



Railroad Street, focus of young Ahsokie's bustling business district



Young elm border beginning to shade Church Street, residential thoroughfare



First Methodist Church Building in Ahsokie, 1904

Historic Ahsokie Photographs

Three historic photographs of early Ahsokie scenes show the look of the town in the bustling days of the early 20th century, when it was growing to become the Roanoke-Chowan's largest community.

These photos were used in producing postcards, which were then coming into vogue. The originals of the pictures in this series are owned by Mrs. Robert Chamblée of Ahsokie.

Exact date of the pictures is unknown. They were taken sometime in the period of the First World War. The Baptist Church (at right), now the Presbyterian, was still the focus of the community. Main and Church streets had been laid off. Railroad Street was actually the heart of the business district, development of the lower end of Main was beginning.

The Methodist Church stood on the corner of Main and McGlohon streets.

It had been built in 1904, a few years after the church had been established and held its first services in the former Masonic Hall. The hall had stood at the corner of North and McGlohon, where the home of the late Dr. Jesse Mitchell now stands. A few years later, it was to serve as the first high school building for the new town.

No streets were paved in this period and the town had few automobiles.

Church Street was becoming the town's residential thoroughfare, and the giant elm border that is its present-day pride was beginning to provide shade to the wide, at times dusty, boulevard.

The photograph was taken at the corner of present-day Church and Rhoe streets, looking westward toward the railroad.

In 1890, there were two Episcopal churches in Hertford County, listed in the N. C. Business Directory. St. Barnabas' Church is located at Murfreesboro, and St. John's is listed as Winton.

Hertford County in 1890

Saloons Were Open, River Was Busy in Year of Hope

A transitional decade in Hertford County history was the 1890-1900 period. The county was recovering from the long period of depression after the Civil War. A new generation of leadership was taking over, and the look was to the future.

The picture of Hertford County in 1890, at the beginning of this important period, is taken from a business directory published that year in Raleigh. A copy of the directory is in the library of the Bertie County Clerk of Court.

It was a period celebrated as the "Gay Nineties." It was a period when Hertford County had saloons, and when the Chowan River was a busy center of fishing activity. It was the days of the beginning of Negro education in the county, and a day when railroads were beginning to end the long-time isolation of the county's people.

Anetta, Lotta and Winton, Too

Ever heard of Anetta, Lotta and Riddicksville? No, the first two aren't girls you should have known—they're towns in Hertford County, listed in the 1890 North Carolina Business Directory.

A check with the directory, now in the Bertie County courthouse files, shows how times change, for Anetta and Lotta, along with Riddicksville, have passed into history.

The town of Anetta wasn't even a post office, according to this book. In fact, there's only one mention of Ahsokie, given as the residence of James Newsom, physician. A list of post offices and their population shows:

The 1890 Business Scene

Blacksmith, Wright, Distillers

Blacksmithing and wheelwrighting was the most important business in Hertford County in 1890, judging from the occupations listed in the N. C. Business Directory that year. The following firms were listed as "blacksmiths and wheelwrights": L. A. McLaughlin, Winton; M. A. Proctor and Co., Union; Ira Odum, Bethlehem; G. D. Payne, Mills Joyner, G. W. Hines and E. C. Worrell and Co., all at Murfreesboro; W. B. Alexander, Bethlehem; J. T. Lowe, Winton; and H. B. Vann, Winton.

William Core and Co. at "Turner" is listed as the only boat builder in the county, and Laster Bros. at Union did the only coopering.

"Building and contractors" were George Harris, Tony Southall and W. R. Warren, all of Murfreesboro and W. D. Deans, J. H. Harrell and L. C. Lawrence operated cotton gins at Murfreesboro and Matthews and Mitchell had one at Winton.

Schools—Growing List

There was an abundance of schools, both private and public, in the Hertford County of 89 years ago. According to the N. C. Business Directory of 1890, the county had 29 white public schools and 27 colored public schools.

At Winton, the Rev. C. S. Brown was principal of the Negro academy, Miss Lula Mitchell also had a primary school there, and there was another primary school with Mr. Garriss as principal.

The Brownsville Academy at Menola was also active, with Mrs. S. R. Brown as principal, and Miss Lola Stanly and Miss Eva Chitty as assistants. The Chowan Baptist Female Institute at Murfreesboro had J. B. Brewer as director.

D. Borcliff also directed an academy at Union, and J. H. Picot was principal of the Buckhorn Academy at Como. W. C. Parker was principal of a male high school at Mapleton, and Percy Rowe was principal of the Murfreesboro Male Academy. Mrs. E. V. Carter taught a primary school at Murfreesboro, and G. C. Williams conducted a primary school at Harrellsville.

Home Schools

Two "home schools" are listed, with Miss Webb as teacher of the one at Union, and Miss Parker as teacher at Como. A private school was operated by Miss Laura Carroll at Riddicksville. E. E. Parham was director of the Wesleyan Female Institute at Murfreesboro, a Methodist college.

An advertisement in the directory lists the curriculum at the Wesleyan Female Institute as offering courses in French, German, Latin, English, and a diploma in music. For nine months, tuition and board was \$200.

Farmers . . .

A listing of farmers occupies the largest portion of Hertford County's record in the N. C. Business Directory of 1890. Among the post offices are some long since gone, such as Anetta, Bethlehem, Lotta, Riddicksville, and Rosaka.

According to the directory, J. J. Horton was the only farmer at Rosaka, and J. D. Gatling was the farmer at Woodland. Other farmers listed were at Aulander, Como, Harrellsville, Mapleton, Menola, Murfreesboro, Powellsville, Union, St. John, and Winton.

The discrepancy in the accuracy of the listings is shown in the fact that Woodland is in Northampton County, while Aulander and Powellsville are in Bertie.

Top Hotels . . .

Hotels and boarding houses occupied an important place in the life of Hertford County in 1890. According to the N. C. Business Directory for that year, the following places and their operators were given:

Excelsior House, Murfreesboro, J. L. Harrell; Jordan & Parker, Madlin House, Union; Henry Madlin; and Spencer House, Murfreesboro, C. W. Spencer.

Two colored restaurants in Winton were also listed, with Neanie Turner and Zilpha Beckwith as proprietors.

Ten Doctors . . .

Ten physicians were serving Hertford County in 1890. According to the N. C. Business Directory, they were: A. H. Askins, Harrellsville; T. J. Burbage, Como; S. S. Daniel, Winton; J. T. Eldridge, W. G. Freeman and John W. Haggard, all of Murfreesboro; H. Mitchell, Union; James Newsom, Ahsokie; W. H. Seales, Union; and J. T. Shubrick, Winton.

Hertford County in 1890 was served by two newspapers. John W. Hicks is listed in the N. C. Business Directory of that year as "ed. and prop." of the Index at Murfreesboro. The Rev. C. S. Brown, Negro educator of Winton, was editor of a semi-monthly religious and educational publication, the Baptist Pilot.

Shipping was an important function through Winton's access to the Chowan River. T. H. Dedman was agent for the Albemarle Steam Navigation Company and Matthews and Brother were agents for the steamer "Mary Roberts."

1890 Winton, M'boro

Winton's busy early history is shown in the trade listings in the 1890 N. C. Business Directory, now in the Bertie County courthouse at Windsor. Dr. S. S. Daniels, physician, also served as postmaster and manager of the Western Union telegraph office. J. A. Northcott was assistant postmaster.

Murfreesboro offered all the refinements of good living in 1890, as evidenced by the trade listings in the N. C. Business Directory of that year. For the ladies, M. B. Chappell was a baker and confectioner, G. W. Grimes offered furniture and photos and Mrs. M. S. Lewis was the milliner.

E. L. C. Ward and Co. were the only bankers listed in the county and J. T. Weed bore the distinction of being "merchant tailor." W. B. Day sold stoves, Lawrence and Co. were druggists and W. B. Spencer dealt in books and stationery. Spencer also doubled as postmaster and telegraph operator.

Search for Knowledge
ITHACA, N. Y.—(UPI)—When Cornell University raised its tuition fee from \$10 to \$25 a semester about 75 years ago, enrollments went down by nearly one half. Tuition at Cornell will be \$1,250 this fall, but there is no sign of any drop-off in the number of students seeking admission.

A Fair Proportion
TOLEDO, Ill.—(UPI)—Signs posted at the city limits here read: "Welcome to Toledo—Population 1,000—989 Happy Souls—11 Soreheads."
Merit Pay for Teachers
CHICAGO (UPI)—Most school administrators now favor a merit pay system for teachers, according to the magazine "The

Nation's Schools." A large number of the administrators said they had only come around to this point of view in the past two years.
Bingo
MONTEZUMA, N. Y.—(UPI)—A referendum on whether bingo should be legal for charitable groups in Montezuma resulted in a vote of 54 to 0 in favor.

The famed Scythe Tree near Waterloo, N. Y., is a unique memorial to a young soldier of the Civil War. When the boy left for the front he hung his scythe in the crotch of a Balm of Gilead poplar and asked that it be left there until he returned. He never did. The growing tree enveloped the scythe's blade, and today only six inches of it show.