

Historical Sketches of Wilkes County

Published by John Crouch in 1902

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"We were born in Wilkes county, North Carolina, in 1868, lived on a farm, ate corn bread and fat meat and plowed a steer until we were 21 years old. We were blessed with the opportunity of getting to attend school for about fifteen months, all told. At the age of thirteen we made the first printing press we ever saw, carrying the type from ivy wood. When we obtained money enough a small hand press and a few fonts of type were purchased. Printing seemed to be our fort so we stuck to it. Somehow we got the idea in our noggin that we wanted to be a one horse editor, so in June, 1895, without any money, and with a printing outfit that was not worth twenty-five dollars, we founded the Yellow Jacket. For a long time it looked like the game was not worth the candle, but we worked the harder, hoping that a brighter day will come by and by. At last our hopes are partly realized. Today we have a larger paid-up circulation than any other paper published in North Carolina, and have at last succeeded in replacing the little old printing outfit with an up to date plant and have that paid for."

Mr. Laws is a man of more than ordinary wit and seems to be specially suited to the work he has adopted. He married Miss Dora Wallace and they have three children.

The Patriot, Moravian Falls
The Patriot is a three column, four page paper established a few months ago by James Larkin Pearson. Mr. Pearson is a young man, about 23 years old. He is widely known throughout this county as a poet, having been writing verse since his youth. He made his first printing press out of wood.

The Blue Ridge Baptist, North Wilkesboro
The Blue Ridge Baptist was established in Wilkesboro in 1900 with Rev. W. R. Bradshaw and F. B. Hendren editors. The next year the paper changed hands and A. C. Hamby became editor and D. W. Lee manager, and the paper was moved to North Wilkesboro. The Baptist is a clean religious paper and speaks well for its young editor and manager.

A. C. Hamby, editor, was born in Wilkes county Aug. 28, 1876, and worked on his father's farm until he was seventeen years old. He attended Bethel Hill Institute, Traphill Institute, Whitehead Academy, and he also spent nine months at Wake Forest College. He paid his tuition and board by teaching and working as a farm hand. He also attended the Blue Ridge Institute for one session. He was licensed to preach by his church but has not yet been ordained.

D. W. Lee, manager of the Baptist, was born June 23, 1875, was raised on the farm and attended school at Bethel Hill, Traphill and Whitehead. At the last named place he taught a commercial department for one session. He was principal of New Hope Academy in 1898 and 1899. In 1900 he, in copartnership with his brother, established the Baptist Instructor which was consolidated with the Blue Ridge Baptist in 1901.

The Curfew, Brewers
The Curfew was established in 1898 by W. L. Brewer and J. J. Spicer; at first it was a 3 column, 4 page paper but it has been enlarged to a 6 column, 4 page paper. Mr. Brewer, the present editor, is a man of character and ability. (Further particulars about the Curfew have not reached the author.)

LAWYERS
John S. Cranor
John Samuel Cranor was born at Rockford, in Surry county, April 26, 1847. When he was about ten years old his father moved to Wilkesboro and engaged in running a hotel. In 1864 he entered the Confederate army, being then only seventeen years. He enlisted in Company B. and was intended to be assigned to the First Battalion North Carolina Reserves and was stationed at Camp Vance for instructions. Here he was captured by Col. Kirk of the Federal army and was carried as a prisoner of war to a prison camp at Chicago, where he was kept for twelve months. While in prison he endured many hardships and witnessed the death of many comrades from exposure and hardships. After being paroled after peace was proclaimed he returned to Wilkesboro, studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1868. On Nov. 27, 1872, he was married to Miss Sarah Taylor and to them were born nine children. Mrs. Cranor died in May, 1902.

Mr. Cranor was minister of the church from 1884 to 1893. He represented a district in the State Senate; he was elected by the people when the majorities were about that much for the coming party. Mr. Cranor is

at present Mayor of the town of Wilkesboro.

Frank B. Hendren
The subject of this sketch was born Feb. 24, 1860, and worked on the farm until he was 21 years old attending the public schools about two months during the winter for a part of the winters. He entered Moravian Falls Academy and was prepared for college by Rev. Geo. W. Greene, principal of the academy. Before entering college he taught school in Ashe county one year and at Vashiti academy, in Alexander county, one year. In 1884, he entered Wake Forest College and graduated in 1888. After his graduation he taught school for ten years, teaching in Montgomery county, in High Point Female College, in the Winston Graded Schools, in Jackson county, and finally for four years was principal of Moravian Falls academy. In 1895 he was admitted to the bar, but taught school two years after. In 1898 he moved to Morganton and formed a partnership with J. F. Spahnour for the practice of law. He returned to Wilkesboro in 1900 where he has since resided practicing his profession. While he was at Morganton he was elected County Superintendent of Schools of Burke county. Mr. Hendren is a ripe scholar and an able jurist. He is an enthusiastic member of the Baptist church and is a great Sunday school worker.

William W. Barber
The subject of this sketch was born in Wilkesboro Oct. 14, 1855, and was educated by his father, Rev. R. W. Barber; he read law at Lenoir under Col. Geo. N. Folk and was admitted to the bar in 1879. In 1882 he formed a copartnership with Col. W. H. H. Cowles for the practice of law; the partnership existed until 1887, several years after Col. Cowles had been elected to Congress and was mutually dissolved; since that time he has practiced law alone in Wilkes and adjoining counties.

In early life he showed a fondness for politics and since 1876 he has been an active worker for his party. He has several times been chairman of the County Executive Committee of the Democratic party; he served eight years as a member of the executive committee for the judicial district, four years as chairman; for ten years he has been a member of the Congressional Executive Committee, two years as chairman, and is still a member of the committee; he also served six years as a member of the State Executive Committee. He was clerk to the committee in Washington of which Col. Cowles was chairman, but he resigned in 1889, after serving nearly two years, to take his seat in the State Senate to which he was elected the previous year.

In 1890 he was the Democratic candidate for Solicitor in this district; he canvassed the district against Hon. Thomas Settle, the Republican candidate. As the district was largely Republican Barber was defeated but he ran ahead of the ticket. Mr. Settle resigned in 1893 and Gov. Thos. M. Holt appointed Mr. Barber to succeed him and he served till 1895. In 1894 he was again nominated by his party for Solicitor but with his party he went down in defeat in that memorable campaign of 1894, again running ahead of his ticket.

In 1891 he was married to Miss Wilcox, daughter of Dr. J. O. Wilcox, of Ashe county, and four children bless their home. Mr. Barber stands in the fore front in his profession.

Frank D. Hackett
Mr. Hackett was born near Wilkesboro June 14, 1857. His father was distinguished educator and his mother was a Miss Sturgis, daughter of Judge Sturgis of the Georgia Supreme Court. He studied law under Maj. Bingham, of Statesville, and was admitted to the bar in 1880. He was District Surveyor during Cleveland's second administration. In the Legislature of 1899 he was assistant to the Principal Clerk of the House; in 1901 he was again selected for the same position. In 1900 he was a candidate before the Democratic convention for the nomination for State Auditor, but retired in favor of Maj. Dixon.

Lytle N. Hickerson
The subject of this sketch was born in Boone county, Arkansas, August 20, 1874. When he was about seven years old his parents moved to this county. Lytle worked on the farm and attended the academic school at Ronda; he also went to Moravian Falls Academy two years and finally took the four years course at the State University at Chapel Hill, after which he studied law at Statesville, under Judge R. F. Armfield and was admitted to the bar. He located at North Wilkesboro where he has since lived. He married Miss Jarvis, daughter of L. A. Jarvis, of North

Tire Dealer



T. H. Thompson, who has been in the re-treading business and as a tire dealer here for the past four years, has a very good opinion of North Wilkesboro and is glad to have a part in its business, civic and church life.

T. H. Thompson's Business Growing

Thompson Retreading Company Entered Business Here Four Years Ago

T. H. Thompson, a native of Statesville who was engaged in the tire business there for a short time prior to coming to North Wilkesboro, entered into the business life of North Wilkesboro four years ago when he set up a tire retreading outfit in the building on the corner of Tenth and A streets.

Mr. Thompson accomplished good results and turned out very satisfactory products. His business grew and larger quarters became necessary. He moved about two years ago to the lower floor of the F. D. Forester company building on the corner of Main and Tenth streets. In addition to a retreading service for all sizes of tires, Mr. Thompson has the dealership here for the widely known Pennsylvania tires, which are known for high quality.

Mr. Thompson has become quite popular here as a useful, public spirited citizen always ready to do his part in promoting the progress of the city and community. He is a member of the Presbyterian church, the North Wilkesboro Lions Club and the North Wilkesboro council of the Juniors. His family consists of a wife and one daughter.

Wilkesboro

Richard N. Hackett
The subject of this sketch was born in Wilkesboro on the 4th of December, 1866. He was educated at the State University at Chapel Hill where he graduated in June, 1887. Then he took up the study of law under Col. Geo. N. Folk, and in September, 1888, was admitted to the bar. He located in his native town and has become one of the ablest jurists and advocates in this section of the State.

Mr. Hackett has always taken a lively interest in politics, and when he was only twenty-one years old he was chosen as chairman of the county Democratic Executive Committee and he served continuously for six years. While he was chairman his party made steady gains until in the election following the last campaign under his direction a part of the Democratic nominees were elected. For more than ten years he has been a member of the State Democratic Executive Committee, and is also a member of the Judicial Executive Committee. At all times he has taken an active personal interest in the advancement and campaigns of his party, and he is one of the most forceful orators in the West.

In 1889 he was Commissioner of State to represent North Carolina in New York at the centennial anniversary of Washington's Inauguration.

In 1896 he was a candidate for the Legislature but was defeated though he led the Democratic ticket by 300 votes. In 1898 he was a candidate for the nomination for Congress from the eighth district and was defeated by only four votes. In 1900 his name was again brought before the convention, but he was defeated by J. C. Buxton, after which he gracefully took the stump and canvassed the district for Mr. Buxton.

In the campaign preceding the August election of 1900 Mr. Hackett canvassed the northwestern portion of the State in behalf of the State ticket and the constitutional amendment.

In 1901 he was appointed Assistant Secretary of State for the purpose of annotating and indexing the laws of the General Assembly of the State for 1901. He is an officer of the Grand

Lodge of Masons of North Carolina, and is an earnest worker for the order, especially for the orphanage of the order. He is a distinguished looking gentleman of pleasant and agreeable manner, a man of unblemished honor, a lawyer of much ability, and one of the coming statesmen of North Carolina.

Herbert L. Greene
Mr. Greene was born in Wilkesboro May 28, 1866, and was educated at the Wilkesboro Academy and at the State University. He read law under Col. Geo. N. Folk and was admitted to the bar in 1887. Instead of becoming a candidate for office he stuck to the practice of law and, in partnership with T. B. Finley, has built up a large practice. Although against his wishes, he was nominated for the Legislature in 1900 by the Democratic party, and he represented the county in the next General Assembly. Mr. Greene has been chairman of the County and also the Congressional Executive Committee of his party.

Mr. Greene is the author of the bill enacted by the Legislature of 1901 commanding the commissioners of Wilkes county to build a new court house. He also helped to secure the passage of the bill to build the Wilkesboro and Jefferson turnpike by the penitentiary convicts.

He was married in 1898 to Miss Davie Wellborn.

Hugh A. Cranor

Mr. Cranor is a son of John S. Cranor and was born in Wilkesboro Nov. 20, 1876. He attended Wilkesboro Academy and the State University; studied law at the law department of Wake Forest College and was admitted to the bar in 1902. He is a bright young lawyer and has a promising future.

Col. Thomas J. Dula
The subject of this sketch was born in Caldwell county and was raised on the farm; he attended the common schools and Emory and Henry college. He studied law under Judge Anderson Mitchell and was admitted to the bar about 1855 and located at Lenoir; in 1858 he was elected to the Legislature from Caldwell. When the Civil war broke out he entered the Confederate army as a private in company I, 26th N. C. regiment. He was detailed to return home and form a new company; he was elected Major and later was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel. During the war he was twice wounded. In 1871 he moved to Wilkesboro and the next year was elected to the Legislature, and also in 1875 he was elected a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. In 1876 he was the Republican nominee for Congress but was defeated by Maj. Robbins. In 1900 he was elected to the State Senate.

L. C. Carter

Littleton Calhoun Carter was born May 14, 1871, and was raised on the farm. He was educated in the common schools and at Fair View College, Traphill. For a number of years he engaged in teaching school. At the age of twenty-two he began the study of law under Maj. Bingham, of Statesville, and seven months later was admitted to the bar.

Thomas B. Finley

The subject of this sketch is the son of the late Augustus W. Finley, one of the wealthiest and most influential men that ever lived in the county. His mother's maiden name was Miss Martha Gordon. On his farm—where North Wilkesboro now stands—in the year 1862 was Thomas B. Finley born. During his boyhood he worked hard on the farm, keeping his work apace with that of the negroes hired by his father. He was educated at Wilkesboro Academy, Finley High School at Lenoir and at Davidson College, completing an elective or scientific course at the latter place in three years. At Davidson College he won a gold medal for declaiming. He read law under Col. Geo. N. Folk and was admitted to the bar in 1885. After receiving his license he located at Wilkesboro to practice his profession. He formed a partnership with H. L. Greene which exists up to this time.

Mr. Finley has been the promoter of many of the business institutions of this county. He was one of the men who planned and founded the town of North Wilkesboro; he was the first man to advocate the establishment of the Bank of North Wilkesboro and it was largely through his efforts that the bank was established. At present he is a director of the bank. In 1888 he canvassed the county in favor of the county issuing \$100,000 bonds for the construction of a railroad to Wilkesboro. He has helped to promote several other business institutions.

Although strenuously urged by his friends Mr. Finley has never been a candidate for office. In 1902 he was especially urged to become a candidate for Judge of the Superior Court; although assured of the nomination he declined to abandon his practice. He has appeared in a majority of the court cases tried in the county since he was admitted to the

Owns Two Shops



W. J. Church, owner of Wilkes Barber Shop and Tenth Street Barber Shop in this city, served in the capacity of barber in the United States Army during the World War, working in two training camps, in England and later in France.

Church Owner Of Two Barber Shops

W. J. Church Barber Here For 20 Years; Was Barber In Army Two Years

W. J. (Jake) Church has been barbering in North Wilkesboro for 20 years and many who had Mr. Church to do their work when he first started here are among his customers today.

Perhaps he is the only barber in North Wilkesboro who has done barber work on two continents. During the World War he began as a barber in Camp Jackson, S. C., later he pursued the same trade at Fort Mills, N. Y. After being transported he was an army barber in England and toward the end of the war was sent on into France, where he continued in the capacity of a barber in the U. S. Army.

In 1920 he began work in the City Barber Shop, later bought a half interest with R. J. Hinshaw and was also owner of a half interest in Tenth Street Barber Shop. In 1930 he bought the remaining interest in Tenth Street Barber Shop and in 1932 bought the Wilkes Barber Shop. He is now owner of both shops, which employ seven barbers and have an enviable reputation for good barber service.

THEY SET A RECORD

In a quiz given at W. U. recently, one of the questions was: "Name two ancient sports." A freshman wrote: "Anthony and Cleopatra."

In 1893 he was married to Miss Carrie Lizzie Cowles, and five children bless their home.

James W. McNeill

The subject of this sketch was born in Beaver Creek township Feb. 3, 1872. Until he was ten

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Owner Laundry



J. A. Jones is owner of Wilkes Laundry, which was begun 16 years ago and has experienced a steady and rapid growth of business. Many of its customers during its first week in business were also customers this week and throughout the years between.

Wilkes Laundry Here 16 Years

J. A. Jones Owner and Manager; Highly Satisfactory Service Is Rendered

The Wilkes Laundry was established in North Wilkesboro 16 years ago and what better recommendation for a firm could be given than to state that seventeen customers who used the services of the laundry during its first week in North Wilkesboro were among the firm's customers this week.

J. A. Jones is owner and manager of Wilkes Laundry, which started in business in a shed building adjacent to Wilkes Milling Company. There were four employes, counting Mr. Jones.

In 1934, a year after Mr. Jones had purchased the other interests and became sole owner, Mr. Jones erected a large brick building on Main street to house his laundry plant and installed the most modern type of machinery and equipment available.

Today the firm gives regular employment to 20 people and each year shows a substantial increase in business. Mr. Jones attributes the growth of the business to efforts on the part of his firm and every member of its personnel to render the best laundry service possible.

The business of the Wilkes Laundry is not confined to the corporate limits of the city but delivery trucks serve several nearby communities regularly.

Mr. Jones was born and reared on a farm in Davie county and prior to coming to North Wilkesboro was in the flour milling business for a few years. He likes North Wilkesboro and likes to do business with the people of the city and surrounding communities.

Has Modern Shop



C. G. Plexico, who established the Right-Way Shoe shop in North Wilkesboro eight years ago, has one of the most modern shoe repair shops and shoe parlors in the state.

Right-Way Shoe Shop Is Modern

C. G. Plexico Has One Of Best Shops In Northwestern North Carolina

C. G. Plexico came to North Wilkesboro eight years ago and established the Right-Way Shoe Shop.

That he went about the business in the right way is evidenced by the growth and progress of his business.

Today he has a very modern shoe shop with the most modern equipment available. The Right-Way Shoe Shop is located on Main street.

Mr. Plexico spent a large sum of money establishing his modern shop and the result is one of the best shoe repair establishments to be found in this part of the country. Experienced workmen are ready at all times to attend to every job, large or small, and satisfactory results are always assured.

The best of materials are used in the work. Mr. Plexico has been often heard to remark that he might use cheaper materials and make more profit but he had rather turn out a good job which will give satisfactory service and retain the goodwill of the customer than to make more profit.

A modern shoe shine parlor is operated jointly with the shoe shop. As in the shoe shop, the best of equipment has been installed for the comfort of patrons and high quality materials are used by well experienced workmen.

Mr. Plexico is glad to be a citizen of North Wilkesboro and to have had a part in the progressive business life of the city since he came here in 1932. He joins with other business men of the city in extending a cordial invitation to everybody to attend North Wilkesboro's 50th anniversary celebration June 30 to July 4.

50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION JUNE 30 - JULY 4

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