

# Perquimans People



## History buff

Ray Winslow stands before what he thinks might be the largest collection of local history books in the county. Winslow is what you might call a professional history buff.

# Winslow is fluent in area history

By MIKE McLAUGHLIN

Ray Winslow can spin yarns about the Perquimans County of by-gone days as well as any pipe smoking old timer toasting his toes by a wood stove in a country store.

The difference is that Winslow's stories are unvarnished fact gleaned from dusty old courthouse records and age stained documents.

Winslow is what you might call a professional history buff. He earns his living by doing genealogical research, traveling by bus to speak at various college seminars and historical meetings, and researching contracted projects.

Winslow's passion, though, is the history of Perquimans County and its people.

In a sit down conversation he can weave a rich record of county life from colonial times all the way into the present.

According to Winslow, Perquimans County was the center of activity for the entire county in pre-revolutionary times.

What is now known as the Newbold-White House was in the seventeenth century perhaps the finest home in the colony.

"The general assembly, the governor's council and the highest courts all picked this

house to meet in," Winslow said.

Court sessions were an exciting happening in the none too eventful colonial life and nearly half the population would show up for them.

"People came and did a little bit of everything," Winslow said. "They swapped horses, arranged marriages for their children, got drunk and even did a little fighting."

The practice of coming into town for court week persisted into the twentieth century and as the years passed, the show got wilder, particularly after the railroad came to the county in 1881.

"In later years entertainers would come. Patent medicine shows. Theaters. Anybody expecting to make a buck off the public would come around during court week knowing there would be a big audience," Winslow said.

Generations of high school students have traditionally asked, "Why should we study history?" Winslow would answer "for the sheer fun of it."

"You find out why things are the way they are," he said, "who people are and where they come from."

"Sometimes it reads like a 'who done it?'" Winslow said. Often it's no more than a question of who married who,

but it might just as well be a murder story.

Most of the county's records are housed in the state department of archives in Raleigh, where Winslow does a great deal of his research.

In his work he turns up tales of intrigue and an occasional scandal, along with the more usual deeds, maps and birth records.

One of the most tired plots in cheap thrill literature is a wife's conspiring to kill her husband for money. Does it really happen? Apparently so, or at least it did here once.

In the eighteenth century a prominent Perquimans County merchant, high up in government circles, was poisoned by a laborer at his wife's bequest. Court records show the motive was money. The laborer was hung, but the merchant's wife went unpunished.

Perhaps the greatest public scandal in the county's history came about in the early nineteenth century.

John Clary, float bridge operator on the Perquimans River and prominent local politician, was convicted of raping his stepdaughter and received virtually no punishment for the deed, or at least not from the proper authorities.

The victim's brother and

friends, however, waylaid Clary and tarred and feathered him. They were apprehended and punished severely for the offense, and Clary was re-elected to the state house of commons by the voters of Perquimans County.

The house of commons was indignant about accepting a man of such repute into its midst, and refused Clary his seat. Perquimans County was forced to hold another election and again Clary came out on top.

A pamphlet war developed denouncing Clary for his dastardly deeds but he was allowed to take his seat in the house of commons.

Winslow has also uncovered some popular misconceptions about the history of the area in his studies. One is the date of the construction of the Perquimans County Courthouse. The original courthouse was a wooden frame building that was torn down when the present courthouse opened its doors in the 1920s. A widely held notion is that the present structure dates back to 1732.

Another misconception is the belief that George Washington personally surveyed the Great Dismal Swamp. Washington did, however, visit the county, probably on more than one occasion, and bought a large chunk of the swamp with hopes of draining it and turning a profit.

Agriculture has always played a role in Perquimans County History, though corn and soybeans haven't always been the preferred crop.

Originally, the cash crop was tobacco, and farmers not only grew it but used it for money. Cotton, corn and

wheat were important before the Civil War, and toward the end of the century, peanuts, and even rice came into prominence.

Gradually, though, the soybean stole into the picture and now it shares the spotlight with corn as the county's primary crop.

Time and patient study have made Ray Winslow one of the foremost experts on the history of Perquimans County.

He has published numerous articles and books on the subject and is the president of the Perquimans County Historical Society.

His latest project is one that will help spread his knowledge of historic research methods to others. It is a textbook for the state community college system entitled HOW TO DO HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN NORTH CAROLINA.

For all his achievements, though, Winslow's research takes a huge chunk out of his life. At 43 he is single, and lives with his parents in a white frame house on Edenton Road.

His library is crammed full of books on local history. His own microfilm reader sits on a table cluttered with pamphlets and papers.

One might conclude that Winslow has given up the present for life in the past. The self-made historian would argue, however, that all life is to some degree lived after the fact.

"The past is all we have because the future doesn't exist, and the present, what is it but the immediately remembered past," Winslow said.

# Stokes offers mailing tips

Postmaster Henry C. Stokes, Jr. is reminding customers that for the best service this Christmas season they should use ZIP Codes, place their return address in the upper left corner of the envelope and use proper postage.

be assured good mail service this holiday season."

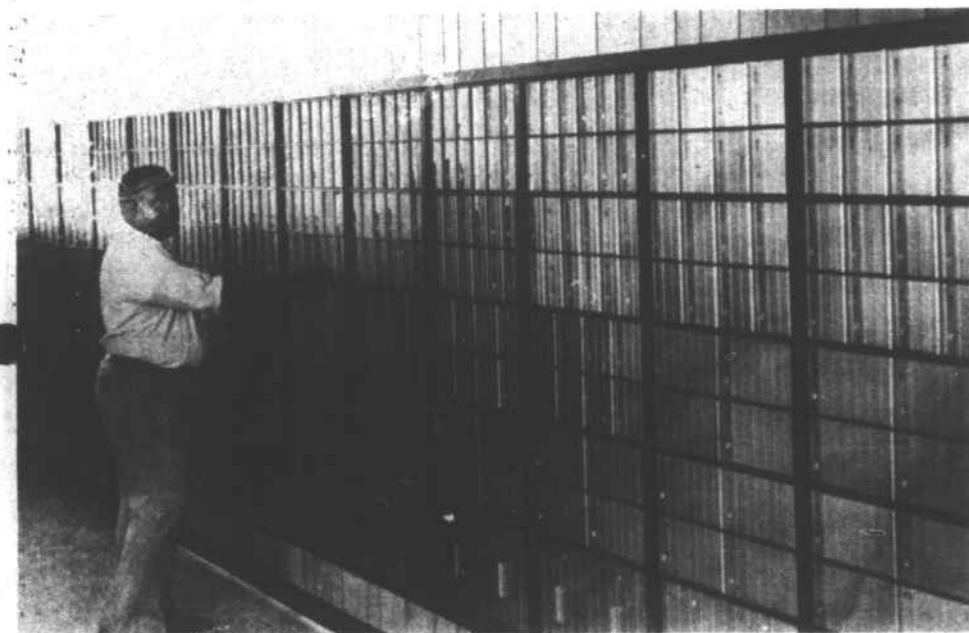
It is important, the Hertford postmaster says, that families "double check" envelopes and cards to be certain that proper postage is affixed. Envelopes without postage will be returned to senders, if possible, or delayed by postage-due procedures.

When the return address is placed on envelopes bearing

holiday greetings, it also helps remind friends of one's current address.

And, if the family to whom a holiday message is sent moved more than a year ago, it cannot be forwarded. With a return address, Postmaster Stokes says, such letters are returned to the sender with a notation that the following "order" has expired.

"By following these suggestions," Postmaster Stokes says, "Customers will



## Remodeled

Calvin Johnson, a postal employee, shows off the remodeled Hertford Post Office, now equipped to handle 498 boxholders.

# Barber retirement celebrated

The Perquimans County Health Department honored Louise Barber with a surprise retirement dinner last Saturday night at Angler's Cove. Mrs. Barber is retiring after thirty years of service.

Working since 1949 has afforded Mrs. Barber the chance to see many changes come about in public health service, including the expansion of child health services, and the deletion of

several previously necessary immunizations such as typhoid and smallpox.



"It has been an accomplishment to see many diseases become practically eradicated," said Mrs. Barber.

Although Mrs. Barber does not have any definite plans for her retirement, she wants to become more involved in community and church work.



Mrs. Barber


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1ST ANNUAL PERQUIMANS COUNTY D.U. BANQUET  
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DINNER: 7:30 P.M. — PRE-DINNER SOCIAL: 6-7:30 P.M.

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Your Pharmacist  
**Charles Woodard**  
Says


Woodard's Pharmacy, 101 N. Church Street,  
Hertford, NC. Tel. 526-2366

**Aids for allergy**

Allergic sneezing and bronchial distress can be troublesome. Here are several suggestions I'd like to pass along for possible relief.

- 1) Elevate head at night for easier breathing.
- 2) Sleep with small pillow to support back and to serve as a "ramp" between head and waist to aid easier ventilation.
- 3) Use a harder cushion for your pillow to prevent head sinking into soft pillow and overheating.
- 4) Walk to improve respiration.
- 5) Soothe itching eyelids with wet washcloth, ice cube, or even the frosty rim of a glass or bottle containing a cold drink.

Remember, don't underestimate the value of your "personal" pharmacist.



Woodard's Pharmacy


Dial 426-5527 Hertford, N.C.

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L. Stanley Crane, Chairman, Southern Railway System, Washington, D.C. 20013

The railroad is the most efficient user of fuel in the transportation industry. Bar none. And the Southern Railway is one of the most efficient railroads in the country. For instance, on the Southern, a 3,089 lb. compact car can travel

145 miles on one gallon of fuel. How far could a truck carry it on the same amount of fuel? Well, the railroad is four times more efficient than trucks, 60 times more efficient than planes, and even more efficient than barges. So it's easy to see that trucks can't carry freight anywhere near as far as railroads can per gallon of fuel.

What does this mean for the future? Well, it means that trucks will

be used less and less for long hauls. More and more products will ride on the Southern, and trucks will be used for distribution at the other end of the line. Because, in the coming years, only the railroad will have the energy-efficiency for long hauls.

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