

the Civil War. Since that time the period of development has gone forward. At times it has been slow—so slow to be seemingly imperceptible. At no time was it rapid. For three decades the lack of railroad practically isolated this section. Highways are the product of the last few years. When the railroad did come, it left us tied to Georgia rather than our own state, the large corporation controlling it, working through a lobbied legislature and some of our own glibble representatives, refusing to build the thirty miles necessary to couple a trunk line from the Ohio to the sea.

Until the coming of the surfaced highways this practically made Macon county, in all save political boundaries a portion of Georgia. For years we have been cut off by the lack of transportation system from our own State. The very discrimination has however proven our greatest boon, for with the completion of our hard surfaced highways we have become the gateway through which the travel from Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and the other Southern States must pass in entering the great Western N. C. playground. Rapid motor transit makes us one with Western North Carolina and gives us an untold advantage in our rail and motor connection with Georgia and the South.

We must push rapidly forward and get ahead of our story. It is impossible within the scope of this article to narrate all the minor incidents which has come about during the last two generations and while it is always true that the history of any county is the biography of its people, we cannot, here, do justice to them and therefore resist any impulse toward personal biography.

Macon has been fortunate in the character of its citizenship. It is, as if, solidity of the mountain, the timelessness of the crags, the vision of far places from lofty heights, has crept into the souls and personalities of these men of Macon and had made them strong in faith and far reaching the vision. It is not our province here to record their lives. We shall merely chronicle some of the land marks of progress which they have brought about.

Macon—General Conditions in the Nineties.

For some years prior to 1889, various schools of a subscription nature had been taught at various places around town. In addition to this subscription school a public school

was erected. Neither were very large nor was the term very long.

In 1889 the Methodist church built the building now occupied by the Franklin Terrace and established a school under the principalship of Frank Siler. This school continued with several intermissions until the establishment of the graded schools some fifteen years or more ago. This school was established principally through the efforts of Dr. J. M. Lyle.

As a general indication of conditions in Macon county as well as the progress made since that time it is interesting to note that, in 1890, there were only four people in Macon county who paid tax on more than \$10,000.00 worth of property.

Kope Elias was the largest property owner, listing for taxation property valued at \$27,895. N. L. Barnard listed \$19,449, Jackson Johnson \$13,342, and W. H. Higdon, property valued at \$10,356. The identical property today is worth between a half million and a million dollars. In 1895 the total value of all land in Macon county was \$804,000. The value today is better than five million. For that year the following taxes were collected: General purposes \$6,543.72; Schools \$4,755.10; States purposes \$2,555.91. In 1923 twenty-eight years later a total of \$116,710.17 was collected in this county.

In short property valuations have grown 800 per cent and taxes collected have increased in like proportion.

Population growth has not been so marked. In 1890 there were 9,436 white and 666 colored inhabitants of Macon, a total of 10,102. The present population is a little over two thousand greater than at that time. It will be recalled that great numbers of our folks have gone to the west, particularly during the last three decades. We have furnished a governor for one western state, a congressman or two from others and numerous leaders who have built up the present great empire of the west out of an unsettled wilderness. Lack of advantages for development owing to our isolation and lack of transportation facilities have caused this emigration. Hardly a family in the county is without members in some state of the Rocky Mountain or Pacific slope section. Happily this continued hegira no longer continues for the youth of Macon today sees greater opportunities at home than anywhere in the whole land. To fine roads and adequate transportation of products, more than any other one thing, is the multitude of opportunities due today.

Highlands

In 1872, Chas. Hutchison and S. F.

Kelsey of Kansas bought 800 acres of land from J. W. Dobson on the west plateau of Satulah Mountain. The legend has it that Kelsey and Hutchison had taken a map of the U. S. and, on it, had drawn two lines, one running from New York to New Orleans, the other from Chicago to Savannah or Charleston.

Working under the theory that the point of intersection of these lines would be the exact center of population between the great population centers of the east and would make an ideal location for a summer and health resort, they set out to locate the spot and came to Franklin and on to the present site of Highlands.

Whether or not that is a true story, is of little importance for they came to where Highlands now stands, Kelsey bringing his family in that year and Hutchison his the next.

Others soon came, among them Capt. S. P. Ravenel of Charleston, S. C., who built a fine summer home. Others have come until today Highlands is a prosperous town of over 500 people.

It has been developed and built by a splendid type of people and perhaps represents as high type of cultured community as may be found anywhere. During the last few years it has established a bank, put in a splendid water system and made other improvements.

It is the highest incorporated town east of the Rockies, having an elevation of nearly four thousand feet above sea level. It has steadily grown in favor as a summer and health resort.

Railroad Development

As has been pointed out before Macon county fought for rail transportation for years. Before the Civil War a project was under construction from Port Royal and Charleston, S. C. through Walhalla and Rabun Gap to the Tennessee river and thence down it on the natural water grade, through to Knoxville and the Ohio river region. Work was well underway on this when the Civil War broke out. Structures of fine masonry may today be seen near Clayton, Ga., on the proposed line. Through the Blue Ridge between Clayton and Walhalla a long tunnel lacks only a few feet of being completed. The present Tallulah Falls Railway uses a mile or two of the grade completed by this antebellum project.

The coming of the Civil War stopped work on this project before it reached the state line and Macon was forced to forego a position on one of what would have been one of five trunkline railroads crossing the Blue Ridge into the Mississippi valley,

south of the Potomac river.

Various schemes were devised for the promotion of a railroad through Rabun Gap during the three decades following the war. At one time the county authorized \$100,000 in bonds to aid the construction of a line but plans fell through and the money was never made available.

In 1884 the Murphey branch of the Western N. C. R. R. entered Macon county and extended for a distance of two and one half miles across the extreme northwest corner. The coming of this line did not affect the county as its location lies in the most inaccessible part of it and through only one corner.

In connection with the construction of this line, a line was authorized by the legislature, from Almond up the Tennessee to Franklin. Under the terms of the act five hundred convicts were to be placed on this line and it was to be pushed to completion.

The W. N. C. R. R. had been about this time, leased to the Richmond and Danville R. R. The representative of this road made some kind of an arrangement with the representative from Macon in the General Assembly by which the provision dealing with the Franklin-Almond line was killed. Whatever promises were made as a basis for this repeal, it is needless to say that they were unfulfilled.

It was not until 1905 that ground was broken in Macon county for a railroad which should serve as a practical outlet. On November 13th of that year forces entered the county at the state line working on the Tallulah Falls line.

The first train to enter the county on this line was a work train which entered on May 9, 1906. The road was completed to Franklin during the summer of 1907.

During the Present Century

The first bank chartered in Macon county opened for business in 1903 with a capital of \$10,000. Geo. A. Jones was president and J. T. Siler cashier. In 1905, two years after opening it had deposits to the extent of \$68,427.07, a surplus of \$2,000.00 and undivided profits of \$3,033.00.

Macon county adopted prohibition permanently in 1903. At that time the dispensary was voted out by an overwhelming majority.

In 1893 Franklin was visited by a disastrous fire. All buildings east of where the McCoy block now stands on the south side of Main street were wiped out. Among these were the old Bell house on the site of the present Franklin Hotel, a building owned by E. H. Franks, two stores owned by S. H. Lyle and E. H. Franks and a large ivory stable owned by "Uncle D." Cunningham. The total loss of all of this property was estimated at \$15,000.

With the entrance of the U. S. into the World War in 1917 Macon county gave unsparingly of her wealth of money and of men.

Over 1000 men went into service. Of that number 13 were killed and many more were wounded in more or less serious degree.

Liberty loan drives were over subscribed and the various war activities splendidly supported.

Macon County Today

Macon county contains 513 square miles, 328,320 acres, and is located on the headwaters of the Little Tennessee river. It lies mainly in a natural basin formed by the Cowee mountains on the eastern boundary and the Nantahala mountains on the west. Macon county is watered by the Little Tennessee, Cullasaja and Nantahala rivers, and by numerous creeks and smaller streams. The county abounds in fertile valleys, where bountiful crops can be grown with the minimum of labor and no commercial fertilizer whatever. Macon county's altitude ranges from 1900 to 5,567 feet.

The incorporated towns in the county, with population according to the 1920 census, are: Franklin, the county seat, 773; Highlands, 313. There are 19 other post offices in Macon county, and 4 Rural Free Delivery Routes, serving 97 miles of territory, and 3 Star Routes.

During the last twenty years great progress has been made. Franklin has paved her streets, put in electric lights, a water and sewerage system, built her best buildings, has developed into a business center for the whole county. Roads have been built, hotels erected, the population has increased, tourists have come, and Macon county has just begun to awake, to come out of the chrysalis of her transformation.

Her resources in natural endowment and in energy of her people have not been touched. With abounding water power, virgin forests of finest hardwood, the finest climate in the world with good roads, unsurpassed scenery, with vision, faith and energy her future is beyond imagination.

The pioneer days are over. The history of those days has been recorded here in a most general way. What is not written here is eternally carved in the life of her people, the soundness of her foundations, the high type of spirit which is the heritage of her citizenship.

Her future lies before her. A future which lies in the sound development of every phase of her life, the conservative use and sensible exploitation of every resource that is hers. In every respect her history is a challenge to her future, the work of her pioneers a stimulus to their sons and daughters.

AN INSTITUTION

Charley Morgan's place has passed the stage of being a mere garage.

It has become an institution.

Since the first old White Steamer puffed its way through the mud of Franklin's Main Drag—and that was somewhere back yonder!—Charley Morgan has been actively engaged in the automobile business. Mechanic, garage owner, dealer—he has been in touch with the business from every angle. And that particular bit of knowledge about the innards of a gas engine which Charley Morgan has not acquired has been torn out of the book.

In other words—

At Charley's place—The City Garage—your problem is met by knowledge, not guess work; and when the job is finished you KNOW that it is done RIGHT.

We work on no other basis.

And here is another consideration:—

At night—when the other fellows have closed up—you will find Charley Morgan's place open and a skilled mechanic there ready to help you out of your trouble.

Likewise on Sundays.

There is a man always in reach of our 'phone. If you break down on the road, he will lend a sympathetic ear to your tale of woe. And, what's more important, get a trouble car out to you in record time.

On the Fourth we would enjoy having you drop in for a friendly call. No matter whether you need anything for the old bus or not, come in and say hello. We have a bunch of new accessories we'd like to have you lamp—or maybe you'd be interested in hearing about the best light touring car in the world.

Anyway, drop by and swap yarns and tobacco with us, if nothing else.

CITY GARAGE

PALMER STREET

PHONE 40

FRANKLIN, N. C.