



Still standing

After 100 years, the Dundarrach Trading Company is still standing and still doing the same friendly business. Manager Tom Jones stands ready to help a farmer or visiting out-of-towner who stops by the store to pick up groceries, supplies or maybe to just pick up the latest gossip.

Dundarrach, 100 Years And Proud Of It

By Sherry Matthews

Although Dundarrach's population is dwindling and its aged buildings are weathering, Hoke County's only incorporated town outside of Raeford remains proud of its heritage.

Dundarrach is small, not more than a crossroad, with a few houses and stores scattered across the mile that encompasses the little village.

But regardless of the size, the little town and its residents, 125 or so, hold many memories of the way Dundarrach used to be.

According to Grace Malone, who was born in Dundarrach and has recently moved back, the little town has been in existence longer than Hoke County and was incorporated in 1911, the same year as Hoke.

"There is a lot of memories and history wrapped up in this town," Malone said.

A lot of "what used to be" still exist in Dundarrach.

The Dundarrach Trading Company has been here for at least 100 years, Malone said, adding that the service is just as good now as it was then.

"It was a farm credit store," manager Tom Jones said.

According to Jones, farmers would come in during the summer months and purchase supplies and then pay for them in the "fall of the year."

The store had a credit system that kept farmers happy and business good, Jones said.

The Trading Company was more than just a place to buy goods.

Men would come in during the winter months to warm themselves by the pot-bellied stove that stood in the center of the store.

While at the store, the men might drink a cup of coffee with their neighbor and share a little of

the town's gossip or even brag about the crops they were intending to harvest during the summer.

The dusty roads, which are now paved, were traveled by the stage coaches during the civil war years and before.

According to Malone, the main road running through Dundarrach was the "stage coach road that ran from Camden, S.C., to Raleigh."

"That stretch of land is known as the old Camden road for that very reason," Malone said.

Dundarrach was also one of the first towns to have a post office, according to Malone.

"Roderick McGrimmon was the first postmaster in Dundarrach and his job included making sure the coaches had fresh horses when they came through on their way to Raleigh," Malone said.

McGrimmon was well known in the community and lived only a few hundred feet from the Trading Company, Malone said.

It was the McGrimmon house, where Malone's home now stands, that Sherman burned during his march on the South.

Malone also claims that Sherman and some of his troops camped at the Mildouson school, which has now been closed.

Malone and Kathleen Jones, another Dundarrach resident, remember other things that "don't really deal with the war."

The depot, which still stands, was where people gathered to take the jitney to Fayetteville, Jones said.

"We could go to Fayetteville, spend the day and come back to Dundarrach for a dime," Jones said, adding that adults had to pay a quarter for the same ride.

The depot was also a loading dock.

According to Malone, the train would haul in supplies and whiskey and leave them sitting on the depot

porch to be distributed to the store and area farmers.

"Dundarrach was a thriving little country village," Malone said.

Kathleen and Tom Jones agree. They, too, can remember how the store and the town used to be.

"Before the church was built, they held Sunday School classes in the flour room of the store," Mrs. Jones said.

According to Mr. Jones, the flour room was usually piled to overflowing with sacks of flour.

"A lot of times you would have to make a path through all the sacks just to get in the room," Mr. Jones said.

Malone, also remembers those kind of Sundays in Dundarrach.

"After the church was built, people would fill the pews for preaching on Sunday mornings, but in the afternoon we would hitch up the mules and head for the nearest square dance," Malone said.

"We didn't have a lot of money back then, but we sure had a lot of fun," Malone added.

Dundarrach, which means "hill of oak" in the Gallic language, was named by Roderick McGrimmon and still stands much as it did in the 1800's.

The jitney is gone but the depot remains. The roads are paved and the population has decreased from nearly 300 to a little over 125, but the people remain just as friendly and just as proud of their "little village."

The trading company still stands and still extends credit to neighboring farmers.

The old stove has been removed and the barrels of molasses don't exist, but farmers still come in for a cold drink and some fresh gossip and farm news.

"There's nothing like this place," Malone said.

"I loved it when I was a girl, and I love it even more now," Malone added.



Loading down the mules

Back in 1921, the Dundarrach cotton gin did a booming business! The mules were almost always loaded down with sacks of cotton that was brought to the gin for processing.



School days

These children wait less than anxiously for the little one room school to open its doors. The school was opened until January 1, 1922. Pictured here are left to right front row - Clara Gibson Jones, Jessie McKenzie Gentry and Ruby McKenzie Parnell. Second row - Louise Gibson Wright, James McKenzie (deceased) and Elizabeth Gibson Tolar.