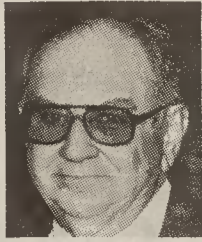


Agriculture integral part of county

Agriculture has always been an integral part of the history of Sampson County. Many of its most prominent citizens from the colonial period were involved in agriculture. A notable son of Sampson, Gabriel Holman, who served as Governor of the state of North Carolina from 1821-1824, was instrumental in setting up the first Board of Agriculture in the state. The principle means of making a living in Sampson County during the colonial period was the raising of wheat, corn, flax, indigo, rice, peas and vegetables for the family. During this period, the gathering of tar, pitch and turpentine were the main cash crops. Cows, hogs and sheep were kept mainly to meet a family's needs.

Sampson's farmers have always had a keen interest in agriculture and any new technologies that would help them produce more as well as better commodities. This is quite evident by the fact that in 1911, two part-time county agents, J.A. Turlington and J.M. Powell, were appointed to work in Sampson County. In 1912, these county agents along with George W. Herring, the first black county agent, organized a pure bred dairy bull



By George Upton
Special to The Independent

association. This organization's purpose was to buy bulls of superior breeding and loan them to farmers to improve the quality of their milk cows.

In 1947, under the leadership of Mayor Pete Winfrey, the City of Clinton, for its size, undertook a monumental task in providing local farmers with an auction market for their produce. During that year, the market opened under management of Tom Cornwell who had previously served as a County 4-H agent. At that time, it was the largest produce market in the eastern part of the state of North Carolina. Around that same period of time, poultry production had spread into Sampson County with a lot of small

flocks of laying hens. In 1953, the City of Clinton decided to open an egg grading station in conjunction with the produce market. Cuyler Heath was hired as manager of this station. This was the only egg grading station east of the Raleigh area.

After several bad crop years, many of the county's agricultural leaders saw the need for diversification with the production of something in addition to cotton and tobacco to pay the bills.

In the early 1950s, Burrows T. Lundy along with some local investors opened the Lundy Packing Company providing a ready market for hogs.

In 1958, a group of Sampson farmers formed the Sampson Livestock Association for the purpose of promoting livestock in this county as well as surrounding counties. The group sponsored many livestock events such as shows and sales. In 1959, they set out to raise money to build the Sampson County Livestock Arena which was completed in 1962.

Also in 1958, the Extension Service added a position for an agent to work solely with livestock. George Upton was moved into this position with the empha-

sis of his work directed at swine production.

In the early 1970s, the Sampson Livestock Association pushed to have another agent's position created to work with livestock producers. Nelson Waters was hired in 1972. Sampson is the only county in the state to have two positions devoted to livestock production.

By 1958, livestock sales exceeded all crop income for the first time in the history of Sampson County's agriculture.

By having leaders who had the foresight to realize what the county's agriculture could become, and with progressive people whose roots were in agriculture, Sampson has become a showplace for agriculture in the Southeastern United States.

Sampson now ranks number one in the state of North Carolina in agriculture income. In 1993, the county had a gross farm income exceeding \$388 million with \$275 million coming from livestock production.



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Grazing in the grass

Livestock is becoming an increasingly important aspect of farm life in Sampson County, as can be attested to by the number of cattle farmers now springing up. Another good indicator of the importance of livestock is the new county arena being built on U.S. 421, which stands as further testament to the importance people here are now placing on this up-and-coming agribusiness.



On the cover

Agriculture. Travel. On the one hand, they seem to have little to do with one another, yet on the other, one without the other seems nearly absurd.

In this section, the first of five highlighting aspects of life in Sampson County, the focus is on both agriculture and travel and how traditions of the past have been the foundation for growth now and in the not-to-distance future.

In this special five-section tab, readers will get a firsthand look at how traditions have helped everything from business and industry, education, health, communities and government evolve, growing, changing, yet keeping the uniqueness that makes county's like Sampson special.

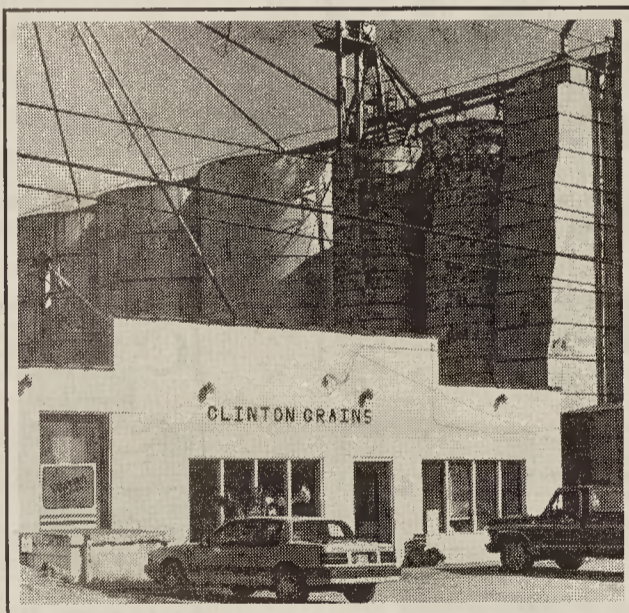
Traditions — the theme for Insight '95 — are a lot of what this county's about, and agriculture, most especially, has and continues to be a tradition that gets right to the heart of what has moved this county forward.

We have, individually and collectively, built upon the traditions that Sampsonians from years ago first began, and while the county continues to grow and diversify, it is those traditions that have made education, government, health, industry, businesses, travel, and yes, agriculture the thriving components of a county on the cutting edge.

On the cover a celebration of Farmer's Day in the 1940s saw a huge turnout at the courthouse in downtown Clinton, where young and old mixed and mingled, while today, Prestage Farms continues a similar tradition, holding an annual family day that brings over 2,000 employees and their families together for a day of fun and fellowship.

As for travel, it, too, has changed. Here, the New York Central — one of the most famous 20th Century Limited locomotives — as it looked in the early 1900's as compared to today's modern-day train, seen on the cover pulling into Carroll's Foods. Today, companies like Carroll's and Prestage take advantage of the rail to haul feed.

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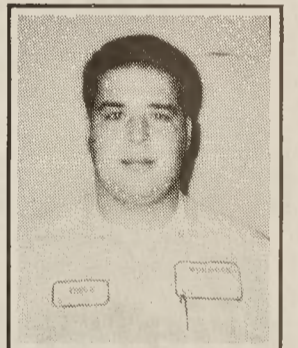
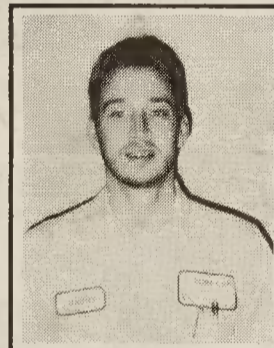
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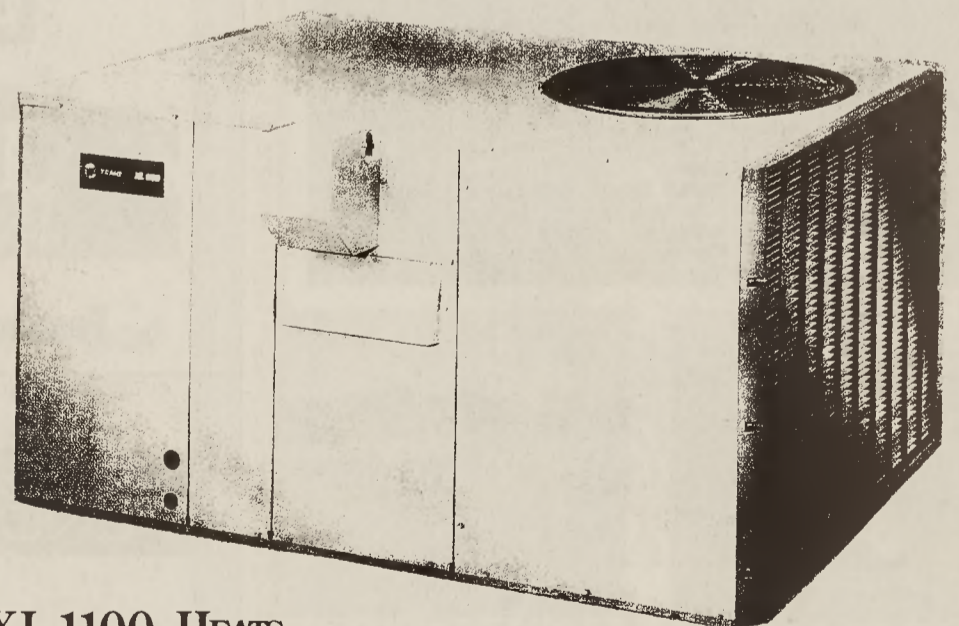
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