



Mrs. Eva S. Holtzman, postmaster, is shown at left outside of the new Ridgeway Post Office in 1959. She borrowed \$6,000 to finance the construction of the building, which she once rented to the federal government for \$15 a month. The photo at right shows Mrs. Holtzman



outside of the post office. Although the looks of the building have changed only slightly, Mrs. Holtzman now charges \$235 for rent—a sign of the times. (Staff Photo at right by Diane Davis)

Ridgeway Post Office, Warren County's Oldest, Celebrates 150th Birthday, Still Going Strong

By DIANE DAVIS
Staff Writer

Warren County's post office in Ridgeway turned 150 this year and is still going strong under the supervision of its postmaster who has been there 32 years.

Back in the early 1800s, the Ridgeway community was developed from the plantations of the Hawkins, Plummer, Collins and Marshall families. In 1839, the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad was established, and the railway brought many travelers through the small town. Soon the need for a post office was realized.

On February 21, 1839, mail service began inside the train station in Ridgeway. After the station was destroyed by fire, a building was erected which was to house the post office and a shoemaker's shop.

Eventually, the shoemaker's shop closed, and the post office occupied the entire building.

However, when U. S. 1 was widened, a space of six feet from the building to the shoulder of the

highway was left. This was not enough room for the postal trucks to unload mail.

Mrs. Eva S. Holtzman, postmaster, is more than eager to tell the story of her post office's history.

According to Mrs. Holtzman, in order to keep the Ridgeway office from closing, a new location had to be found. She immediately began asking people in Ridgeway for their help.

Paul E. Brauer sold her the land she needed, and Mrs. Holtzman borrowed \$6,000 to construct a building, which she says she designed herself.

The new post office was built out of solite blocks, "in less than a week's time," Mrs. Holtzman said. The structure consists of a lounge for patrons, closets and a bathroom.

Mrs. Holtzman rents the building to the postal service and said she saves the government about \$300 to \$400 a year because of the thick insulation in the walls of the 600-square-foot building. During the summer's hottest months, she says, her electricity bill reaches an all-time high of around \$35.

"At first, I only charged them \$15 to rent the building. But that was a long time ago. Now, I charge \$235," she said.

Mrs. Holtzman said the reason she decided to go to work with the postal service was because her husband was working with the N. C. Department of Transportation

Ridgeway's Postmasters

John Daley	February 21, 1839
Thomas Paschall	December 19, 1840
Thomas S. Twitty	October 5, 1842
Benjamin S. Montgomery	December 9, 1845
James A. Cheatham	July 29, 1850
Sandy T. Watkins	April 23, 1866
Alex S. Webb	September 23, 1872
John Read	December 23, 1875
Mrs. Lucy A. Cheatham	August 3, 1885
James L. Wortham	April 14, 1897
Henry Daeke	July 2, 1901
Stephen L. Crowder	June 27, 1905
Henry H. Grant	August 19, 1926
Mrs. Helen M. O. Grant	November 13, 1955
Mrs. Eva S. Holtzman	March 12, 1957 (still serving)

and she wanted to do something with her time.

"I love people, and I wanted to get out in the public," she said.

Mrs. Holtzman was hired in 1947 by Henry H. Grant and worked under his supervision for a number of years.

When she first started work with the postal service, her duties included hanging the mail at the train station "so the train catcher could snatch it off the rack." She remembers earning only \$1 a day for being a messenger, "and that was a lot of money back then."

Her position and salary were soon upgraded. She became officer-in-charge when Mrs. Helen M. O. Grant, postmaster since November of 1955, was hospitalized. This was a position that paid \$5 a day. Because she had to still take the mail to the train station, she earned an additional \$1. And those responsibilities required her to work seven days a week.

"I had to do it all," she said, smiling.

On March 12, 1957, Mrs. Holtzman was certified to become a postmaster, and on March 22 of

the same year, she was assigned to her current position.

Mrs. Holtzman has a substitute worker at the post office, Ms. Lynn Stone, who works on Saturdays. Ms. Stone said that Mrs. Holtzman works hard to keep the post office business alive.

During the past 32 years, Mrs. Holtzman has built up the small post office.

When she became postmaster in 1957, the post office was ranked fourth class. She said she began talking to customers about purchasing and collecting commemorative stamps, which eventually built up the revenue needed to become a third class facility.

Also, when the new post office was built, there were 12 boxholders and 16 general delivery customers. Today, there are 150 boxholders.

Although it's obvious that Mrs. Holtzman loves her work, she said she may be leaving the postal service soon.

"I feel like it's time now to start training someone to do what I've been doing," she said. "I've been so active for so long."



Nominated by their teachers for the Student of the Month Award at Norlina Middle School are, from left, Eric St. Sing, this month's winner; Daren Wilkens, Bert Stoner and Nikeena Boyd. The awards and trophy for this month were donated by Bryant Caulder of Caulder's Auto Sales.

(Community Schools Photo by Mary Hunter)

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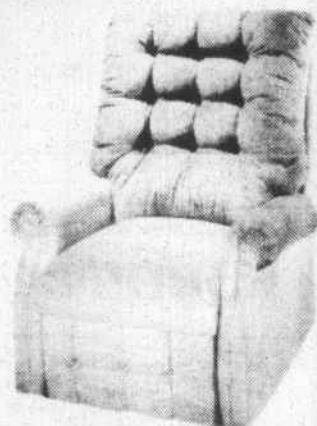
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