

Along The Way

By
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Even though the DUPLIN TIMES only dates back to the early 1900s, history from the colonial days has been written and printed in the newspaper. Much of Duplin's history was published in 1949 when "The Duplin Story" was staged and in 1955 when Duplin General Hospital was dedicated.

The next few weeks Along the Way will feature a reprint from the February 24, 1955 issue of the DUPLIN TIMES. The reprint from the hospital edition features the doctors of the town of Faison. The article was written by Junius B. Stroud and her mother, Mrs. A.H. Witherington.

The Doctors Who Have Served Faison and Surrounding Areas

According to available information, Dr. James H. Hicks was the first physician to practice in the Faison section of Duplin. He was a native of this section, being the son of Thomas and Mary Faison Hicks. Dr. Hicks was born 1804, and was a graduate of Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. His diploma has been preserved all these years, and is now in the possession of a great-grandson, James H.C. Hill. Dr. Hicks was very fond of children and always carried candy in his pockets to give them. He rode horseback to make many of his calls, over roads which would have been impassable otherwise. His daughter, the last Miss Georgia Hicks, said that he would ride all night to see a patient, and that he never seemed to care whether he was paid or not.

Since there were no drug stores, he had his own apothecary shop in which he mixed pills and tonics. The mortar and pestle used in this shop are in the possession of the members of the family. His wife, Mrs. Eliza Miller Hicks, was born in the Sarecta township, this county. She was an excellent business-woman, and to her fell much of the care of managing their plantation. Perhaps the best estimate of Dr. James Hicks can be found in his obituary, which was loaned the writer by a great-granddaughter, Miss Ruth Faison of Greenville.

"At Faison, Duplin County, N.C. on Thursday, 30th of July 1874, Dr. James H. Hicks died in the 70th year of his age. For many years an Elder in the Union Church, his loss is deeply felt and sincerely mourned. He was greatly esteemed and respected by the whole community for his many virtues, and his memory will long be cherished as a most useful citizen, a sincere Christian, a kind and sympathizing friend. Through life, he was distinguished for his cheerful disposition and many happy traits of character which endeared him to young and old."

Beginning his practice some 20 years later was Dr. Henry W. Faison. Born in 1823 in the town of Faison, he attended the University of North Carolina, and completed his medical work at the University of Pennsylvania in 1846. He and his wife, Mrs. Martha Hicks Faison, lived about four miles to the northwest of the town in a lovely old house which is still standing and in a good state of preservation. Dr. Faison was a good businessman and farmer as well as an outstanding physician. He is said to have replied, when asked how he managed to dress so well: "Farmer Faison dresses Dr. Faison." Paper in the possession of his family indicates that he "worked on an infirmary in Goldsboro" and helped to found a medical journal. He had seven sons and three daughters, and in spite of economic reverses due to the Civil War, was determined to give them the best education possible.

With his sons he was sometimes severe. When they did not study, he called them home from college and

had them work under the overseer, on the plantation. When he felt they had been punished sufficiently, he sent them back to college with instructions to make up the work lost.

A granddaughter, Miss Ruth Faison of the East Carolina faculty, loaned this obituary which appeared in a Wilmington paper: "Dr. Henry W. Faison died at Faison Dec. 23, 1885 in the 63rd year of his age. He belonged to that small class known as men of success. He was one of the foremost farmers of this section of the state, but his life was one of the profession of medicine. For more

than 30 years he did a large and laborious country practice, and his fidelity and skill won for him the confidence of his patrons and a high place in his profession. In the field of work for humanity, his death leaves a large vacancy and a great responsibility for his successor. For 30 years he was a constant, almost an invariable attendant of church, and with all one of the most liberal supporters of the church."

Another native son, Dr. William Isaiiah Thompson, began the practice of medicine here a few years after Dr. Henry Faison. Dr. Thompson was born in 1824 and graduated in

medicine at the College of Charleston, South Carolina, School of Medicine. After graduation Dr. Thompson went with a cousin, William Moseley to Florida. Dr. Thompson was in Florida a year or more before returning to his old home.

This residence, still standing and in good repair, is about four miles southwest of the town of Faison, just over the line in Sampson County. During the War Between the States, Dr. Thompson had the care of the families of his sisters as their husbands were in service. On one occasion, a group of Yankees came through his section. They were

making all the cattle, which meant that the children of his household and his neighbors' households would have no milk. Dr. Thompson took drastic steps to prevent this. Standing in the way of the herd, he forbade the soldiers to take the milk cows, and said that if they persisted, they would do so over this dead body. So earnest was he that the soldiers did leave the milk cows, taking all the others. Dr. Thompson was a faithful and devoted Christian, serving for years as an elder in the Faison Presbyterian Church. He died at the age of 85, after years of service as an able and kind physician.

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