

'A Lot Of Good People Live Here'

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

There's not much higher compliment you can pay any community than to say with Gilbert Grissett that his birthplace is home to "a lot of good people."

The area that bears his family name, about eight miles south of Shallotte, revolves mostly around the intersection of U.S. 17 and Hwy. 904. It stretches out some five miles to the south, east and west, with a mixed economy of farming and small businesses. Thomasboro is on the southern border, Wishing Well Campground on the west, and the Grissettown-Longwood Fire Department on the east.

The 74-year-old Grissett, enjoying retirement hobbies of bee-keeping and raising fantail doves, is now the patriarch of the clan. His great-grandfather, William Grissett, owned, more than 100 years ago, all the land that now makes up the community. The name Grissettown dates back to the mid-19th century.

William's descendants are still plentiful in the area, but they were supplemented over the years by a lot of Somersets, Wards and Hewetts.

Hulon and Gilbert Grissett, second cousins, don't have a lot of historical facts on tap, but they remember their childhood, when there was no U.S. 17 bisecting the community. "There

was just the Old Shallotte Road, and lots of people raised cattle and sold turpentine," Hulon Grissett recalled. Gilbert remembered the busy



STAFF PHOTO BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

GILBERT GRISSETT tends to one of his fantail doves, a hobby he pursues along with bee-keeping at his Grissettown home.

highway as an unpaved road, with a restaurant and big general store near the present intersection.

"It was just a little farm community," he said, noting that tobacco and corn were the chief crops.

Farms are still to be found, especially west of the highway, but more and more families like that of Marie Somersett exchanged agriculture for business.

"We farmed here till 1968," she

said, "then we moved to the intersection to start a construction business."

Her combined construction and realty office has lots of company at the crossroads. A service station-grocery store is next door and across the road is a fish house, an oyster house, a garage, a net shop, body shop and honey company, to name only a few.

A big brick building, owned by Glen Parker, just across 904 on U.S.

17 is now vacant but has been many things to many people. As an adult book store it was the target of county dismay, then in a complete about-face it served for several months as a non-denominational storefront church.

But Grissettown's most interesting residents are those who patronize Coastalina Pines Sun Club, tucked in among the trees west of the highway.

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