

Four Oaks and Its Great School

In the sketch of Johnston County in the last issue, it was impossible to do justice to the several good towns and communities. Since that issue, we have visited Four Oaks and got better acquainted with the community. At the former date we did not know the name of the principal of its great school, probably the world's largest consolidated school so far as the number of country children assembled from a large area is considered. Lo, we discovered an old acquaintance and friend in charge of this great institution—J. T. Hatcher.

Mr. Hatcher was reared in the Rose Hill section of Duplin County. He is a brother of the popular Hamlet physician and of Mrs. Bernard Alderman, the young lady who has made quite a reputation among the Alderman connection for her most readable and comprehensive records of the clan meetings.

An Enrollment of Nearly 2,000.

The Four Oaks school is equipped with three excellent buildings. Its area extends as far as seventeen miles, including the Bentonville area which is so sparsely settled as to make it impracticable to establish and maintain a school of high rank out there. The consequence is, the Four Oaks school has an enrollment of nearly two thousand students, and actually has an average attendance of more than 1500, despite the fact that the great majority of its pupils are from the farms.

The faculty consists of forty-four college-bred men and women. Nearly all of them have degrees from four-year colleges—the rest have two-year normal diplomas. Attorney and Representative Gilbert Grady volunteered the statement that the community is almost absolutely void of criticism of any of the teachers and that it is a most harmonious and efficient group. Mr. Hatcher is clearly a man capable of the great responsibility placed upon him. He has held the reins of the institution for several years and seems likely to remain indefinitely as its executive.

Four Oaks a Beautiful Village

Four Oaks is a lovely village. It is surrounded by one of the fine agricultural areas of Johnston County and was built up largely by the people of the community. When the Wilson Short-Cut was constructed forty-eight years ago, several fine young men came in and began a development that has resulted in their own enrichment and a solidity of community interests that withstood the very worst of the depression. Its bank, for instance, headed by Mr. W. J. Lewis as president, R. C. Cannaday, vice-president, and Bert Lassiter as cashier, stood the test without a quiver.

Mr. Lewis is a native of Grantham township, Wayne County. He came to Four Oaks twenty-five years ago and has been constantly engaged in the general merchandise and furniture business. He buys much country produce and states that he pays out \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually for poultry, eggs, and other farm products. He is a genial gentleman.

Mr. Cannaday is a twin brother of Claude C. Cannaday, a vigorous contestant for the Solicitorship in the Fourth district. After taking a course in pharmacy at the University, Mr. Cannaday worked two years for the Hood and Smith drug store at Smithfield. In 1915, he borrowed \$2,000 and set up a drug store at Four Oaks. He had paid back that money in a very short time and was on the way to prosperity. He owns the building in which the bank is located, his own drug store, and other valuable Four Oaks property. Mr. Cannaday is a man who makes friends readily and his success is not at all surprising.

Mr. Lassiter, too, is a home-grown product, and has shown splendid banking ability. The capital of the institution is \$37,500. It seems to be really performing the functions of a community bank.

R. B. Adams is a Harnett product, born near what is now Erwin. He has been merchandising at Four Oaks since the inception of the town, and according to his own words, was at one time able to lose a half-million dollars and still not be broke. He is not only a general merchant but a cotton buyer and gin-ner. Mr. Adams attended old Trinity College in 1884-85 and there met his wife, who is a daughter of the then professor of mathematics, Professor Bandy. Four Oaks' other druggist is Bert Barefoot, who, like Mr. Adams, is Harnett reared, being a native of the Dunn community. A fine fellow he.

Dr. J. B. Surles came from the Linden community of Cumberland County. After attending the State University, he secured his medical diploma at Jefferson Medical College. That was in 1909. He practiced five years at Lumber Bridge, Robeson county, and came to Four Oaks in 1914. He got his wife in Robeson—Miss Marietta Parham.

H. M. Johnson is a newcomer to Four Oaks. He was a country merchant, but moved to Four Oaks last February and has already launched a successful business career, it appears. He is a graduate of King's Business College. He has recently taken a brief course in cotton grading and plans to compete

ABOUT MOORE COUNTY AND ITS PEOPLE (continued from page two)

November election. The Democratic candidates number A. B. Cameron, who made a good record in the 1933 session and is trying to succeed himself, W. R. Clegg, prominent Carthage attorney, N. L. Gibbon of Lawevew, and Jesse Frink.

There are two of the Clegg lawyers in Carthage. They are of the old Chatham Clegg family. Mr. Frink the writer does not know. But I wish to tell you of N. L. Gibbon.

A Cosmopolitan for The Legislature.

Mr. Gibbon is an industrial engineer somewhat after the order of Herbert Hoover, though his employment has been confined to this country, if his travels have not been. For Mr. and Mrs. Gibbon are great travelers and have visited the old world more than once, one of those trips carrying them around the world. And let me say before I give you Mr. Gibbon's business career that Mrs. Gibbon, formerly Miss Ethel Parcher of Biddeford, Me., is a character herself. She has recently written a song which is being published and is told by the publishing company that it will take fifty more of her productions.

Born in Mechenburg county, young Gibbon attended State College where he was one of the early graduates in Textile engineering. He graduated in 1897. He was employed first by the noted D. A. Tompkins Company. He was up to his neck in the cotton mill industry in Greenville, S. C., for a time. Next he associated himself with Textile Machinery Company of Biddeford, Mo., and as that company's representative went hither and thither, introducing new machinery and more economical methods in the cotton mills of the country. During the war he was government purchasing agent for the Muscle Shoals development, no little job. He served as a member of the Customs Investigating Committee of 19 for facts for digestion by Congress in its discussion of the Fordney-McCumber Tariff Bill in 1923.

He is now taking life easy in a small cottage at that most lovely Moore county village of Lakeview. Mr. and Mrs. Gibbon are not trying to play big Ike at Lake View. The latter says they prefer to spend any excess of funds in travel rather than in a showy home. This couple is among the folk whom Bion Butler tells of coming to the Sandhills just because

with the other Four Oaks buyers next fall. He is a likeable young man.

The name Stanly always interests me. There was one Stanly family down in Sampson during my childhood—poor but intelligent. Miss Lou Stanly was one of my teachers and capable for the schools of that time, though she had probably not been to school herself more than twenty months. The old-time teachers were the very brightest intellects a-going—otherwise they could not have been prepared to teach. Well, lower Johnston seems to be the Stanly nesting place. I presume the Sampson family drifted down from this section. It is gone now, though one of the daughters of the one son was back in Clinton as a teacher some years ago. The Chatham County Stanlys trace back to Johnston. Well, here is Dr. J. H. Stanly, one of the Johnston stock and located at Four Oaks. He is one of the home-grown physicians, having secured his education in the University department of medicine when located in Raleigh and directed by Dean Hubert Royster.

The Stanly name is one of the really aristocratic names of old England, and was for a period represented in North Carolina's aristocracy—at New Bern—when North Carolina boasted such an animal as aristocracy.

Mr. J. B. Creech is another home-grown boy who made good as a Four Oaks merchant. He is a brother of Chas. A. Creech of Smithfield, whom many of our readers know. Mr. D. H. Sanders is another strong merchant. He has the one strictly hardware store of the village.

Lewis Keen—Here is Four Oaks' one candidate for county office this year. Mr. Keen is a native of Ingrams township, is well-known as a young man of ability and integrity and is so endorsed by the leading citizens of his town as a candidate for treasurer of Johnston county. He has formerly served as mayor of Four Oaks. He was a World War soldier and participated in the Meuse-Argonne offensive with the Eighty-second division. He will be hard to beat for that treasurer's job. His brother, Seth Keen is one of Johnston's staunch farmers and lives nearby Four Oaks.

Other prominent citizens of the village are J. W. Sanders, J. H. Austin, W. A. Massengill, R. A. Keen, E. F. Strickland, James A. Creech, and S. H. Sherrill. The writer is under much obligation to Representative Gilbert Grady for kindness shown him. Mr. Grady is not a candidate to succeed himself as a member of the House. He says he cannot afford the luxury. And one cannot blame him. Prosperous, with a most charming companion, with a lovely home and plenty to keep him busy, Gilbert Grady should be a happy youngster, and seems to be.

it is a new Eden. By the way, that Butler article has come in since I wrote the general sketch of Moore county and it is quite interesting to note the similarity of views of his and mine about the early life in Moore.

Mr. Gibbon has real ideas which he wishes to present to the Legislature. If elected, he will be heard from. He would be the most cosmopolitan character that has attended the General Assembly in some time.

A Southern Pines Lawyer.

While telling of the lawyers, I will mention W. Duncan Matthews, of Southern Pines. He is a native of Yadkin county and a brother of Dr. Matthews, well known physician of Sanford. For fifteen years he was a teacher, Vass being one of the places where he was principal. In 1926 he turned to the law and has a good practice at Southern Pines. He married Miss Rachel Cameron, daughter of the former Nabob of the Vass community, of whom I will say more when Vass is reached in this prolonged story.

Carthage Physicians and Dentists.

I have spoken of the patriarch of the medical profession. Dr. Shields. Next meet Dr. A. McNeill Blue, thoroughly Scotch in heredity and name. The first two names come from his grandfather, that same magnificent gentleman who served 32 years as clerk of the Moore court. Dr. Blue is a son of a physician, Dr. J. C. Blue, who, unfortunately, died when his son was only six years old. Dr. Blue, one of the cleverest gentlemen you could meet in a month of blue moons, is an A. B. Graduate of the State University. He took his medical degree at Tulane University. His wife was a Miss Beam of Statesville.

Dr. F. H. Underwood is another native of old Sampson and a brother of Dr. Underwood of Roseboro. He is a dentist, a graduate of the University of Maryland. He has been located in Carthage ten years. He got a wife at Glendale, noted as the home of that superb physician Dr. M. E. Street. She was Miss Ida Davis. Dr. C. E. McManus is a Cathamite. He took his professional course at Richmond. For years he practiced at High Point and has been in Carthage only a short while. Dr. Chas. T. Grier is a native of Mechenburg and has been in Carthage for 20 years. He was educated at Davidson, including his medical course. He spent 2 1/2 years in the army.

There are doubtless other physicians in Carthage but I failed to meet and get notes about them.

A Few Other Citizens of Carthage.

Moore, of course, did its full part in the War Between the States and in the World War, and here is Capt. W. J. Black back home after 17 years in the army, beginning with service on the border with Company K of Asheboro. He took training at an officers' training camp in 1917 and re-entered the service as a second lieutenant. He went over in September 1917 and returned unscathed in 1919, though he "went over the top" eleven times and was in six of the biggest engagements. It became a joke in his regiment that if all the other officers should be killed or wounded reports were to be made to Capt. Black, who would be Johnnie on the Spot. He was promoted to his captaincy in October 1918. Evidently, Capt. Black liked the army, as he has just retired from it. But he would better look out or an automobile will do for him what all the German guns failed to do—put him out of commission.

Mr. Wilbur H. Currie is apparently a youngster, though he says he has been in the Lumber business at Carthage 15 years and is chairman of the Moore county board of commissioners. He is seeking reelection, and we bet that he wins.

Here is another fine fellow—J. L. McGraw, of old and distinguished South Carolina stock. After serving in the aviation department of the 30th Division of the army during the world war, he came to Moore county, where he is engaged in business, and serves as a justice of the peace.

McQueen Bailey really belongs to Vass, but is a county man by virtue of his office of county surveyor. He is a fine fellow and is mentioned here when in mind.

And here I am about to omit the two men who are doing more than all the others to keep Carthage on the map—John Beasley and Ted Frye, makers of the Moore County News, which is right now about the best paper Carthage has ever had in her long history. Mr. Frye is a Moore county product; John Beasley is a son of George Beasley, senior member of the Monroe, Journal publishers, and a nephew of Editor Rowland Beasley.

The name Rowan has always intrigued us. I here met Mr. T. H. Rowan, a fine fellow, which meeting affords me an opportunity to write of the Rowans, but all the space that can be spared for this article is used up, and that matter and the stories of the several towns and their leading citizens will have to await the next issue. Really, it is impossible to give in even the space allowable in the next issue all I should like to say of Moore and its fine citizens, but something must be left to say in other years.