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## COL. FRED A. OLDS WRITES INTERESTING STORY OF MADISON

COL. OLDS WRITES LETTER TO JOHN A. HENDRICKS OF MARSHALL

How did Marshall get its name? This question was asked the publisher of this paper recently and thinking it would be of interest to our readers, we asked Mr. John A. Hendricks to write something of the history, especially the beginning of Marshall and Madison County. The following is the result, for which the publisher of The News-Record feels deeply indebted to Mr. Hendricks and to Col. Fred A. Olds.

School children in the County would do well to clip out this article and keep it for future reference.

THE PUBLISHER.

The North Carolina Historical Commission, Raleigh, North Carolina.

August 11, 1928.

My dear Mr. Hendricks:

It is a pleasure to reply to yours of the 9th. I gave away 3,000 copies of my "Story of the Counties" and not one is now left. So I send you the facts you need from a detailed story of Madison.

The County was named for President James Madison, the county seat for Chief Justice John Marshall of the U. S. Supreme Court.

The act of General Assembly creating Madison was ratified January 27, 1851, out of the parts of Buncombe and Yancey, the county having been formed, David Steele Reid was Governor—January 1—1851 to Dec. 8, 1854. Nehemiah Blalock, T. C. Proffitt and John W. Peek were named by the act as Commissioners to survey the boundaries. The first meeting of the county court of pleas and quarter sessions was held at the tavern of Adolphus E. Baird, the first Monday in February, 1851, and afterwards at various places until a courthouse was built. The location of the site for the courthouse was by the act directed to be selected by John Roberts, Joshua Young, John A. Fagg, Noah Morgan, William Baldwin, Thomas Gardner and Charles Moore. The act directed that the county seat should be called Marshall. The act directed that in case five of the seven commissioners named could not agree on one point as the location of the county town they should name two points, one of which should not be in two miles of the French Broad River, and that in such a case the duly qualified voters should make the choice. The Commissioners were ordered to obtain, by gift or purchase, not less than twenty-five or more than one hundred acres and set apart lots for the courthouse, jail, a male academy, a female academy and four lots for churches, on which churches were to be built by such denominations as applied for them; these lots to be given to the schools and churches without cost.

The first county court, which met February 8, 1851, was composed of J. J. Gudger, John Fagg, John Roberts Joshua Young, Noah Morgan, Thomas Gardner, Charles Moore and William Baldwin. This body of men chosen out of the magistracies which the general Assembly appointed for the county was by resolutions applied for by citizens required to locate the county seat at Jewel Hill, which was also called Walnut, which place the majority of the Commissioners named by the General Assembly had chosen.

The First County Court elected James Nichols, Clerk, and until he gave bond, February 26, 1851, Robert B. Vance was made acting Clerk. James Sawyer was the first Register of Deeds (the word ought to be "registrars.") Thomas W. Bray, Sheriff. The first Superior Court met at Jewel Hill in October, 1851, with Judge William Horn Battle, presiding, J. W. Andrews, Clerk.

An act of the General Assembly ratified February 15, 1855 said "the

Commissioners named by the act of 1853 to locate the county seat have done so and have located it on the land of R. B. Vance where Adolphus E. Baird now lives and have named it Marshall, and an election shall be held in April, 1855, as to whether this shall remain the location, doubts having arisen as to the legality of the decision of the commissioners. The election by the people was in favor of Marshall, which had been called Lapland. R. B. Vance had made a gift of the 50 acre site.

The courts were, however, actually held at Jewel Hill (or Walnut) until 1857. In 1856 a jail and courthouse of brick were finished. The first will was recorded February 3, 1851, the first deed, June 20, 1851. This deed is the strongest ever recorded in the State. It says: "Being placed by my daughter, Mary Ann Nichols, to the value of \$400, and in order to better provide for her comfort and welfare, I hereby give her one negro, Caroline." Signed by Hezekiah A. Barnard.

The first highway, a "Toll Turnpike" from North Carolina to Tennessee was by way of Hot Springs from Asheville.

Yours truly,  
 FRED A. OLDS.

In addition to what Col. Fred A. Olds has said in his very interesting letter, giving the history of Madison County and the Town of Marshall, there appears of record in the Register of Deeds' office of Madison County, a deed executed by Zebulon B. Vance, dated April 20, 1853, in Book 138, which conveyed to the County of Madison, fifty acres of land for the purpose of locating thereon the Town of Marshall. On both sides of the French Broad River, being a part of the land of David Vance, deceased. A full description is given of the tract of land, which includes where the Courthouse now stands and the line ran down the river and across the river below the point of the island, then up the river on the South side, 82 poles, then across the river to the north, and back to the beginning. This deed covered the island where the schoolhouse now stands.

Samuel Chunn, on the 16th day of February, 1853 also deeded to the County of Madison, a tract of land adjoining the tract deeded by Vance to the County, containing twenty or twenty-five acres, and described as follows: Beginning at the mouth of a large branch below Case Bold's board and island of said river and running up said river east 18 poles to a gum, locust and ash supposed to be in Vance's line; thence North crossing the main road to a stake in the old road to Barnard station, thence to the beginning. Both the Vance tract and the Chunn tract were donated without charge to the County. It appears that Vance made the deed in behalf of the Vance heirs. This was the foundation of Marshall, which embraced about seventy-five acres of land. The County now owns the Courthouse site and where the jail stands. All told less than one acre and the county after building the new courthouse bought from other parties part of the courthouse lot. The strip lying between the courthouse and the French Broad Bank. It would be very difficult to trace down where the other seventy-four acres donated to the County of Madison for the Town of Marshall has gone. I wish to thank Col. Olds very kindly for his letter. There is no other man, probably in North Carolina who has donated so much valuable time and labor for the preservation of interesting history in different parts of the State.

Col. Olds is so vigorous and active I am sure that he would not appreciate being called "the grand old man of North Carolina," but he is entitled to all of this except the word "old." For the benefit of readers of the Record, I wish to say that Col. Olds has spent the major portion of his life as correspondent for many of the leading newspapers in the United States and millions of people have read Col. Olds' stories written about all the living issues and subjects of the time. I know of no man in North Carolina who is more patriotic and so deeply interested in the details of the history of the State of North Carolina, and especially of the counties, cities, and towns.

JOHN A. HENDRICKS.

## F. M. WEBSTER DIED SUDDENLY

PROMINENT CITIZEN OF MARS HILL PASSED AWAY SATURDAY

Fletcher Michael Webster, age 74, died almost suddenly at his home at Mars Hill last Saturday afternoon about 3:30 o'clock, August 11, 1928. Mr. Webster was apparently in perfect physical condition about forty minutes before his death, the cause of his death being heart failure following acute indigestion. He was dead in about 30 minutes after he felt the attack. The entire community was greatly shocked to learn of his sudden going, as he seemed to be in such fine health.

Mr. Webster is survived by his wife, who was before her marriage, Miss Matilda Sams, an aunt of Dr. W. A. Sams of Marshall. He leaves two sons, Guy Webster, of San Antonio, Texas, and D. F. Webster, of Farrar, Texas, and three daughters, Mrs. C. C. Metcalf, of Asheville, N. C., Mrs. Floyd Holcombe, of Mars Hill, and Miss Louise Webster, of Mars Hill, N. C. He is also survived by one brother, Mr. G. A. Webster, of Weaverville, N. C., and one sister, Mrs. Mary Webster, of Jerome, Idaho.

Funeral services were from the home Tuesday afternoon at three o'clock conducted by Rev. J. R. Owen of Mars Hill, and Dr. O. E. Sams, of Bluefield, West Virginia, a former president of Carson-Newman College, Tenn., and a nephew of the deceased. The closing prayer at the home was led by Rev. J. L. Colville. The speakers stood on the porch while those attending the funeral stood in the yard round about under the beautiful oaks, the family seated on the porch. The entire audience was asked to take part in the singing of the favorite old hymns. Solos were sung by Miss Vivian Sams, of Marshall, and Mr. Henry Clay Edwards, of Mars Hill, followed by a duet by the two. The scripture was read by Rev. J. R. Owens, who paid a beautiful tribute to the deceased and called on Dr. O. E. Sams to speak. Dr. Sams made a beautiful talk, speaking most touchingly of his intimate acquaintance and knowledge of the deceased, his uncle and foster father. He spoke of what a splendid husband, father, neighbor, and citizen Mr. Webster was, living a quiet, peaceful, unobtrusive life, not so much in the limelight, but a genuinely good citizen and home maker. Dr. Sams stressed the importance and sweetness of home life and how he himself was at home there.

Almost the entire assemblage went to the Mars Hill cemetery, where interment followed. Messrs. Holcombe and Tison, undertakers, very gracefully carried out their part on the program, assisted by neighbors and friends in the filling of the grave. The floral offerings were many and beautiful, covering well both the new made grave as well as that of his 12-year old son who died in 1917. The active pallbearers were: Messrs. Fred Sams, Theron Sams, Tom Sams, Paul Sams, Troy Sams, L. J. Bailey, Edgar Phillips and Harry Webster. Honorary pallbearers were: Messrs. T. J. Murray, Joe Brown, Rome Anderson, J. L. Colville, A. E. Carter, Sr., Wayne Peek, W. M. Edwards, N. B. McDevitt, N. J. Runnion, Fred Roberts, R. L. Moore, W. L. George, Dave Lawson, E. N. Holcombe, and Dr. Walter N. Johnson.

Mr. Webster was a Mason, a member of the lodge at Flag Pond, Tenn., before moving to Mars Hill more than twenty years ago. He was a member of the Presbyterian church and at the time of his death was chairman of the public school committee at Mars Hill.

All his children were present at the funeral except D. F. Webster, of Farrar, Texas, who will come later. The other son, Guy, arrived in good time having come part of the way by aeroplane.

Mr. Webster lived to see the fulfillment of one of his cherished wishes, the graduation of his youngest daughter, Miss Louise, who will be a member of the Marshall School faculty next session.

Quite a number of relatives of the family from Tennessee, and other distant points attended the funeral.

Farmers of Chowan County will ship 26 cars of fat hogs cooperative this fall.

## NEW AIRPORT WILL PLACE ASHEVILLE ON AVIATION MAP

The establishment of the new joint Asheville-Henderson airport now under construction midway between these two cities, will place Asheville and the entire "Land of the Sky" on the aviation map of the United States. The airport, which is a private enterprise, has been successfully assured through the efforts of citizens of both Asheville and Hendersonville. The movement to build the port has been supported by the Asheville Chamber of Commerce and by the governments of the two cities and counties directly benefited by the new landing field.

Owing to the popularity of Asheville as a tourist center the airport will afford a means for visitors who wish to pay a visit to this section to fly here in a few hours from the larger cities of the United States. Although heretofore poorly equipped with landing field facilities, Asheville has entertained a number of aerial visitors including Harry Brooks, the ill-fated Ford aviator who was forced down at this city during his flight to Miami.

The new airport which is located at Fletcher, midway between Asheville and Hendersonville will offer first class facilities to aviators and will be in operation shortly after September first, according to officials in charge. The establishment of the port will be celebrated with a huge aerial derby in which army planes and privately owned machines will take part. When completed, the port will be used by airmail, passenger and freight machines and will be a training ground for new aviators as well as a landing field for privately owned planes.

The promoters of the Asheville-Hendersonville Airport have overcome many difficulties, chief among them which was the lack of level ground property located near the principal cities in this mountain section. T. J. Roberts of Asheville, is owner of the airport and will operate the enterprise, with the advice and assistance of a group of aviators and engineers. J. A. Richbourg of Asheville, Chairman of the airport committee of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce has been active in the establishment of the airport and will take an interested part in the operation of the new institution.

## AT WALNUT NEXT WEEK

French Broad Association Thursday and Friday of Next Week

The French Broad Association will meet with the Walnut Baptist church next Thursday and Friday, August 24 and 25. An interesting program has been arranged and dinner will be served on the grounds. It is hoped that the attendance will be large.

## Ships That Never Come

All young people have their dream ships—and they expect them to come in.

But dream ships have a way of drifting farther and farther out to sea until they finally disappear. The ship that comes in is the one captained by Common Sense, with Vision for a mate, and a crew made up of Industry, Persistence, Ambition, Determination and Enthusiasm.

A ship thus manned will reach the harbor, but the one with Idle Watching for a captain, Thoughtlessness for a mate, and a crew made up of Delay, Indecision, Fear and Faint Hope, never calls at a port.

Dream all you will, but see to it that your dreams are not merely fanciful pictures. To fix upon a possible and desirable objective and to think of it night and day, to work toward it hour after hour, is not idle dreaming; it is the practical thing that enables men and women to rise above their fellows in the scale of accomplishment.

—Southern News Bulletin.

Damage by insects, soil conditions and disease cut the strawberry crop on some farms in Columbus County at least one-fourth to one-half the crop.

Farmers of Wilson County established a curd market at Wilson on Saturday, July 31.

## UNUSUAL FLOOD SWEEPS THE ENTIRE STATE

### FRENCH BROAD RIVER WELL OUT OF ITS BANKS

Traffic Tied Up, Both Railroad and Highway And No Mails

Marshall is in for its part of the storm which has been sweeping the Atlantic Coast states for the past several days. A steady down pour of rain a large part of Tuesday night and all day Wednesday, covering practically all of North Carolina and other states caused the French Broad River to begin swiftly rising Wednesday afternoon, and by night it had risen to the point that the residents of Marshall began to feel uneasy, so much so that quite a number of them did not sleep at all Wednesday night, and the furniture of many of the residences on the lower streets was moved out on to the porches ready to be trucked to the hills. Not since 1916 has such a flood swept our town, and the memory of that disaster comes back with striking vividness to those who experienced the loss of their property in that memorable year. Then the flood was July 16, 1916. Now one month later in the summer, August 16, 1928, partly a repetition of the same is evident. Up to the time we go to press, no serious damage has been done the business or residences of the town. The railroad is perhaps the most damaged of all. Since early Wednesday night the railway track has been inundated and traffic has ceased. No mails could come in or go out of the town except by carrier. Marshall is by no means the only town under water. Reports from Asheville are to the effect that the lower parts of that city are under water. Much through automobile traffic has been held up in Marshall, but if not held up here, it would have to wait some where, as there are washouts all over the state, except that they came earlier in the eastern sections. The Roanoke river in the east was so much risen that traffic had to be routed other ways.

At ten o'clock Thursday morning cars could hardly pass over the street at Marshall, only the higher makes of cars attempting it by staying well up on the sidewalks. The island is completely covered and quite a few trees on the island have been swept down. The rock wall built for protection of the school building is being put to a test, but seems to be meeting the need for which it was intended, holding back the on-rushing floods from sweeping the foundation of the building away. While the water stands high around the building and well up in the basement, the water is not sweeping around the building with any appreciable force, so that it is hoped that instead of washing the dirt from the island, it will have a tendency to fill the lower places and eventually help rather than harm the school property. On account of the interruption in the mail service, we do not know when this paper will reach its readers, and the conditions may have materially changed before that time. However, as we write this, the sun shines occasionally and we trust the worst is over.

Since the above was written, the water has risen still higher than it was, and several business houses have moved their goods to higher shelves or to higher buildings. The Baptist church was filled with merchandise from one of the stores. Several families moved not only themselves to higher ground but their furniture and other household belongings as well.

In the midst of all this excitement, the fire siren sounded. The lime stored by the Builders Supply Company had become wet and in overlooking was smoking. This was soon over, but the manager, Mr. J. Morgan Ramsey, stated that he thought he was damaged about \$2000 by the water. The French Broad Hotel and the Montezuma Hotel were put out of business for the day, the occupants moving to other quarters, and the Let 'Er Go Bob filling station and the room of Mrs. A. B. McDaniel, adjoining, were completely under water. This is the floors were, and no business could be done there. Quite a number of places at Marshall were more or less damaged, but the damage

was nothing to compare with that of 1916. Before we could get to press, the sky had cleared and the floods are receding and we believe the worst is over.

### FOUR PRISONERS LEAVE BASTILE ONE IS CAUGHT

Three prisoners escaped from the jail here last Friday afternoon about five o'clock in the afternoon and are still at large. A fourth prisoner made his escape about 10 o'clock Friday night when he ran out over the officer or trusty who had been sent to lock the main door of the jail. In the afternoon, according to Piney Randall, the jailer, the prisoners had been cleaning up the jail down stairs, but had been moved back up stairs. He was in another part of the building, he said, and the only way he can account for the escape of the three who took leave in the afternoon was that a boy, delivering ice, must have picked up the door key and placed it in the lock. The prisoners, it is thought, had reached through the door and unlocked it.

They jumped on a passing truck and were carried a short distance out of town. The truck driver became suspicious and came back to town to make inquiries and learned that three prisoners corresponding to the three men who rode on his truck, escaped. The three men are Bud Carver, charged with a statutory offense, Lyda Massey, larceny, and Till Cogdill, larceny. Each prisoner was awaiting a trial in Superior Court.

Bony Randall, the fourth man to escape, was from the Anderson branch section, who was in jail following a fight in which he was shot in the leg. Running over the party who was sent to lock the main door, he made his way to the street and on to the bridge and got to the island where he was caught. He could not make his escape on account of his leg.

A later report is to the effect that these prisoners have been caught at Flag Pond, Tenn., and returned to the jail.

### GOLFERS FROM FIFTEEN STATES IN ASHEVILLE TOURNAMENT

Golfers from fifteen states and the District of Columbia are represented in the list of 225 entries taking part in the annual Mens Invitation Tournament held this week at the Biltmore Forest Country Club. The annual event has long been a popular one among golfers of the southern and eastern states. The field this year is widely representative, the golfers hailing from as far south as Miami, Florida, and north to Providence, R. I., and west to St. Louis, Mo. Forty one cities are represented in the tournament.

Among the prominent entries in the event are: Kayton Smith, of Savannah Ga., winner of the tournament last year, who is defending his title, Harry Ehle, of Asheville, former Southern Amateur Champion, Toomy Aycock, Champion and Alan Smith of Asheville, champion of the Carolinas. Finals in the event will be played August 18.

Interest is keen in the coming Annual Women's Invitation Tournament which will be held at the Asheville Golf and Country Club during the week of August 20 with the finals scheduled for August 24. Mrs. J. G. Smith, of Savannah, Ga., will defend her laurels won last year in the event. Golfers from many cities are expected to be represented in the large field of entries taking part in the tourney.

Asheville's eighth season of summer grand opera has attracted many music lovers to the city. Opening on August 13 with "La Boheme" the San Carlo Company will present a total of 8 operas ending their engagement on August 18. Asheville is one of the few cities of the south and in the United States for that matter, which have presented grand opera on a paying basis. The annual opera season here draws its audiences from many cities of the south.

"Why are you so angry at John?" "Well, you'd be angry too. He put his arms around me and told me everything he touched today seemed to be wrong."