanoke.

Social life in the settlement was practically nil, all effort being tendered toward the development and operation of a successful port.

The settlers decided to incorporate themselves in 1715 and became known as "Ye Towne in Queen Anne's Creek". Charles Eden was appointed in England the first Royal Governor of the colony in 1716 and proceeded on his first ocean voyage over his duties.

Governor Eden was about forty-three when he arrived in the Colony and he remained in office until his death in 1722. He was about forty-nine at the time of his death.

Eden received a great deal of notoriety through his reputed association with the pirate "Blackbeard". The pirate was one of the greatest roaming the seaboard and it seems he was allowed much latitude and a degree of protection through the efforts of the Governor. It is said that Eden, because of his personal liking for the pirate as well as financial gain, favored the pirate in many of his nefarious activities. History handed down, but not printed as authoritative record speaks of a tunnel leading from the shores and ending under the home of the Governor at what we now call Eden House and used, supposedly, as a meeting place and storehouse for pirated goods.

Those of us born and bred in a small community surrounded by so much of the old and traditional tend to become swamped more by the old and lose sight of the personalities, affairs and situations that must always be a part of the scheme of living regardless of the era. We feel at times that our elders dwell more on the historical and seemingly retard the ideas and growth of those who must inevitably take their places.

That is why we feel they should know it gives us a feeling of well-being to walk into the grounds and Church of St. Paul's which was erected in 1736. It was partially destroyed by fire in 1949 but until that time one could walk into the Church and actual pews that had been used so many years ago by those living as seriously as we live today. Probably they the moreso.

St. Paul's has been rebuilt along identical lines and will contain the original Font, Lectern, Altar, Pews and Communion Railing. These had been removed while the Church would be undergoing repairs.

Then there is the Court House built in 1767. We go there today to register for voting, to buy property, pay taxes or just to see where nearly two hundred years ago people walked, attended the affairs and probably met for the latest news on the "green" in the cool of summer evenings. The Court House faces the "green" which provides an open view to the sound. The "green" is still used too by the romantic who come under the spell of the same Carolina Moon which still beams upon them and probably sends a wink across the silvery ripples at the same old story.

We still use the Cupola House which was erected in 1758. It is a wooden structure and houses our public library as well as a museum. It stands today as of old commanding a far-reaching view of the sound. It still contains the old wall panels, hand-carved mantels and the Chippendale staircase. It was built as a home for and under the specifications of Francis Corbin, a sea captain, and the glass-enclosed cupola on the roof was designed so that approaching ships could be spotted miles out.

Many of the residences of early Edenton are in use today, each making its contribution to the cultural background and beauty of the town. The Booth House, erected about one hundred and seventy years ago, was moved through the streets a few years ago and converted into a home which easily lends itself to the old and the new.

Beverly Hall, formerly the State Bank Building, was converted into a private residence many years ago and continues with aristocratic bearing surrounded by one of the largest gardens in this part of the state.

Hayes, overlooking the bay, remains essentially itself since no changes have been made in its original architecture.

In 1777 there were at least 135

dwelling in Edenton. Progress is certainly indicated by the number of dwellings in Edenton today. The same will apply to the business district what with its additions and the facelifts given some of the old standbys. While one can wonder or even seriously desire a flashback into the time of the "lamplighter" and "post roads" or the time when the harbor was a busy one, it is interesting to contemplate an advance in time which would allow the familiar historical persons of Penelope Barker, Elizabeth King, or Joseph Hewes to see us today.

The colony expanded rapidly and "Ye Towne on Queen Anne's Creek" became Edenton soon after the death of Governor Charles Eden in 1772. A General Assembly had come into being and met alternately in Edenton, New Bern and Wilmington. Meeting in the several towns was evidently a gesture of appeasement in order to circumvent any argument which might arise had only one been chosen. Between 1730 and 1746 the Assembly held nine sessions in Edenton, seven in New Bern and two in Wilmington. Edenton was more or less taken for granted as the capitol seat.

The important names in the history of our town always include Joseph Hewes, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence; Mrs. Elizabeth King, who led the local ladies in the second Tea Party patterned after the Boston event; James Iredell, who came over from England at the age of seventeen with the idea in mind, it seems, of seeking both fame and fortune. We shall say he made good, even by modern standards, since at twenty-three he married his teacher's sister, Miss Hannah Johnston, became Deputy-Collector of Customs and was later appointed by George Washington as Justice of the first U. S. Supreme Court. It is unusual to note that Governor Eden and Justice Iredell died before reaching the age of fifty years.

There is more—much more—but these are some of the hi-lites we chose to bandy about in our minds. Things we see today which stand for so much yesterday.

The largest number of drivers involved in highway accidents in 1949 fell in the 25-34 year age group, Department of Motor Vehicles figures show.

Boll Weevil Damage Set At \$25,000,000

Although cold weather during recent weeks probably has killed some of the boll weevils which were in hibernation, indications are that plenty of these pests still will be around during the cotton growing season this year, George D. Jones, entomologist for the State College Extension Service, said this week.

Pointing out that weevil damage in North Carolina alone last year amounted to something like \$25,000,000, Jones said cotton growers may be in for another "bad weevil year" unless they make immediate, thorough plans for control of this insect.

Several factors were responsible for the huge loss from weevil damage last year, Jones asserted. In some counties weather interfered with dusting operations or farmers made no effort to practice control measures. Lack of cooperation between landlord and tenant contributed to the loss on some farms.

Many growers failed to begin in time and did not have materials or equipment ready when the insect struck. In many cases airplane operators were rushed in after damage had reached its peak, and as a result the treatments were ineffective.

Jones said a careful study of control efforts made last year shows that growers who followed a well-timed control program and used recommended insecticides produced an average of a bale of cotton per acre, well above the State average.

The entomologist urged growers to buy enough insecticides immediately for at least one or two applications, get their equipment ready by early May, and plan to begin treatment when squaring begins, making two to three applications at weekly intervals. He also suggested that growers work with their neighbors in carrying out

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ON ECTC HONOR ROLL
Miss Mary Forehand of Tyner, a student at East Carolina Teachers College, Greenville, was among the group of students to be included on the honor roll for the winter quarter. There were 261 students making the honor, according to Dr. J. K. Long, registrar.

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