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History Of Railroading In This Section Of The State

MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Branch Line Built To Williamston In 1883 From Tarboro

Railroad Extended to Plymouth in 1889 by Albemarle And Raleigh Company

By THOS. F. DARDEN Vice President of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company

The history of railroading is really a history of the development of the country, and the history of the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad is a history of the development not only of Eastern North Carolina, but of the whole Southeastern section of our country. It may not be amiss, therefore, to outline some of the ec-onomic background leading up to the building of this road.

There had been only slight ad-vancement in the economic development of North Carolina from the end of the Colonial period up until the year 1835, conditions being somewhat similar to those in Virginia. The influential portion of the population lived in the eastern section and dominated the policy of the entire State. North Carolina is preeminently an agricultural State Timber has also played an important production was an important indus- coast cities of New England. The tontry and Wilmington at one time was nage of the port at that time

The question of internal improve- ter the size of Richmond.

eastern section contending for the building of a road north and south, while the western portion favored an east-west line. E. B. Dudley, later Governor of the State, opposed the east-west line and was of the opin-ion that such a line would divide the State into two parts, one part be-ing transferred to Virginia and the other to South Carolina. It was decided, the undertaking. It was decided, therefore to build the road into the Roanoke River country, and in De-cember, 1835, the charter was amended and the destination chang-ines at Weldon. At the same time permission was granted to purchase, other to South Carolina. It was veri-own and possess steamboats to ply other to South Carolina. It was evi-dent to most of those interested that from Wilmington to Charleston and the primary market within the State must be Wilmington. As population spread into the back country Wilm-ington still held its place as the most important trade center of the dis-triet. It secured much control the citizens of Wilmington, which at the citizens of Wilmington, which at the citizens of while the the citizens of while the citizens of whi





Contrary to the general rule existing in public offices throughout the land, the personnel of the Martin County's Board of Commissioners is marked by the absence of law yers. Recognized mainly as an agricultural county, old Martin turned to the land for its leadership in four out of five cases, the acting giving the 26,111 loval subjects a well balanced and able governing body. While their every act has not, as is to be expected, of course, met with general approval, the facts coming out of the administration point to a conscientious and successful leadership. Martin County today, certainly as a result of its able leadership past and present, is recognized as one of the leading units in the State's political system. While it claims no single big advancement, the county has gone far in battling for all its people and when viewed as a whole, it has made a definite progress in all its fields of public endeavor. Holding top ranks in the fields of agriculture and business, the commissioners, reading left to right, C. A. Roberson, K. A. Haislip, Joshua L. Coltrain, C. D. Carstarphen and R. L. Perry, are handling well the duties imposed upon them by their offices of public trust. Mr. Perry is chairman of the group.

and re-shipped from there by means er. Before the railroad era much of the largest naval stores depot in the world. ceeded that of Richmond, although the city was not more than a quar-

The question of internal improve-ments and the need for transporta-tion early occupied the attention of the public but very little progress was made. In 1829 the Cape Fear-River was included in the list of rivers which were to-receive Feder-al appropriations. For sixteen years it received an annual appropriation of \$20,000.00 and in 1847 a depth of thirteen feet, at high water was at tained. It now has a depth of thirty-two feet. Public opinion from the time of 0.1 (1832) the cape fear-ion regime to building a railroad on orth and began the agita-tion to subscribe the proposal period. The prices, ranging about \$25 a prominent citizen of Wilmington, were announced as follows: U. S. 1, class A Virginias \$94 per ton. The first tained. It now has a depth of thirty-two feet. Public opinion from the time of of in the principal sear divided into two hostile camps, the building of a road north and been divided into two hostile camps, the building of a road north and been divided into two hostile camps, the building of a road north and been divided into two hostile camps, the building of a road north and been divided into two hostile camps, the building of a road north and been divided into two hostile camps, the building of a road north and been divided into two hostile camps, the building of a road north and been divided into two hostile camps, the building of a road north and been divided into two hostile camps, the building of a road north and been divided into two hostile camps, the building of a road north and south

ment of Agriculture, said that "no diversion into oil"

trict. It secured much of its trade that time had a population of about from Fayetteville, the focus for the 3,000 including a number of Negro wagon trade of the surrounding slaves. When twenty public-spirited country as well as for the river pole boats. Fayetteville had an extensive system of plank roads in the country and thus carried on trade with the country bins arrived in the country scribted was larger than the entire country bins of the country scribted was larger than the entire country bins of the country scribted was larger than the entire country bins of the country scribted was larger than the entire country bins of the country scribted was larger than the entire country bins of the country scribted was larger than the entire country bins of the country scribted was larger than the entire the top of t country lying west, extending even into Tennessee and southwest Vir-ernor Dudley's subscription of \$25, ginia, the old canvas-top wagon be-ing the vehicle which served to meeting of the stockholders was held bring produce to the head of navi- on March 14, 1836, in the Courthouse Cargoes were unloaded at at Wilmington. Governor E. B. Dud-

part in its economic development the produce, especially naval stores. Prior to the Civil War turpentine found its way in small vessels to the S89A Ton By the Government

While the 1941 tobacco marketing announcement has been made as to season is holding the farmer's atten-tion just now, it is encouraging to be adopted." Westcott did point out include in the farm picture even at that under the proposed program the South and East and greatly

eral Alex MacRae was elected sup-erintendent. attached to wooden string pieces and cutizens of the town. it was not until 1848 that the first. The Petersburg Railroad, charter erintendent.it was not until 1848 that the first
iron rails were purchased in Eng-
land and placed in the track. This
was accomplished until the spring
of 1837. Although parts of the road
were in use from 1838, the main line
extending from Wilmington to Wel-
extending from 151 miles, was onened for on-
textending from 151 miles, was onened for on-
textending from Wilmington to Wel-
extending from 151 miles, was onened for on-
textending from Wilmington to Wel-
extending from Wilmington

extending from Wilmington to Wel-don, 151 miles, was opened for op-oration on March 9th, 1840, just one hand the distinction of being the long-had the distinction of being the long-est railroad in the world. Its equip-ment consisted of twelve locomo-tives, eight passenger cars, four mail cars and fifty freight cars. The lo-comotives were-built in England, in Philadelphia, and in Richmond. The Philadelphia, and in Richmond. The congratulation read, and in the af-track consisted of flat pieces of iron ternoon the ceremony of mingling the Piedmont sections to the west

and re-shipped from there by means of boat through the Cape Fear riv-er. Before the railroad era much of At this time the road was also op-

Wilmington to Charleston, which to the life of the coastal cates that wilmington to Charleston, which they should scence the trade of these of the Albemarle & Raleigh Rail at Wilmington. This rail-water line new sections.

esy was likely to be followed by a series of formal calls by prominent

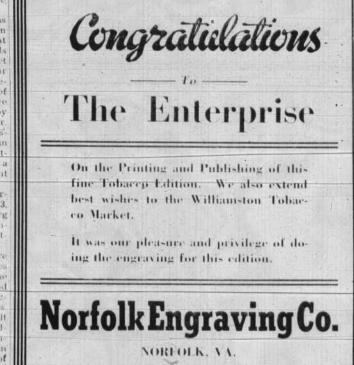
wholesale Distribut'rs

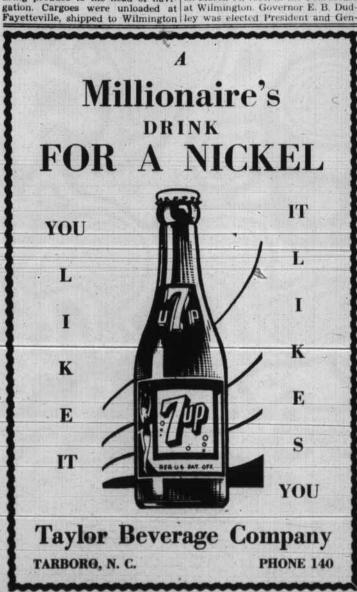
attolling factor in the situation The history of the roads in North Carolina and Virgima is closely pardieled by mat of the roads con-tructed about the same time in South Carolina and Georgia, Trade competition between Wilmington, Carolina: Charleston, South and Savannah, Georgia the Wilmington & Marchester, la ter known as the Wilmington, Col-umbia & Augusta, the Northeastern of South Carolina the Cheraw & Darlington, the Atlantic &Gulf, and other lines now a part of the Atlan-tic Coast Line System that were

Eastern Section of North Carolina furnishing it with transportaally date, and in 1859-1360 a branch constructed by the Wilm nor & Welton Railroad Company in Rocky Mount, N. C. to Tarboro

1961, the Williamston Tarboro Redroad Company was anized for the purpose of con-Tarbory Villamston N.C. a distance of thir and & Richagh Radroad Company which was incorporated in Decem-ber, 1873. The Company practically Gulf, were attracting an ever grow parbally constructed by the William, ing number of settlers. It was vital from & Tarboro Radrowd Company

Transportation was of course the (Continued on page four)





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We have a very large stock and we are increasing it every week. We are adequately equipped to supply the merchants of this section with merchandise and groceries. You'll find us ready to serve the merchants and business firms of eastern Carolina. Mr. Merchant, if you haven't visited our place of business, we extend you a cordial welcome to do so.

WE TAKE PLEASURE IN JOINING THE OTHER MERCHANTS AND BUSINESS MEN OF WILLIAMSTON IN WELCOMING THE TOBACCO GROWERS TO OUR TOWN

Martin - Elliott Co.

WILLIAMSTON, NORTH CAROLINA.