

# Historical Sketches of Wilkes County Published by John Crouch in 1902

(Continued From Page One)

Grassy Knobs, in the McCann neighborhood. The oldest man in that section at that time was James McCann, ancestor of the McCann generation. He was then about 80 years old and was one of the first settlers. I have heard him say that when he was young Grassy Knob had nothing but grass on it, from which it derived its name and that he had seen large herds of deer grazing on it. It is now and was forty-five years ago heavily timbered.

The Cherokee Indians were quite numerous in those days, and where North Wilkesboro now stands seemed to be their capital village. Here the Indians held their annual corn dance, which was their festival of harvest. There they reeled and frenzied and made merry for days and weeks. In the bottoms along Yadkin and Reddies rivers, which were then heavily timbered with stately cedars, were hundreds of Indian wigwams.

On the hill where Gus Finley lived and died was erected by the early settlers a kind of fort known as the "Black House." Here the whites were attacked by the Indians, would flee for refuge. They could spy the approaching enemy in every direction and bring him down with their deadly rifles before he could get close enough to do any injury to the whites. This house or fort, seems to have been burnt by the Indians, but another was built on the same spot. The last one was called the "Red House." How long the "Red House" stood or how it was destroyed is not known. But it is probable that before it was destroyed the savages had been driven from the Valley of the Yadkin and it was not longer needed as a fort for protection from the attacks of the Indians.

The early settlers had to go nearly two hundred miles to Cross Creek to get salt, sugar, iron and other necessities that they could not produce here. The women of those days were more industrious than the bon tons of the elite of society that we have with us today pretending to be wives and mothers. They would work in the fields all day, and at night they had the cotton to seed, flax to spin, carding, weaving, knitting and many other things to do. The meals had to be prepared too, but it required only a short time to do that; the principal articles of food were "hog" and hominy, and such other articles as could be produced on the plantation. Coffee and tea were rareties. Tea made from spicewood twigs, sassafras roots and sage leaves and "coffee" made of parched corn or rye was commonly used.

In the spring of the year all the stock was belled and turned loose in the woods to shift for themselves. Troughs were hewn in logs where the stock was salted about twice a week. These troughs were called "salt licks." In those days there was a kind of wild pea vine that grew abundantly in the woods and the stock would graze upon these pea vines and do well until cold weather. These wild pea vines ceased to grow about 50 years ago.

There is quite a contrast in society then and now. In other days the dwellings usually consisted of two log houses—the kitchen and the "Big House," and occasionally the "Big House" had "up stairs". The "Big House" was the parlor, sitting room and bed room combined. There was no organ nor piano, but the fiddle, banjo, flute and fife were the musical instruments in those days. Courting was carried on in those days; you bet, but the boys of today wouldn't have recognized the style in those days. There were no drives in costly vehicles nor expensive bridal tours. When the distance to be traveled was too far to walk they rode on horseback. Bride and groom or beau and sweetheart would both ride the same horse and hie away over the rough roads as merrily as the mated sparrows fly about their nests. The courting at home was done in the "big house", in the corner by the fire while the old folks were in bed and pretendedly asleep in the backend of the room. Corn shuckings, quiltings, etc., were great social events. At night after the work was complete, the neighborhood fiddler came in and the fun began. Until an hour or two before day both old and young, male and females, would dance and skip and play keeping step with the music all the while. Everybody believed in helping his neighbors do their work and in turn his neighbor would help him. The whole community would engage in shucking corn, etc., and keep moving about until every man's work was done, keeping up the frolics every night. When a man killed a hog or a yearling he would divide with his neighbors who would repay when butchering day came with them.

The principal sports among the men were hunting and horse racing, and in later years, mustering. In those days, there was no tax on "grog" as they called it, and

from all information it was freely used. It is peculiarly interesting to study the habits and customs of our fore fathers who first inhabited their country; think of them chasing the deer, elk, bear and other game; their conflicts with

the Indians; the every day association with such pioneers as Daniel Boone and Benjamin Cleveland. But the frontier life is a thing of the past; the pioneers have long since passed away, and all that is left is the county which they founded and nurtured in its infancy. Let us honor them by keeping the record of our county spotless and clean. The Moravians In Wilkes Lord Granville was one of the

eight Lords Proprietors of North Carolina. He did not sell his interest in the lands of North Carolina back to the King of England as did the other seven Lords Proprietors. In 1752 he granted ten thousand acres of land to the Moravians who surveyed a part of the ten thousand acres—8778 acres—within the present border of the county of Wilkes. Two surveys were made, known as the upper and lower Moravian surveys. The

lower survey included the site of Wilkesboro and extended down the river to the Blah's island, and up the river a mile above North Wilkesboro crossing the river and running on the north side, then again crossing the river between the Hackett and Stokes farms, leaving the latter out of the survey. The line crossed the Wilkesboro and Moravian Falls road near where R. C. Lows now lives, and ran out near Oakwoods and back

to the beginning. The upper survey included the sections about Moravian Falls and Goshen. The exact lines of either survey can not now be located. It is said that the Moravians intended to include in their survey the bottoms on the north side of the Yadkin about where North Wilkesboro now stands, but when the surveyors came to the heights on the south side of the river and looked over and saw so many

savages rising from Indian wigwams they concluded it would be best to leave the savages unmolested, so they went a mile further up the river before crossing. It is said that the Moravians were in search of a better site and failing to find it in desirable quantities they failed to pay Lord Granville for the land. Lord Granville afterwards sold the lands of the Moravians had (Continued on page three)

# 1879 - 1890 - 1927 - 1940

## What Is The Significance Of These Dates?

**1879**  
Electric Lights Invented

Electric lights invented by Thomas A. Edison.

A luxury then enjoyed only by the very wealthy.

**NOW**  
"Eyesight is priceless—light is cheap."

**1890**  
Town Is Incorporated

North Wilkesboro incorporated.

The railroad came.

**1927**  
Duke Power Arrives

Duke Power Company extended its lines to North Wilkesboro, a town of 3000, to serve approximately 800 customers and 20 miles of lines.

**1940**  
The Year Of Opportunity

North Wilkesboro celebrates its 50th anniversary population 4501 with approximately 37,000 more in the county.

Duke Power Company grown to approximately 300 miles of lines serving 3400 customers to serve most of the county instead of just the town.

## So, In 1940, We Are Staging A



# 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION JUNE 30 - JULY 1-4

## 50 Years Of County and City Progress

Duke Power Company is proud of the part it has played in the progress of our city and community since its participation in an electrical way in 1927, providing an abundant supply of electricity for lighting, heating and power purposes. This supply will be increased as demand made through continued expansion of industrial and household consumption. Today there are thousands of electrical appliances connected to our lines, affording advantages and conveniences to hundreds of patrons, which in turn create additional leisure for pleasure or time for other essential duties. Whatever the needs of this section, Duke Power Company will not be found wanting in fulfilling its obligation to supply electrical service to meet the demands of this fast growing city and adjacent area.

**ELECTRIC DEVELOPMENT BUILDS COMMUNITY PROGRESS**

For more than 30 years the Duke Power company has served the Piedmont Carolinas. Through this period, electric service has revolutionized conditions in industry, in commerce and in the home as has no other new development. For many years, low-priced electricity has been an important factor in bringing new industries to the Carolinas. Thus communities have grown and prospered with the application of electric service which is now so widespread that it is indispensable to the high standard of living which our citizens now enjoy.

Today, Duke Power Company has almost 1-4 million horsepower of installed generating capacity in hydro-electric and steam-electric plants—abundant to serve growing industry, commercial and home needs.

While the Piedmont section is regarded as an industrial center, it is of more than usual interest to note that approximately 10,000 miles of line have been built to serve rural customers. The availability and low rates of electric service will, according to students of agricultural economics, be almost, if not entirely as great a factor in the development of our agricultural community as it has been in our industrial development.

Lower cost electric appliances with the low cost of electricity now make the benefits of electric service available even to the humblest of homes. With all of these comforts and conveniences we can unquestionably look forward to even greater benefits in the years to come.

We Pledge Full Co-operation In The Continued Expansion Program Of Our Community

# DUKE POWER CO.

NORTH WILKESBORO, N. C.

"Electricity Is Cheap—Use It Adequately"

General Office: CHARLOTTE, N. C.