

THE TOWN OF HAMLET

Population in 1900 — 639
Population in 1940 — 5111

Started from Saw-mill in 1877.
Now a Thriving Railroad Center.

Hamlet 1900 & 1940

First is given the population of Marks Creek township, then Hamlet:

	T'ship	Hamlet
1900	2089	639
1910	3843	2173
1920	6569	3659
1930	9155	4801
1940	9248	5111

The Post-Dispatch editor is a stickler for dates and factual matters, and things historical.

This editor was asked the question a few days ago as to how old the now thriving railroad center of Hamlet is. And ruminating on this line, is the cause of this little article on our sister-town.

In 1888, John Shortridge came from England, and in 1874 he bought much land at where Hamlet now is, and erected a saw-mill, and a bit later a foundry. The place was called "Shortridge's Mills."

In 1877 Mr. Shortridge changed the name to "Hamlet," and he built a small woolen mill, manufacturing woolen tweeds.

On Feb. 9, 1897, the Legislature incorporated the town, with the following as the first set of officials:

Mayor: L. C. Spear.
Board: A. S. Cowan, R. B. Terry, C. C. Smith, O. F. Goodwin and F. Shortridge.

The area of the town is three-fourths of a mile from the Seaboard passenger depot — with the depot as the center.

The following is the Act incorporating Hamlet Feb. 9, 1897:

Private Laws 1897.
Chapter 14.

Section 1. That the town of Hamlet, in the County of Richmond, be, and the same is here-

by incorporated under the name and style of "The town of Hamlet," and said town shall be subject to the provisions of Chapter 62 of THE CODE, not inconsistent with this act.

Section 2. That the corporate limits of the said town shall be and include all the territory embraced with a circle, the center of which is the Seaboard Air-line Passenger Depot in said town, and the radius of which is three-fourths of a mile.

Section 3. That the officers of the said town shall consist of a Mayor, five Commissioners, a Constable, a Clerk and Treasurer, and as many policemen as may be necessary for preserving the peace and good order of said town. That the Mayor and five Commissioners shall be elected by the qualified voters of said town as hereinafter provided. That the other officers shall be elected by the Commissioners. That until the first election under this act L. C. Spear shall be Mayor, and A. S. Cowan, R. B. Terry, C. C. Smith, O. F. Goodwin, and F. Shortridge shall be Commissioners, who shall hold their respective offices until their successors shall be elected and qualified, and that the said Commissioners shall elect the Clerk and Treasurer, Constable and policemen herein provided for whose terms shall expire with the terms of the said Commissioners.

Section 4. That there shall be held on the first Monday in May A. D. 1897, and every year thereafter an election in said town for Mayor and five Commissioners thereof; said election shall be advertised four weeks prior thereto, by notices posted at four public places in said town; that all duly qualified electors of the County of Richmond who shall have re-

sided ninety days in said town next preceding the day of election shall be qualified voters of the said town, provided they shall be registered as herein prescribed; that the Commissioners each year shall appoint a registrar and other judges of election who shall hold the election each year; the registrar shall register in a book to be provided for that purpose by the Commissioners, all qualified electors who shall take the oath prescribed for electors in said County, and also an oath that they have been residents of the said town for ninety days preceding the election; that the registraion book shall be kept open for the registration of voters on the four Saturdays preceding the Saturday before the election in each year between the hours of 9 A. M. and 4 o'clock P. M., at which time and no other all electors shall be registered who shall present themselves and comply with the provisions of this act; that on the second Saturday preceding the election any voter of said town may challenge any person registered, and the Constable shall serve a notice on the person challenged to appear before the registrar and judges of election on the succeeding Saturday when and where the challenge shall be heard and decided; that no challenges shall be heard at any other time; that the registrar and judges of election shall attend at the polling place with the registration book on the day of the election; that the polls shall be opened at 7 o'clock A. M. and shall be closed at sunset; and the vote shall be by ballot. One ballot to contain the person voted for for Mayor and the names of the five persons who shall be voted for for Commissioners, which ballots may be on paper of any color and may be with or without device. That before entering on the discharge of any of their duties the registrar and judges of election shall take the oath prescribed in section 7, chapter 159 of the laws of 1895, before some justice of the peace of said County; that at the close of the said election the said registrar shall count the votes for Mayor and Commissioners, and the person receiving the

highest number of votes for the office of Mayor shall be duly declared elected thereto; and the five persons receiving the highest number of votes for office of Commissioners shall be duly declared elected thereto; and the said registrars and judges shall post at some public place in said town the names of the persons voted for and the number of votes received by each; and town Clerk and Treasurer shall forthwith notify the persons so declared elected of the fact of their election; and that the registration and poll books of the said town shall be deposited with the Clerk of the Superior Court of said County immediately after the said election, to be safely kept by him until needed for the purpose of the next election.

Section 5. That no person shall be eligible to any office in said town unless he be a duly qualified voter therein. That the term of office of Mayor and Commissioners shall begin on the Tuesday following the election in each year, and before entering on the discharge of the duties of the said office they shall each take the oath prescribed by law for public officers before some justice of the peace of said county.

Section 6. That the Mayor shall preside at all meetings of the Commissioners, and shall have power to call special meetings of the Commissioners, when he shall deem the same proper. That the Commissioners shall elect one of their number Mayor pro tem., who shall fill the office of Mayor during the absence or disability of the Mayor. That the Mayor shall see that the ordinances of the town are enforced, and shall have the criminal jurisdiction of a justice of the peace within the limits of the said town.

Section 7. That in addition to the powers conferred upon the Commissioners by said chapter 62 of THE CODE, they shall have the power to open, change, enlarge or discontinue streets in said town, and may condemn land for that purpose upon making just compensation to the owner thereof. That in case the said Commissioners shall decide to condemn any land for this purpose they shall appoint three disinterested freeholders in said town, who shall view the land proposed to be condemned, and after giving the owner thereof notice of five days to appear before them and contest the matter, if he so elect, they shall, if they deem the land necessary for said purpose, assess the damages at whatever sum they think just, which sum shall be paid by the said town, and the owner or owners of the said land shall have the right to appeal to the superior Court of said county from the assessment of the said appraisers, notice of appeal to be given within ten days.

Section 8. That the Commissioners shall have the power to levy taxes upon the real and personal property and polls in said town, the property tax not to exceed ten cents on the one hundred dollars valuation, and the poll tax not to exceed thirty cents on each taxable poll, and the valuation of all property to be the same as that at which it is assessed for State and county purposes. That the taxes shall be listed with the Clerk and Treasurer of said town during the first twenty days in June in each year, and all persons failing to list his taxes shall be liable to a double tax: PROVIDED, the Clerk and Treasurer may take a list of the taxes for each person failing to list from the returns for taxation for State and county purposes for the current year, which shall be as binding upon the taxpayer as if his taxables had been duly listed. All property and polls in said town on the first day of June in each year shall be listed; the Town Clerk and Treasurer shall make out and complete the tax-list and place a copy thereof in the hands of the Constable on the first Monday in September in each year, which shall have all the force and effect of an execution. That said tax-list shall be a lien on all real property in said town, and all personal property shall be liable to be seized and sold on ten days' notice for taxes; and real estate may be sold for taxes by the Constable in the same manner as sales are made under execution.

Section 9. That the Commissioners shall have the power

to pass ordinances, to be enforced by suitable penalties for the preservation of the peace and regulation of the good order of said town; they shall also have the power to levy and cause to be collected such reasonable privilege taxes as they may deem proper on the professions, callings, occupations, teacher and businesses carried on in said town.

Section 10. That the Clerk and Treasurer, and the Constable shall each give a bond in the sum of Five hundred dollars with sufficient surety, payable to the State of North Carolina, conditional for their faithful performance of the duties of their respective offices, and for the proper accounting for and paying over to those entitled to the same of all sums of money which may come into their hands, by reason or under color of their respective offices; that all policemen shall give bond if required by the Commissioners, in the sum to be fixed by them, conditional for the faithful performance of their duties; that the term of office of the Clerk and Treasurer shall be the same as that of the Commissioners electing him: PROVIDED, that the Commissioners may remove any person holding this office for cause; the Constable and Policemen shall hold office during the pleasure of the Commissioners.

Section 11. That Chapter 234 of the laws of 1881, entitled "An act to prohibit the sale of spirituous liquors in certain localities" and all other laws and clauses of laws which prohibit the sale of spirituous, vinous or malt liquors within

the territory embraced in the corporate limits of the town of Hamlet, as set forth in this act, be and the same are hereby repealed so far only as the said chapter 234 of the laws of 1881, and said laws and clauses of laws apply to the territory embraced within the corporate limits of the said town of Hamlet.

Section 12. That the Commissioners of said town shall have the complete regulation and control of the sale of spirituous, vinous and malt liquors in said town, and of the licensing thereof, with full power and discretion to grant or refuse license; that the license tax shall not exceed three hundred dollars a year; that license shall be granted only to persons of good moral character, who are residents of freeholders in said town; and that

the said Commissioners shall have full power and authority to revoke any license at any time without refunding any part of the license tax.

Section 13. That all ordinances passed by the said Commissioners shall not take effect until the same have been posted for five days at four public places in said town.

Section 14. That this act shall be in force from and after its ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this 9th day of February, 1897.

**TRACTOR WORK
Plowing, Etc.**

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Financing
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PAVING ROAD**

FROM

Beaunit Mill to Hamlet

HAS WORKED TIRELESSLY ON THIS PROJECT.

CONTRACT TO BE LET IN RALEIGH JUNE 25.

Arthur L. Capel, County Commissioner, who is asking your vote for re-nomination in the June 22nd primary, has worked day in and day out for many months to get the Highway Commission to pave the road from Beaunit mills at East Rockingham, eastward to Hamlet by way of Hylan avenue.

Capel's efforts are succeeding.

The Commission will receive bids at Raleigh June 25th for the contract for this road.

Here is a letter from Louis B. Peck, the division engineer:

Albemarle, June 10, 1946.

Dear Mr. Capel:

I am outlining below the status of the road leading from East Rockingham by way of Hylan avenue to Hamlet, in which you have shown considerable interest in the past.

This road is a part of our Federal Aid Secondary System, and was set up in our program for construction this year. The survey has been completed on this road and plans have been prepared and submitted to the Public Roads Administration for their approval for advertising in our next letting, which is tentatively scheduled for June 25th. If these plans are approved by the Public Roads Administration, and we believe that they will be, I see no reason why we would not call for bids for the construction on this road on June 25th.

Yours very truly,
L. B. Peck, Division Engineer
of the Seventh Division.