

The Smithfield Herald

VOLUME 42

SMITHFIELD, N. C., FRIDAY, MAY 25, 1923

NUMBER 42

FACTS OF INTEREST ABOUT BENSON

Town Was Chartered 1887; Named for A. M. Benson Who Owned the Land

(By Mrs. J. R. Barbour)
The town of Benson, N. C., was named for A. M. Benson, a farmer, who owned about two-thirds of the present site of the town at the time it received its charter. This was in 1887, two years after surveying for the Atlantic Coast Line Railway was begun. Nearly all of the town now lying west of the railroad was owned by Mr. Jesse Holmes.

The first building erected in the town was a wooden structure, shop and dwelling combined, built by Stephen O'Neill whose family was the first to settle in Benson. He was father of Mrs. R. R. Brady. Other pioneer families were those of Dave Wallace, Bill Johnson, J. H. Boon, John D. Parrish, Criss G. Ryals and Dr. Willis Turlington, the town's first physician and second mayor. He lived in the house now owned and occupied by R. F. Smith, which until 1897 was located in the exact middle of Main street, which it now faces.

Mr. C. L. Johnson was first policeman and says it was a common occurrence to have half a dozen drinks in the lock up in one day. A bar-room was the first place of business to open and the town could boast of three within a few months.

A. H. Slocumb soon started a turpentine distillery, also E. H. Rankin, who opened the first dry goods and grocery store combined. Most of the first buildings were erected by A. M. Benson but a fire occurred in March of 1894 and two during 1903 destroyed practically all of the first places of business.

Brick buildings soon replaced these crude wooden structures however, and now the town has about sixty well equipped business houses nearly all of them being modern brick buildings.

The first church to be organized in Benson was the Missionary Baptist which was first organized at Dog Eye and moved here the very year the town was chartered. Meetings were first held in the building above mentioned erected by Stephen O'Neill. Later a lot was given by him in that part of town now known as Brooklyn upon which a small church was built. This was blown down a few years later. Their pastor was Mr. Betts. Soon other churches were organized and now there are five, the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Missionary Baptist occupying buildings which would do credit to a much larger place.

In the first Baptist church built, a subscription school was taught by Miss Nolia Benson. A part of the site on which the present school building now stands was given by Mrs. Catherine Benson, widow of A. M. Benson, and there the first school house was built; the last remnants of which were removed to the scrap heap only a few weeks ago. There Miss Mattie Hare and Miss Effie Harper taught and later Prof. J. P. Cannaday taught for about ten years, before he became County Superintendent of schools. In the Benson cemetery a lovely monument was erected to his memory in 1911 by the school children of the county.

The Benson school, now an accredited school, occupies one of the most modern and handsome school buildings in the county and employs a superintendent and thirteen teachers.

In 1895 Mr. J. W. Whittenton opened the first jewelry store, not only in the town but in the county.

The first drug store was owned by J. W. Benson. After Dr. Turlington, the following physicians located here in order named: Doctors, Jones, More, Rowland and Parker; the last named still retaining a large practice in the community. Benson now has three as nicely equipped drug stores as are found in any of our cities, and there are five practicing physicians located here: Doctors, H. H. Utley, J. F. Martin, G. E. Parker, A. S. Oliver and S. P. J. Lee. The town also boasts of one of the state's leading dentists, Dr. W. T. Martin and a member of lawyers who have attained eminence in their profession are J. E. and O. A. Barbour, Ezra Parker, James Raynor, J. M. Morgan, C. C. Cannaday and N. T. Ryals, three of whom, O. A. Barbour, Ezra Parker and James Raynor, have served two



THE FARMERS COMMERCIAL BANK OF BENSON

The Farmers Commercial Bank of Benson, is five stories high including basement. It is constructed of Indiana limestone entirely. The interior of the banking room is equipped with Italian marble. There are thirty-five offices in this building, each having hot and cold water. The building is steam heated throughout and electrically lighted. The basement contains pressing club and barber shop with seven chairs and six shower baths. A person can get anything in the building from a shoe shine to an X-ray picture of his entire body. The bank has a capital and surplus of \$135,000.00. Directors are B. B. Adams, M. T. Britt, W. D. Boon, L. Gilbert, Chas. Johnson, and C. T. Johnson. It is a member of the Federal Reserve System of the United States.

terms each in the State Senate.

Those who have served the town as mayors, according to the best information obtainable, are Johnnie H. Brantham, Dr. Turlington, P. Holly, Will Weeks, G. W. Cavanaugh, C. C. Ryals, H. L. Hall, Jesse Britt, O. A. Barbour, Ezra Parker and C. C. Cannaday. Some of these served two terms.

In 1909 the town was fenced in and a law enacted forbidding any one "to turn out or cause to be turned out any stallion, cow, ox, heifer, horse, mule, jack, jenny, calf, goat, sheep, hog, or geese within the limits of the town"—Such offense to be punished with a fine of five dollars.

It is hard to imagine that until that time geese squawked at one's heels on Main street; hogs grunted and rooted where they pleased, and the lowing of a cow disturbed one's slumbers at night, in a town where now even the chickens are kept strictly in their owners own back yard, and the prospects of paved streets looms brightly in the future.

The first newspaper was established in Benson in 1907 by Mr. Busbee Pope now of Dunn. It was called "The Spokesman." This was sold in 1914 to Mr. J. B. Benson who changed its name to "The Benson Review" which still flourishes. A few years ago "The Eastern News" began its existence, so the town now supports two newspapers and printing offices.

In 1914 local electric lights were installed by Mr. A. Parrish. The town now gets its power from the Carolina Power Company and enjoys most efficient lighting and also water service.

For twenty-one years the telephone exchange has been operating in Benson.

Among the towns oldest merchants, who have built large trade and are widely known are J. H. Boon & Son, C. T. Johnson, P. B. Johnson, A. Parrish, Preston Woodall, Chas. Johnson & Bro., Rose & Woodall, C. W. Anderson, James E. Wilson and J. Greenhal and others, who have more recently established prosperous business houses.

Benson's past is not illustrious, but, based upon its present life a prophecy of the town would probably be more interesting. Within the past decade it has made rapid strides in different phases of improvements and now presents to the visitor a neat, clean little town sprinkled about with a goodly number of lovely homes, handsome churches and school building, a modern brick hotel, two large banks, the Farmers Commercial occupying one of the most expensive and up to date bank buildings in the state. Two lumber plants and two cotton gins do good business here. Nearly 20,000 bales of cotton are marketed 20,000 bales of cotton are two car loads of chickens and eggs are shipped daily to Northern mar-

kets.

The town, in addition to the assets mentioned already in this sketch, has excellent market facilities, a Public Library, a live Chamber of Commerce, a wide-awake Woman's club, a large Parent-Teachers' Association, many church and social organizations and fraternity orders. Its citizenry is of the very best. The business men are energetic and progressive; its people as a whole are friendly and sympathetic. It is a busy town; a happy town; a town with an ideal and altogether a good town in which to live.

SELMA TO HAVE

TOWNSHIP FAIR

Tuesday evening Miss Minnie Lee Carrison, Home Demonstration Agent, met with members of the Woman's Club of Selma for the purpose of discussing a township fair for Selma. The women of the club were quite enthusiastic and the following men present promised their hearty support in the undertaking. Mayor Aycock, Messrs. J. D. Massey, Wade Erown, Matt Wall, John Wiggs, C. G. Wiggs, Kuntz, Lowe, C. R. Lee, and Dr. Noble.

Mrs. Debnam is president of the Woman's Club and has been active in bringing about the decision to have a township fair. Mrs. C. G. Wiggs, president of a rural club was also present, and promised the cooperation of her club, which had such a creditable exhibit at the county fair last fall.

It was decided to hold the fair in October, the exact date to be announced later. The executive committee of the Woman's Club together with a committee of three men will start things going at an early date by appointing committees for the various departments, these committees to be distributed over the township.

The business men present discussed prizes to be offered and it is certain that a number of prizes will be offered by Selma business firms.

Dr. R. J. Noble, president of the Johnston County Agricultural Society, made an opportune talk relative to the County Fair, pointing out how the township fair can cooperate with the County Fair.

HELD FOR ROBBING THE

OXFORD POSTOFFICE IN 1920

Philadelphia, Pa., May 23.—Charged with robbing the postoffice at Oxford, N. C., of \$25,000, in 1920, John O'Brien, said to be known to police throughout the country as "Hostile John," was arrested here today by federal authorities. He was taken into custody when he applied for treatment at a hospital, where it was said he was suffering from cancer. He is 64 years old. Federal officials have been looking for O'Brien since 1920.

THE SCHOOL HERE CLOSSES NEXT WEEK

Dr. B. R. Lacy to Preach Sermon Sunday Night; Literary Address

The finals at T. G. S. begin tonight with the music recital of the junior pupils of Miss Margaret Newell. The senior recital will be given Monday evening. On Sunday evening at eight o'clock, Rev. B. R. Lacy, D. D., pastor of Central Presbyterian church of Atlanta, Ga., will preach the baccalaureate sermon at the graded school auditorium. Dr. Lacy is well known in his community having served several Presbyterian churches in Johnston County in the beginning of his ministry. He is scheduled to deliver the sermon at Peace Institute, Raleigh, Sunday morning. The various churches of this city have given away their night services, and will unite in hearing Dr. Lacy.

Next week, on Wednesday night, the graduating class will give the class day exercises. This class has the distinction of being the first to hold their exercises in the new high school auditorium and something distinctive in the way of a program is expected. The young men and women who will graduate are as follows: Misses Sarah Patterson, Ruth Brooks, Leone Sanders, Mary Avera, Edna Coates, Beatrice Matthews, and Messrs. Mose Godwin, Donnell Wharton, Gilbert Grady, Alton White and Milton Parker. On Wednesday evening the honor rolls will be read and prizes awarded with the exception of the Edwin Smith Pou medal which will be given Thursday evening.

The program has been arranged so that on Thursday evening the literary address will be chief feature. Dr. E. C. Brooks, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, has been secured to deliver the address, which is sure to be well worth hearing. The salutatory and valedictory will be a part of this program which will close with the presentation of the diplomas.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN WIN RIGHT OF REPRESENTATION

Montreat, May 23.—Women today won the right of representation on executive committees of the general assembly of the southern Presbyterian church by the overwhelming vote of 140 to 49.

Advocates of the minority report, favoring the granting of the overture of St. Johns presbytery, Florida, presenting the women's request, drove supporters of the majority statement into an admission of defeat before the vote was taken, when Dr. R. C. Reed, Columbia, S. C., former moderator and chairman of the committee on bills and overtures, asserted on the floor that he realized his position was lost.

"I cannot argue against the great work the women have accomplished in the church," Dr. Reed continued, "but I do question whether we can place women in executive positions and conform with the teachings of God's word."

Sixty-three per cent of the membership of the southern Presbyterian church is composed of women, Judge S. F. Hobbs, of Selma, Ala., a commissioner, declared in submitting the minority report, adding that over half of the church missionaries and 99 per cent of the members of mission study bodies also are women. He challenged opponents to the overture to show cause why the women should not be recognized.

Declaring that the women had contributed more than \$1,000,000 for mission work during the past year, Dr. E. W. McCorkle, Rockbridge Baths, Va., stated he believed they should have a voice in determining how the funds should be expended. Dr. Egbert W. Smith, of Nashville, executive secretary of the foreign missions committee, followed with the assertion that it was his opinion the women's committee would prove of great assistance, especially in his work. G. F. Kirk, Tusculumbia, Ala., took the same position.

The membership on committees do not give the women a vote in the assembly sessions, but gives them a direct voice to that body.

Dr. Reed was the only speaker in behalf of the majority report, and the vote on the minority statement, offered as a substitute, came after a

DR. L. B. McBRAYER GIVES TESTIMONY

Closed Evidence Taken In Legislative Investigation Of The Sanatorium

Four hours and a half of grilling cross examination of Dr. L. B. McBrayer, superintendent of the State Sanatorium, closed the testimony in the legislative committee's investigation of the conduct of the institution yesterday afternoon and immediately afterwards, the committee adjourned to await the preparation of the transcript of evidence before making up its report.

Thirty days or more will be required for this purpose the committee stenographer anticipates on the basis of an estimated thousand page record. Copies of the record will be furnished each member of the committee and each of the attorneys, while the latter allowed ten days following the receipt of the transcript to file a brief. If it is desired, Chairman T. C. Bowie announced the committee will also hear oral argument when it assembles again.

Combatting his inquisitor at every step of the cross examination, Dr. McBrayer left the stand in tears, following an emotional break down that occurred when he was called upon to testify on re-direct examination, of transactions involving the carrying out of the wishes of his dead wife in the distribution of furniture which the complainants charged was the property of the institution and which Dr. McBrayer testified was the property of the family. Dr. McBrayer wept silently while Mr. Hinsdale delayed further questioning to give the witness time to recover.

The taking of testimony which ended yesterday afternoon began during the latter part of the General Assembly when the press of legislative business forced a continuance of the committee with authority to complete the investigation after adjournment of the legislature and to make a report to the Governor. The committee resumed its inquiry on May 15th and has held daily sittings since.

Scores of witnesses including employees, former employees, former patients, physicians, and others who had information relative to Senatorium matters were examined before the committee. For the most part, that body contented itself with hearing the evidence. Questions from members of the committee have been rare.

For the complainants, the investigation has been conducted by John Hinsdale and J. C. Little, Raleigh attorneys, and Caveness Brown, of Lillington, while the defense has been represented by Judge Walter W. Neal, of Laurinberg, and Judge Walter Brock, of Wadesboro. N. L. Broughton, of Garner, Wake County representative whose resolution was responsible for the investigation of the institution, has attended all sittings of the committee, aiding the attorneys in the examination of witnesses.

Dr. McBrayer completed his direct examination which started Tuesday afternoon, yesterday morning at 11 o'clock. It was a detailed review of the contentions of the defense in answering to charges.—News and Observer, May 24.

CANCER IN ONE YEAR KILLS 90,000 PEOPLE

NEW YORK, May 23.—Cancer claimed 90,000 victims in the United States last year and 180,000 more will die within the next two years, all of whom might have been saved or at least had the course of their disease mitigated by prompt diagnosis and expert treatment, according to Dr. Frances Carter Wood, of the Crocker cancer research laboratory, who today addressed the state medical society.

Relief from cancer, he said, must come first from awakening of the public to the dangers of the disease by means of the publicity work of the American society for control of cancer.

Then, Dr. Wood said, family physicians must make early diagnosis and submit their cases immediately to competent surgeons.

Day filled with heated debates and the transaction of much business.—Associated Press.