

THE OLD PLANK ROAD.

This paper has received a copy of the 50th anniversary edition of the Twin-City Sentinel, of Winston-Salem, published on the 5th instant. It is a credit to that progressive city, and to its publishers, who, through its columns, have put out a lot of worth while information not only about Winston-Salem and that section, but the entire state. It is a valuable edition for the great amount of historical facts it carries. We reproduce from its columns a story about "The Old Plank Road," from the pen of Col. W. A. Blair. It is the best and most complete story about this old historic highway that we have read. The "Old Plank Road" crosses the upper section of Lee county. The road can be traced by some of the old plans that are scattered along its route, in fact, modern highways have been built on some sections of this old road, over which the farmers and others from the western part of the state hauled their produce to Fayetteville before the war. Between the states and in exchange carried back goods of every description that they needed in their homes and on the farms. The plank used in the construction of this road were from the very best heart pine that could be found. Had this road been reconstructed of concrete it would probably be in use today. Following is the story of Col. Blair:

The entire question of transportation has been one of absorbing interest in North Carolina and elsewhere for many years. It was more easily solved in the eastern section of the state, where rivers, bays, sounds and ocean were hospitable to boats, rafts and other water craft. But water didn't exist everywhere and canals, roads, and, finally, rail roads, occupied much attention in the legislative bodies. The railroad was a new, ambitious, costly and untried proposition and the people didn't know much about locomotives or cars, and it was understood that these must be tracks, made of iron and steel and that trains did not seem to be able to wander at large through fields and woods, nor could they be counted on to stop at everybody's door.

Our folks did know about horses and wagons, however, and had even experimented with corduroy roads of logs placed crosswise through wet and swampy places. These were rough, uneven, and jolty, but were hailed as new, helpful and indeed a brilliant discovery. There were plentiful everywhere. There was little demand for it and a few machines called a saw mill had been invented, improved and expanded, so that around 1810, in the minds of many people, a sturdy, mighty and magic possibility.

As a result, the idea of a road, level and smooth, innocent of mud or stones, had a direct and strong appeal. We like to think of North Carolina as "first at Bethel" and first in so many other things, but must shamefacedly confess that the first plank road was built in Canada in 1836. It was a small affair, only a mile in length but the idea spread rapidly through the dominion and through the United States. Thirteen years later North Carolina had caught the fever and several roads were constructed here. Her first attempt was by far the most multitudinous and successful one and resulting in building the longest plank road ever built in the world, and, for years one of the most successful ones—the Appian way of North Carolina—the very queen of all roads. It ran from Fayetteville through Asheboro, where High Point was to be, Salem, and on to Bethania, a distance of 123 miles. But for the Civil War and the railroad it would have been crossed over into Virginia as had been planned. The Legislature issued the charter in 1849 for a period of 25 years, giving exceedingly broad and liberal powers and privileges. The capital was \$200,000 with leave to increase to \$300,000, shares were \$50 each which might be paid in installments and the name was given as "Fayetteville and Western Plank Road Company."

The corporation was especially empowered by its charter to acquire lands, condemn what was needed for right of way, to levy and collect tolls, pass its own rules and regulations and do almost as it pleased. It was specified, however, that the road must not be less than ten nor more than 30 feet in width and the right of way was 100 feet. Of course, many changes were made in the requirement and privileges as the years went by. The state agreed to subscribe for and take three fifths of the entire stock. Soon after the passage of the act E. L. Winslow was elected president, a strong board of directors chosen and the enterprise was launched with great faith, enthusiasm and rejoicing in Fayetteville. It was planned originally, that the road should go to Salisbury direct, but as the directors felt that there was not sufficient encouragement and support offered there, it was decided to make Lexington the objective point instead. Through the influence largely of Francis Fries, a director, Salem was finally chosen instead.

Timber for the road was abundant all along the line, and saw mills, with old fashioned straight, long clumsy saws, that moved slowly up and down were placed as and where needed.

Pine was selected for lower part of the road and oak for the upper. It was a little surprising that the pine boards lasted more than twice as long as the oak ones.

On October 1, 1849, the first plans were laid, and on April 2, 1850 the first section was opened for traffic from Fayetteville to Little River amid great rejoicing and greater expectations. It was found that fifteen men could lay a mile in about five days and that the best way to proceed seemed to be as follows: First, the road bed was thrown up, leveled and backed then all travel possible was turned over it, and after it had thoroughly settled, it was packed and leveled again before any of the timbers were laid. Four hewn stringers five by six inches were placed, costing \$3000 per thousand. Across these were laid the plank unnailed eight feet long and eight inches wide and three inches thick. In each mile there were about thirty thousand stringers and the average cost for the entire construction including material was about \$7,700 per mile. In 1853 the road was made as far as Salem and soon afterwards to Bethania.

Travel over it was very extensive, regular stage coach schedules were established and on one occasion a man rode horseback from Fayetteville to Salem in a single day. Stockholders were paid per cent dividends semi-annually and as early as 1854 receipts and tolls were coming in at the rate of \$3,000 per month, not understanding the fact that the young men were in the habit of taking their best girls to ride on it entering road just beyond one toll gate and turning back before the next one was reached. For years the road proved a great success in every way but the coming of the Civil War and the advent of the railroads sealed its doom.

It is worthy to note that early in our history certain Indian tribes from the mountains made annual pilgrim ages to the sea and blazed out the trail from near Wilkesboro through where Salem and High Point were to be located to Fayetteville, thence down the river to Southport. After the Moravians made their settlement it was necessary to bring goods from Fayetteville to the settlements and in fact to a large portion of Western North Carolina in searching for the best and most desirable route they could find none better than the old Indian trail. When careful surveys were made by the best engineers in the state for the plank road, they could find no superior way. When Frank Page chairman of the North Carolina Highway Commission attempted to select the best location for his concrete thoroughfare he was able to make but few and minor changes and would show how it happened that Indians seemed to have some natural and innate engineering ability that enabled them here as elsewhere, without compass or other instruments, always to choose the "straight and narrow path." The road was allowed a right of way of 100 feet and to this High Point owes its fine broad Main Street.

The influence of the road upon the manners and customs of the people was striking and interesting. They were able to send produce, their dried fruit, beeswax and other commodities to the markets and an old driver remarked the "people began to put on airs, dress better, move their pig pens back of their houses fix up their homes, yards and harness, curry their horses and to quit using the old accustomed designation 'meat sop' and to call it 'gravy.'"

The old plank road has gone forever. Now concrete covers the very self-same ground. Gone are foot pass engers, saddle horses, wagons, bulge stage coaches—all. Everywhere along the historic old stage coach way the hum of the motor is the only music and of it we cannot always say,

"Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care
And some like the benediction
That follows after prayer."

An old mile post from the road and some of the plank preserved in the Springfield Museum and the old stage coach which used to bring travelers to old Salem and to Bethania, now preserved by Salem's Wachovia Historical Society are now visited as sacred relics. One can't help thinking of that sturdy, strong rugged old stage drivers of pioneer days.

POLICE COMMISSIONER SOLVES CROP MYSTERY

The reason some crops are weak and poor when on the other side of the fence they are thick and luxuriant has been solved to the satisfaction of Police Commissioner B. W. Walker of Barnwell, S. C. He says good crops are always grown when American nitrate of soda is used, because of its high nitrogen content and purity.

According to Police Commissioner Walker, farmers who use American nitrate of soda are helping themselves by following Dr. Charles H. Herty's recent advice of "Southern fertilizers for the Southern farmer."

For these reasons use and recommend

ARCADIAN, THE AMERICAN NITRATE OF SODA
pure and sure

Mr. Claude Rosser, student at the University, spent the week end at home.

Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Shields, of Fayetteville, visited Mrs. R. R. Riley Sunday.

John Matthews-William Reid, Misses Hortense and Frances Wicker have returned from Boone, where they attended Appalachen College.

John Phillips, who made his home in Sanford for a number of years, and who owns property in town, has returned to Sanford and is with his daughter on Pearl street.

Mrs. H. M. Williams and Mrs. Neal Harrington attended the commencement at Elise Academy Sunday.

Rev. A. V. Gibson preached the baccalaureate sermon at Elise Academy Sunday morning and Rev. P. Cary Adams, President of the Presbyterian Junior College, Maxton, fill ed his pulpit.

Rev. C. B. Cullbreth, pastor of Steele Street Methodist church, will preach on the subject: "Mothers O' Men," at 11 A. M., and the women of the church will have charge of the program at 8 P. M. Sunday, Mother's Day.



Dr. B. W. Kilgore




Sen. Ellison D. Smith

Sen. Ellison D. Smith, N. C., former director of the North Carolina Experiment Station and Extension Service is one of the South's outstanding agricultural leaders. The contest manager has pointed out that farmers entering this great contest, with a first prize of \$1,000, should mail their entry cards when they buy their "soda," as the closing date is approaching.

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Mourn Noted Tobacco Magnate



LOUISVILLE, Ky.—Wood F. Axton, noted tobacco manufacturer, whose death is mourned in Kentucky as the loss of the state's first citizen, and one of the great leaders of the day, was famous for many things.

Two years ago he declined a raise in salary tendered him by the stockholders of the Axton-Fisher Tobacco Company, said to be the largest independent tobacco firm in the country. His salary was around \$10,000 a year and he refused to accept an increase saying that "if there is to be any raising it will start at the bottom."

Colonel Axton began his career as a grocery salesman and entered the tobacco business with a capital of \$60. His rise was meteoric and he was the first to see the wide possibilities in making cigarettes cooled with menthol, and probably the largest maker of 10 cent cigarettes.

A strong friend of labor, he believed that the worker should have enough to buy back the products of his labor if our economic situation is to improve. He was the only manufacturer asked to address the Federation of Labor convention at San Francisco last fall.

This Kentuckian provided his employees with free lunches, sick benefits, recreation facilities and milk for the workers came from his 1,000 acre farm and one of the finest Guernsey herds in this country. He was a noted horseman and a great friend of the farmer and tobacco grower. Col. Axton's death brings to the front his views on large salaries at a time when corporation salaries are a matter of public interest.

States Ask Federal Government To Cease Taxing Motor Fuel



Legislatures of 21 states, as indicated by shading on the map, have adopted memorials demanding that the federal government end the duplicating federal tax on gasoline June 30th, 1935.

WASHINGTON, D. C. — State governments are asking the Federal government to get out of the gasoline tax field and to stay out!

Memorials, adopted by legislatures of 21 states call for elimination of the duplicating federal tax upon gasoline at the legal expiration date June 30, 1935.

The Federal Finance Committee and other Congressional committees, special additional Federal taxes, a total of \$1,723,780,555. The Federal government's regular road expenditures have been only \$1,259,222,497.

Efforts of state governments to eliminate the Federal tax have been aided by nearly 250 organizations representing millions of taxpayers. They have adopted resolutions and appealed to individual Congressmen to end this tax June 30, 1935.

AN APPRECIATION

To our friends in Lee County we wish to express our most sincere appreciation for the increased local fertilizer business that has been given us this year.

This was forcefully brought to our attention by one of the most substantial and honored men of the county who drove up to our plant recently and said, "Last year I was perscaded to use some other fertilizer than yours after having used yours several years. This year my tenant demanded your fertilizer because he said, and I know, we did not make the crop last year that we had been making with OVERSIZE."

OVERSIZE FERTILIZERS follow the latest developments in fertilizing the crop for which they are intended and it is a real pleasure for us to have our own home people recognize it.

FOR QUICK DELIVERIES FOR TOBACCO, CORN, COTTON, GRAIN, AND TRUCK FERTILIZERS
SEE US OR OUR AGENTS

Sapona Mills, Inc.,

SANFORD, North Carolina.

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of Journals, Ledgers, Day Books, Salesbooks; Receipt Books; Manuscript Covers, Marking Tags, Pencils, Stamp Pad Ink; Show Card Ink; Daters, Muclage, Memograph Supplies. Come to see us. We carry a complete line of office supplies and legal blanks.

PRINTERS, RULERS, BINDERS.

Cole Printing Co.,

Telephone 70 Sanford, N. C.

This is the New Mower the Crowds Admired at A Century of Progress Last Year

Come in and go over the entire mower. You'll agree that you have never seen anything like it.



McCormick-Deering No. 7 Enclosed-Gear Mower

WE are anxious to have all of our friends see the New McCormick-Deering No. 7 Enclosed-Gear Mower. We think it is one of the finest pieces of farm equipment we have ever sold!

Everybody who has seen it says they never had any idea that a mower could be built as this one is.

For example: The entire operating mechanism, including drive gears, differential, and countershafts, is assembled compactly in an oil-tight gear housing and runs in a bath of oil. There are four high-grade roller bearings. Operation is so smooth and noiseless that you can scarcely hear the light hum of the sickle!

Special oil seals at the ends of the main axle and fly-wheel shaft, and the oil-tight gear box prevent leakage and protect all working parts against the entrance of dirt and other abrasive materials. Floating action of cutter bar provides ample play without disturbing knife registration.

"FARM WITH FARMALLS"

Holt Supply Co.,

"Good Equipment Makes A Good Farmer Better."

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