

Parkwood Once Flourished But Became 'Lost City'

BY WOODROW WILHOIT

A Century has almost passed since the flourishing village of Parkwood was deserted, but even now there are requests from throughout the country by people wanting information on the "Lost City" as it is known. Just a few months ago, there was an Associated Press story that was in many papers across the country on Parkwood.

Parkwood was a thriving village located near Carthage during the 1880s and 1890s.

It was located near where the namesake, the present Parkwood community stands on NC Highway 22, about six miles from Carthage.

Strangely enough, Parkwood came into being as a result of a big demand for cornmills which used millstones native to this section—and the business that resulted from the quarrying of the millstones, and, of course, the manufacturing into the cornmills, literally made a "boom town" of Parkwood in the 1880s. For years, beds of the conglomerate or millstone rock were worked in the area.

Before the Civil War, the quarry at Parkwood was in operation, but the hostilities caused all quarry activities to come to a halt. However, after the war ended, a man by the name of Devotion Davis took over the quarrying activities. It has been said the holdings at that time included about a 12-acre tract of land, which he sold to Lewis Grimm. Parkwood really had its beginning with the sale of the property to Grimm because he had something in mind to get the facilities back into operation.

It wasn't too long before Grimm had a corn mill—one which had never been seen or envisioned before—ready for the market. It caught on quickly with the public, and Parkwood started to prosper.

About this time George Taylor of Baltimore joined Grimm and they formed a joint partnership and under their management, and foresight, Parkwood became a flourishing village.

The first telephone system in the county was installed by Grimm, having three



PARKWOOD — The once thriving town of Parkwood became a ghost town and then disappeared. This picture is when it was at its height.

connections—one at Parkwood, the other at G.C. Graves Store in Carthage, and the other at the railroad depot at Cameron, about ten miles from Carthage.

Cameron became a focal point in the Parkwood operations because the cornmills were hauled there to be shipped by rail to points throughout the nation.

By this time orders were coming in from various areas, from the New England States and as far south as Mississippi.

The Grimm-Taylor duo took on another partner, Ed Taylor, a brother of George. It has been said that Parkwood was named for Ed's wife, formerly a Miss Parks from the state of Maryland.

Ed Taylor took over operations of the hotel and became what could be termed as "general manager" of Parkwood. He had a very fine store built replacing the old commissary, which was said to have been stocked with the finest merchandise, perhaps too elaborate for the inhabitants of that village. Possibly the first house for making ice ever seen in Moore County was built at Parkwood, along with a planer mill, saw mill, brick and roller mill and flour mill.

It has been said that a creek nearby was diverted from its original course in order that the large supply of millstones in the creek could be used. A large dam was built and an artificial lake sprung up.

By now Parkwood was becoming a show place and many people would go there to take a look at the village and see the manufacturing activities with awe and admiration.

Some writers have pointed out that the various purchases, some of them extravagant, were ordered at what seemed to have been an endless pace and were being credited against the company and by now the creditors were bringing suit and collecting. Ed Taylor never seemed to be bashful about buying, for it has been said he purchased many sewing machines, steam engines and boilers.

Creditors did foreclose, and a Carthage resident, G.C. Graves, conducted a public sale, after he had disposed of, at a private sale, as many of the items as possible.

A man by the name of T.W. Stemmler, from Madison, N.J. who had been among the major creditors in the bankrupt business, purchased the real

estate, the classy hotel and its furnishings, along with the mills and machinery.

With the purchase by Stemmler, the once-thriving community seemed to suddenly stop; the workmen moved away, and life in the village just simply ceased to be.

Stories are that Stemmler refused to operate the property he bought—and no one has come up with the answer to why he didn't, or at least no answer stands out.

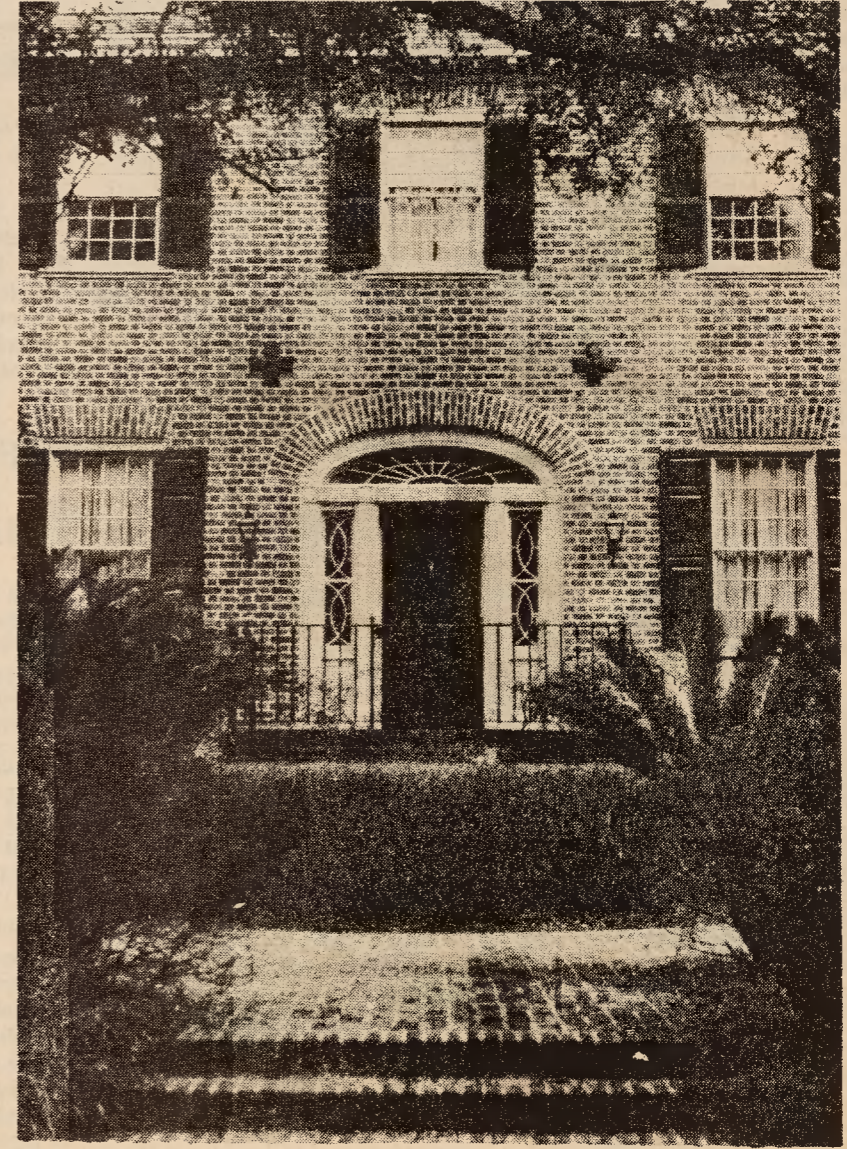
Rigor mortis set in on the village as the boilers and planing mill were left exposed to nature's elements. The equipment was said to have been among the best money could buy.

Even with extensive guarding the place was being vandalized, and furnishings were taken from the hotel.

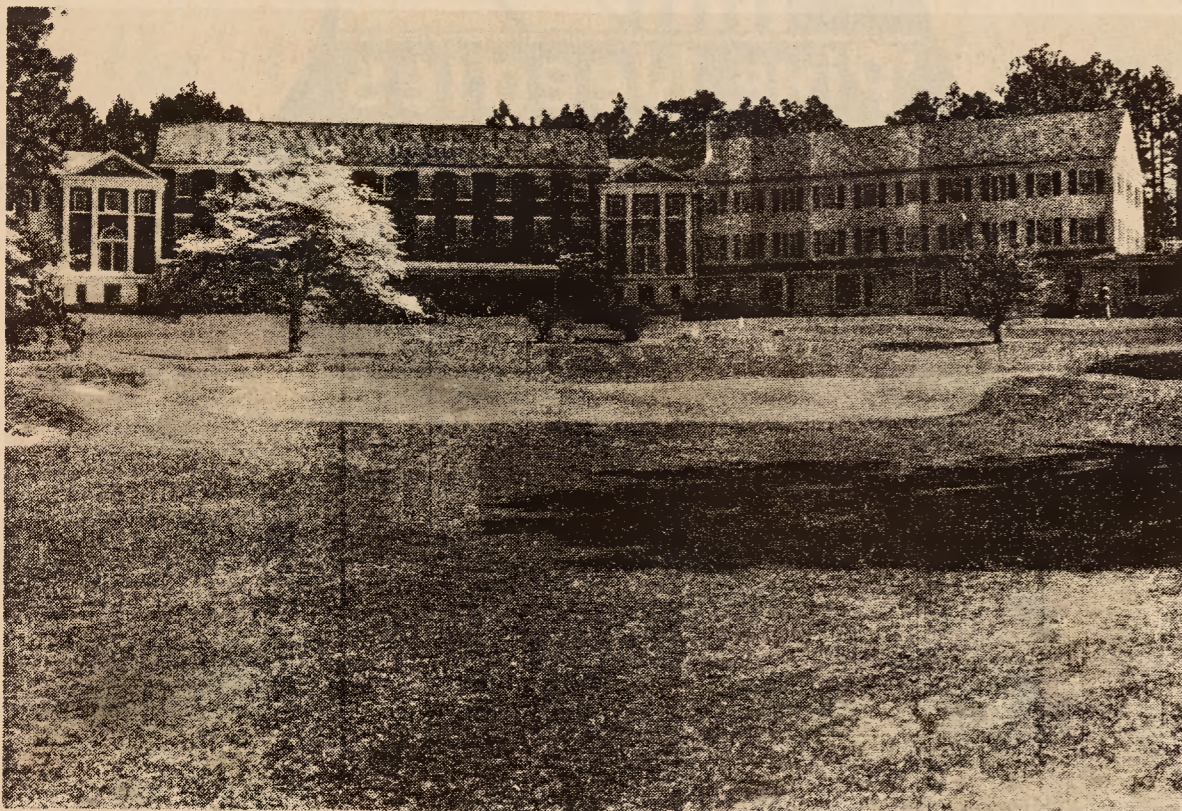
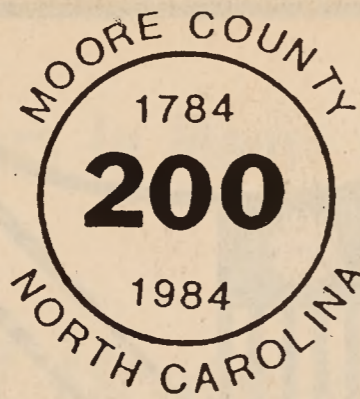
For years people went there to see the rotting timbers, the vines that had grown up over the buildings, and the floors which had fallen in gave way to the passing of time.

Many stories and legends about the place which is now a "ghost town" have spread from those who grew up there in the area during the heyday of Parkwood.

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