

Saloons in Several Spots

"Spiritous liquors" were the common drink of 19th century Hertford Counties.

The sale of such liquors, however, was strictly regulated. The records of Hertford County's Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions paint a surprisingly tame picture of the saloon in the county during the 1830-61 period.

The County Court issued licenses to those authorized to sell liquor "by the small measure."

And the records show that at no time were there more than five bars in the county in any one year from 1830 to 1861.

Some of these licensed bars retained their place of imbibing points throughout the entire period.

Famous Hotel
They included the famous hotel in Winton, which was the stopping point for travelers and for the crowds of officials and spectators who swelled the town's population during court week.

And, they generally included some spot in Murfreesboro, then a bustling river town and social center.

The county court also had the job of fixing rates for the sale of whiskey at hotels and "ordinaries" (inns).

The barroom history of Hertford County in 1830-61 shows:

In 1830, there were four places in Hertford County where spir-

itous liquors were retailed "at the small measure." They included John Matthews' shop in Winton, the shop of Watson Lewis and E. S. Spivey at the Winton Hotel, Moses Clarend at the Murfreesboro hotel, and Abner Harrell at thriving Pitch Landing on the Chinkapin.

In 1831, Watson Lewis renewed his license. In 1832, four licenses were issued, one each at Winton, Murfreesboro, St. Johns, and Pitch Landing.

In 1833, liquor retailing licenses were issued to John Jones "at his house" and Elisha Morton at Saint Johns and Lewis at Winton.

There is a lack of record of the records of the County Court from 1833 to 1843.

In 1843, three licenses were issued: one to Perry Carter at the hotel in Murfreesboro, another at Saint Johns and to Valentine Perry at his store "Barfields" (this was the ferry crossing a few hundred yards south of Winton).

In 1845, liquor licenses were issued to four proprietors. They included Perry Carter at his store in Murfreesboro, Gilford Cook at Saint Johns, Bynum at the Winton Hotel and Chamlee Jernigan at his store in Winton.

In 1847, licenses were issued to Carter for the "Murfreesboro Hotel" and Bynum in Winton.

New in Murfreesboro
In 1848, three liquor retailers received licenses. They included

Edwin Harrison of Murfreesboro, who got a license to operate an "ordinary and house of public entertainment" in Murfreesboro. He took over the Murfreesboro Hotel as proprietor.

Another new grog shop was located at a store at "Pine Tree." This was a busy crossroads just east of Stoney Creek bridge in the southeastern part of the county.

The Winton Hotel and another shop also got licenses this year.

In 1849, Harrison in Murfreesboro and Bynum in Winton renewed their licenses. Riddick Griffin got a license to retail liquor at his store in Saint Johns.

Four licenses were issued in 1850. Griffin and Bynum renewed licenses. James Northcott got a license for his shop in Winton and John Bishop got a license for his store in Murfreesboro.

In 1851, four licenses for retailing liquor were issued. They went to Northcott and Bynum and to "William D. Willoughby at his store" and Job Kittle at his shop in Winton.

In 1852, five licenses were issued. They included Andrew Winborne at Winton, a store at Saint Johns, Bynum at the Winton Hotel and at another shop in Winton, and in Murfreesboro where Charles Champion received a license to operate an ordinary.

In 1853, Joseph Nichols at his store at Saint Johns, Bynum at Winton Hotel and Northcott and A. G. Britt at their Winton shop received retailer's license.

Two licenses were granted in 1854, to Bynum and Northcott at Winton.

Three licenses were granted in 1855, to Bynum for the Winton Hotel and to Northcott and A. G. Britt at stores in Winton.

Again in 1856, three licenses were granted, to Bynum, Northcott and Britt.

In 1857, four licenses were granted, to James Lassiter at the Murfreesboro Hotel and Northcott at his Winton shop, to Henry and James Trader in Murfreesboro, and to Pleasant Jordan, who this year took over the Winton Hotel and was to become its most famous proprietor.

In 1858, Jordan and Northcott received licenses.

And in this year, the County Court set up a schedule of tavern rates which were to apply to inns and barrooms in the county.

The rates include room and board and per-drink liquor charges.

In 1859, "Colonel Pleasant Jordan" renewed his licenses for the Winton hotelery that was now known as the Jordan House. Norfleet B. Whitehead got a license to retail in Murfreesboro and James Northcott renewed his license.

In 1860, only one license was issued, to W. D. Day of Murfreesboro.

In 1861, three retailers received licenses. They included Northcott, Day, and Joseph Vinson at Saint Johns.

Hertford County's Courthouse: 1830-62

Hogs Bothered Courthouse Well, Stove Was a Nuisance

The story of Hertford County's two burned courthouses is well known.

The first Hertford courthouse was burned in 1830 by Wright Allen, seeking to destroy some evidence in a trial.

The Union army burned the second courthouse in February, 1862, after landing from gunboats in the Chowan River.

The story of the rebuilding of the first courthouse, and its history until burned in 1862, is told in the minutes of the County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions for the 1830-60 period.

After the 1830 blaze, the County Court moved quickly to have the courthouse rebuilt.

In May, 1830, the Court moved that a courthouse be built "on the same spot" as the old one, and that the cost not exceed \$5,000. Of this sum, \$2,000 was to come from direct taxes, the other to be borrowed.

Apparently, some portions of the first courthouse were still remaining. The minutes of the Court says the meeting was held "at the courthouse."

A year later, the new courthouse was apparently up. The Court was meeting "at the courthouse."

No Description
There is no complete description of Hertford's second courthouse. It contained offices for some public officials and a courtroom. The jail was in a separate building. There was a public stock and whipping post on the grounds and a well.

Records of the County Court tell the story of the courthouse during the 1830-60 period.

In 1845, the Court ordered the jail steps be repaired, and the next year the bar of the courtroom was also in need of fixing.

In 1847, a committee was named to make a complete examination

of the courthouse. The committee recommended that the courthouse and clerk's office be repaired.

In 1851, the courthouse steps were ordered repaired.

In the next year, the County Court ordered that sawdust be placed on the courthouse floor, and ordered the contractor to "keep it supplied with same."

This indicates that, true to the period, the court crowd chewed liberally on plug tobacco and used the floor for spitting.

This same year, the jailhouse steps were again ordered repaired.

The courthouse also had lightning rods. A new set were purchased in 1851 at a cost of \$31.

In 1853, the County Court faced another typical problem of the period.

Hog Problem
It ordered that a committee be named to fix the courthouse

grounds so that "hogs and stock cannot get on it." In the next year, the Court ordered a fence rebuilt around the well on the courthouse grounds so stock could not fall in the water facility.

At the same time, major repairs were ordered for the jailhouse. A new floor was ordered, made of "thick plank with spikes."

Total cost of courthouse repairs resulting from these orders total \$108.59.

In 1857, the jail was a bone of contention again. It was "unsound" said the County Grand Jury.

Stoves in the courthouse gave trouble in 1858. A committee was named in February to remove the old stove from the Grand Jury room and provide a new coal stove.

But in November, things were worse. The Grand Jury recommended that the stove in its room

"be destroyed." And in some of the most emphatic language in the Court Minutes, the Jury said of the stove: "We view it as a common nuisance (worse than nothing)." It recommended the offending stove be sold to the highest bidder.

In August, the Grand Jury reported it had examined the whipping post, stocks and jail. In November, it said the shutters and steps at the jail needed fixing.

In 1859, the County Court ordered that two pitchers and two glasses be provided for the courtroom. Late in the year, it also ordered that the ever-troublesome jail "be put into order."

Thus, the story of Hertford County's courthouse. Three years later it went up in smoke after a Union army officer said it was being used as a storehouse for Confederate military supplies.

Tavern, Lodging Schedule

Rates of board and room at inns and charges for retail liquors were regulated by the County Courts in the 1830-61 period.

In 1859, the Hertford County Court established a schedule of rates which gives an insight into costs and habits of the period.

The schedule, listed as "Tavern Rates," included: The charge for "one person with horse" was two dollars a day. Without a horse, the charge was \$1.50.

Food for the lodger was 50 cents for dinner and 37.5 cents for breakfast and supper.

Food and lodging for the horse was 25 cents for "dinner" and 25 cents for lodging.

Meals sent to rooms (unless in cases of sickness) would cost the lodger 50 cents extra.

Barroom rates were established for what must have been the favorite drinks. They included "French brandy," which was ten cents a drink, or "domestic brandy," which was 6.25 cents a drink.

Then, the thirsty lodger could get one-half pint of "mint julep" for ten cents "without ice." With ice, the charge was 15 cents per half-pint.

County Dock Was in M'boro

One of the Hertford County's proudest possessions in the early 19th century was the county dock at Murfreesboro.

This facility served the Meherin River traffic in agricultural and forest products. When it was built, it symbolized the hope that Murfreesboro would grow to the size of a major port.

But by 1830, the county dock was falling into disuse. From then until it fell into complete disrepair during the Civil War, the dock caused concern for the Hertford County Court, the county's governing body in that day.

The story of the dock in Court Minutes begins in 1849 when \$50 was allowed for repairs. A few months later, \$85 more was allowed for repair.

In 1853, business in cotton was picking up and the County Court appointed William B. Wise as guardian of the dock.

In the year following, \$38.86 was allowed for repairs to the dock.

The dock was partially destroyed by Union cavalry in 1863 and never used again.

paid by the County Court for repairs. Five dollars was paid for repairs in 1853.

BUCKHORN SWAMP — In 1850, the county was asked to take over a private bridge "near Manney's Old Mill in Buckhorn Swamp on the road from Buckhorn Chapel to the residence of Jethro Darden." The bridge was on a road that led from Murfreesboro northward to Manney's Ferry and Virginia, roughly paralleling US 258 of today. The County Court took over the bridge.

Within a year, the bridge needed repair. A commission was appointed to decide whether to rebuild the bridge or establish a ferry. Apparently the bridge was repaired. In 1854, Darden was granted \$100 for building a new bridge.

CUTAWHISKEY SWAMP BRIDGE—This structure spanned Cutawhiskey Swamp just north of Saint John's. It had been in existence for several years when \$138 worth of repairs were ordered in 1852. More repairs—costing \$24.75—were done in 1855. In 1858, major repairs cost \$370.

WICACON RIVER BRIDGE—This much-used span crossed the Wicacoon near Montgomery's Mill between Bethlehem and CoField (in these days known as "Sally Archer's Crossroads.") It had been in existence for several years when repairs to the abutment were ordered in 1852. Repairs costing \$358.46 were done in 1854.

CHINKAPIN CREEK BRIDGE—This bridge spanned the Chinkapin Swamp just east of Pitch Landing, the important landing of the Ante Bellum period just west of present-day Harrellsville. It is not mentioned in Court Minutes until 1856, when \$94 was allowed for repairs.

GRIFFITH BRIDGE—In 1854, the county took over Griffith's Bridge near Murfreesboro after \$300 had been spent privately for its construction. The county paid \$200 more on the work, but stipulated that the bridge was to be "privately kept."

BLUE WATER BRIDGE—Located west of present-day Union,

this bridge spanned a small tributary of the Potocasi Creek. It is mentioned in 1859 when James Duke was named guardian.

LONG BRIDGE—The "Long Bridge" connected Hertford and Northampton northwest of Murfreesboro. In 1853, a commission was named to meet with a Northampton group to decide on repairs for the bridge. Hertford paid one-third of the cost—a bill for \$233.34—when a new bridge was completed.

Smaller Bridges
Three smaller bridges are mentioned in 1842-60 Hertford County Court Minutes.

A footbridge was ordered built across Ahooskie Swamp between Saint John's and Bertie line in 1846. A footbridge was ordered over "Slaughter's Swamp" in 1857, and the county took over a small bridge across Ahooskie Swamp "near the residence of Dr. Godwin C. Moore" in 1850.

There were more than a dozen other bridges in the county during the period. Most of them were tiny structures spanning the runs of creeks and swamps. Some were no more than planks laid in swampy areas along roads of the period.

County Court Kept Many Bridges

(Continued from Page 1)

Murfreesboro and Saint John's this was a much used bridge. It was in existence during the early years of the 19th century. In 1847, it was mentioned in road orders by the County Court. It was ordered repaired in 1849 and \$214 was paid for the work. Another examining committee was named in 1857. Repairs were ordered and they cost \$653. In 1858, Charles Vann was named keeper of Benthall's.

STONE CREEK BRIDGE — Another ancient river crossing that is still known today. It had been built in the mid-1700's for the heavy traffic between Chowan River landings in Bertie County and the West. It was ordered repaired in 1849. A committee was named to examine it in 1854 and \$185 was paid for subsequent repairs. In 1858 more repairs were made at a cost of \$126.11.

BOONE'S BRIDGE — In existence as a ferry since the mid-18th century, this important bridge crossed the sluggish Meherin between Hertford and Northampton County near the Virginia border.

It is first mentioned during the 1843-60 period when \$8.34 was paid for its keep by the Hertford County Court. The bridge was maintained jointly by Hertford and Northampton. In 1858, a new bridge was built, with Hertford paying \$218 of the \$654 total cost.

HILL'S BRIDGE—This bridge crossed Potocasi Creek at Mount Tabor Church between Murfreesboro and Winton. It was in existence in 1846. William Jones was keeper of the bridge in 1851 and was granted \$22.50 for repairs to it. The bridge was scene of a brief fight between Union cavalry and Confederate cavalry in 1863, known as "Skirmish at Potocasi Bridge."

BEAR CREEK BRIDGE — Between present-day Ahooskie and Harrellsville, in the 1842-60 period this bridge carried a road that led from Ahooskie Baptist Church to Pitch Landing. It is first mentioned in 1850, when \$87 was

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