

Railroads Important In Growth Of Moore County

BY JIM McDUFFIE

The labyrinth of cross ties and steel rails that were stretched across the Moore County landscape in the late 1800's transformed the region in a way previously unmatched.

Steam whistle toots from the first main line locomotive pierced the silence of the pine forests and served as the harbinger of a new era—one in which rail transportation would prove the necessary catalyst for expansion of industry and agriculture, the beginnings of tourism, and the birth of towns and villages.

Tar, Pitch, Turpentine
Among the important new industries facilitated by the coming of railroads was the increased production of naval stores—tar, pitch and turpentine.

Prior to mid-century the vast forests of long leaf pine in the Sandhills stood virtually unthreatened by the broad or crosscut saw. All that was needed to make the tree harvest and production of naval stores profitable was the sort of efficient transportation provided by the rails.

It was no small wonder, then, that news of railroad construction in Moore was enthusiastically received and led to an explosion of land deals. As historian Rassie Wicker notes, "It should be understood...that none of these new grantees expected to either occupy or farm these hitherto spurned pine barrens."

"The tar, pitch and turpentine industry which had begun near the coast in the earliest days, had finally reached Moore County, and magnificent forests of long leaf pine were speedily snapped up."

Although a section of the Western Railroad, originating in Fayetteville, ran along the northern boundary of the county to the coal fields at Deep River in the late 1850's, it wasn't until the Raleigh and Augusta line reached Moore in 1875 that the greatest progress was realized.

As the R&A pushed southward toward a connection with the Carolina Central in Hamlet, entrepreneurs hastened to build both wood and steel rail short lines and logging roads to expand their enterprises and reach the main line. Wherever such connections occurred, small boom towns and villages took

root. One by one they sprang up—Jonesboro (now Sanford), Cameron, Manly, Shaw's Ridge (Southern Pines), Blue's Crossing (Aberdeen), Pinebluff and Keyser (Addor). According to one early rail passenger, most shared the "penetrating odor of tar, pitch and turpentine."

Carthage, the flourishing town and county seat of Moore, ended up too far west of the R&A to enjoy the direct benefits of rail transportation and financed the construction of its own railroad with a \$10,000 bond issue and private donations from local citizens. The line was completed in 1888 and terminated at the R&A station in Cameron.

A gala celebration complete with cannon salute greeted the first Carthage Railroad train. And the excitement was not unfounded as Carthage industries, both old and new, prospered by the increased market accessibility they gained.

Blue's Crossing
Among the rising new communities, Blue's Crossing, incorporated as Aberdeen in the early 1890's, felt most fully the effects of rail transportation.

In time Aberdeen became a small railroad hub in its own right with several short lines stretching away from the R&A station to points in every direction.

Local lumberman Francis Allison Page, wishing to expand his operations into the forests west of Aberdeen, was the first to construct a short line for hauling out timber. Transportation by wagon was made difficult by the alternating sandy, muddy or rutty conditions found on the roads.

Page formally organized the company in 1888; and, although he didn't know where it might terminate, he named the new road the Aberdeen and West End. By 1890, 12-15 miles of track had been laid and was in operation.

As if by some self-fulfilling prophecy by Page, a community grew at the railhead and became known as West End. Later, the tracks were extended beyond the limits of West End, and the road was renamed the Aberdeen and Asheboro.

Aberdeen & Rockfish
A few years later, in 1892, John Blue began work on another railroad, this time tracking

southeast from Aberdeen, also for the purpose of hauling timber. It was christened the Aberdeen and Rockfish.

Unlike the other short lines of the day, however, the Rockfish would show unusual staying power and provide a vital service to the region for years to come.

Not only did it prove valuable to industrial growth in Moore, Hoke and Cumberland counties, its rails gave rise to the communities of Ashley Heights, McCain, Montrose, and Timberland, and was responsible for the creation of Raeford, the county seat of Hoke, which was then just a railhead at MacRae's farm.

The final stretch of Rockfish rails was spiked to the soil in Fayetteville during the early 1900's, immediately increasing its stock as both freight and rail carrier. As reported in the "Southern Pines Tourist" of March 10, 1905, passengers could depart Aberdeen in the early morning, spend six hours in historic Fayetteville and return the same evening.

The Aberdeen and Asheboro also had a "daily, except Sunday" schedule which offered passengers the opportunity to leave town at 2 p.m. and, after 20 stops enroute, arrive in Asheboro about five hours later.

It all meant prosperity for Aberdeen. The railroads—R&A, Rockfish, Aberdeen and Asheboro, and lines of lesser importance—made possible the construction of a modern town. Finer buildings, better roads, water works, churches, schools and a sound industrial base were all products of the period.

Turpentine To Tourism
Similar growth could be found in other county communities.

After several enterprising men negotiated successfully to have the Raleigh and Augusta pass through their neck of the woods, Cameron sprang up with hotels, general stores, saloons, mills and the all important turpentine distilleries.

But Cameron, like many other boom towns in the Sandhills, had to search for other means of sustaining its progress after the pine forests were cleared and hauled away. Among the variety of industries developed and having a lasting impact were tourism and dewberries.

John Patrick, state commissioner of immigration,

chose the region around Shaw's Ridge in which to sponsor a new resort town, a place where "Yankees" could be lured to escape the winter blasts of the cold Northeast.

Many thought Patrick's efforts to transform a region left barren by the saw into a thriving resort were laughable and labeled the project "Patrick's Folly."

But the mild climate and fragrant piney woods that remained combined with Patrick's own persistence to make a success of the venture. For many years to come the annual influx of seasonal residents could be seen unloading at the train station.

Soon after the Southern Pines project was underway, others were started in nearby locations.

Bostonian James W. Tufts arrived in 1893 and purchased several hundred acres of cut-over timber land six miles up the Aberdeen and Asheboro line. In less than a decade the new Pinehurst resort boasted its own hotel, cottages, stores, golf course and even electric trolley to the train station in Southern Pines, setting the stage for the development of the "Golf Capital of the World."

This activity in tourism brought Moore County to a new stage in its growth; now, the same railroads that had made leveling the forests possible would aid the growth of tourism and other industries less taxing to the environment.

REV. McADEN'S VISIT

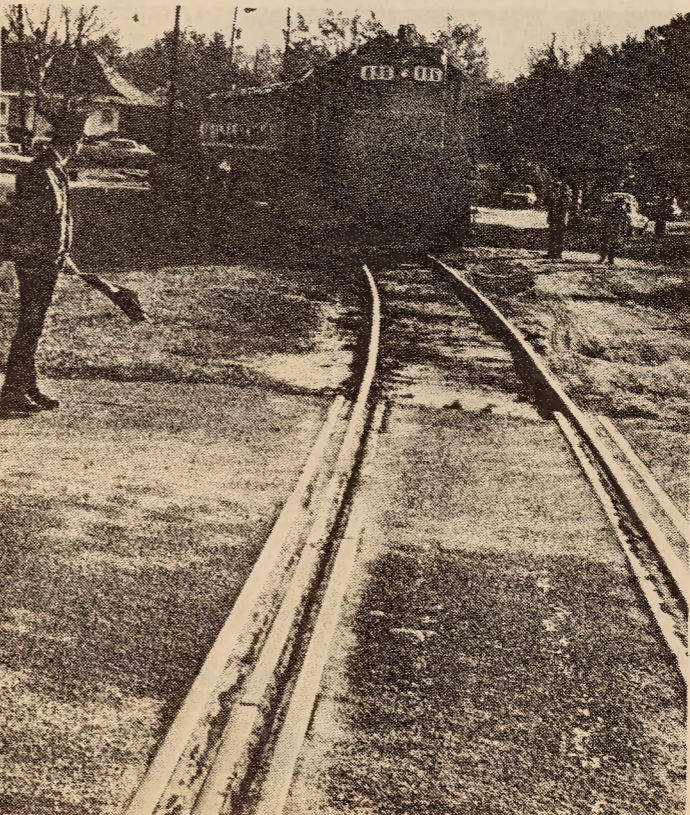
In the 1700s, churches and ministers were conspicuously absent in what was to become Moore County. In 1756, the Rev. Hugh McAden, a Presbyterian missionary from Pennsylvania, rode through the Sandhills and stopped at the home of John Smith. McAden preached there on Sunday, Jan. 18, but found "no one to join in singing part of a psalm." The following Sunday, he again preached, this time to "a number of Highlanders—some of them scarcely knew one word that I said—the poorest singers I ever heard in all my life."

STIRRUP-SHAPED

Moore County is roughly stirrup-shaped. In the north, it is about 30 miles wide, and it extends 28 miles south to a nine mile base.



Railroads Converge At Aberdeen



Aberdeen And Briar Patch Railroad

Flora MacDonald

Mrs. J.M. Guthrie of Cameron, who now resides in Texas, once moved to her wilderness home, "Killiegray" on the Pee Dee River country. Here on the 550 acre estate near an old church lie the lone unmarked graves of her 'wee bairns! who died with diphtheria. It is beside these tragic little mounds with only moss-grown stones for marking that Mr. Leonard Tufts has caused a substantial stone to be erected for the preservation of history."

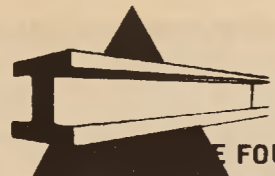
Punishment

During the early days of Moore County there were some varied ways of punishment for criminals.

The use of the "stock" was the favorite mode in dealing retribution to those who had violated the law.

It is recorded that a person convicted of perjury should be fined not more than 500 pounds and should stand in the pillory for one hour, at the expiration, the ears of the person so offending should be cut off, severed entirely from the head, and nailed by the officer to the pillory where they should remain until the setting of the sun.

The stocks were used to confine the offender's legs, arms, or both. The pillory fastened the offender by the neck and wrists; and the whipping post performed at the rate of 39 lashes on the bare back.



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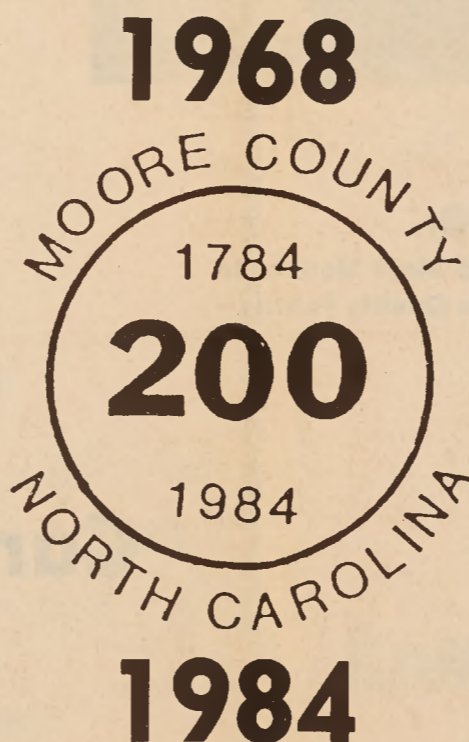
These Moore County Businesses Used Myrick Construction Company



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