



Ahoskie's oldest residential home

The oldest residential home in Ahoskie in continuous use is now occupied by Don Upchurch and his family — the sixth genera-

tion. The home at 412 Carolina Ave. may have been built in 1798 but records at the courthouse in Winton were destroyed.

Ahoskie's oldest residential home may have been built in 18th century

By Jack Stephens
News Editor

The oldest home in Ahoskie had its roots in 1833, when Miles H. Jernigan decided it to his daughter, Nancy Jernigan.

But some believe the home actually dates back to the 18th century.

In later years, the home was owned by Hayes Brett, then Ahoskie's town clerk, and his sister, Mrs. H.W. Upchurch of Buffalo, N.Y.

The deed, in fact, was one of Brett's most treasured possessions, according to an article in *The News-Herald* some years ago.

Now Don Upchurch, general manager of Ahoskie Radio Stations WRCS-AM and WQDK-FM, and his wife, Eleanor, and family have become the sixth and seventh generations to occupy the grand old home at 412 Carolina Ave.

Upchurch, in fact, believes the home dates back to the 18th century. However, he said the old

land records were lost when the courthouse at Winton was destroyed by the Union army during the Civil War.

Upchurch thought the home was built in 1798, "but I can't prove it," he said recently.

'That stuff (outside wood) is so hard now that you can't drive a nail into it.'
Don Upchurch, owner of the home at 412 Carolina Ave.

"I do have the deed in my safe deposit box. It was signed by Miles H. Jernigan, who had the house built for his daughter."

Daughter remarries

The daughter, Nancy Jernigan, married early in life to Lam Newsome, who died after becoming the father of a son, Sumner Newsome.

Mrs. Newsome then remarried to the Rev. Thomas Wright Hayes of Gates County.

This union produced six children

— Thomas C. Hayes, R.A. Hayes, William Hayes, Mrs. Ella H. Baker, Mrs. Sallie Ann H. Baker and Mrs. Nancy Jernigan H. Baker.

Meanwhile, Sumner Newsome became the father of Will, Marcellus and John Newsome.

After the deaths of their parents, Richard A. and Thomas C. Hayes bought the home and surrounding farm land.

Richard Hayes served in the Civil War, but for a brief time, he was a Union prisoner.

The owner of a very spirited horse, Richard Hayes found himself riding through Union lines. He was captured, but a few days later he was exchanged for a Union prisoner held by the South. He did take part in the Battle of Bull Run in Vir-

Here's how town got its distinctive name of Ahoskie

How Ahoskie got its named has been a topic of speculation for many years.

People in the Hertford County town claim Ahoskie is "the only one" in the world which bears the name. The story behind it is so rare that even today the name remains a mystery to townspeople.

In the chapter, "Which Came the Name Ahoskie" in the Parker Brothers' book, *The Ahoskie Area of Hertford County* (1939), mention is made of the old adage of "hot sky" or "horse skin" on a swamp ridge that caused the Indians to sound out a name that years later gave Ahoskie to the world. That it is an Indian name is the general agreement.

Many different spellings

Historian F. Roy Johnson, a former newspaper editor in the county, wrote in 1966 that there is material that tells of the derivation of the name. Johnson quoted research by Louis R. Binford, an anthropologist and archeologist at the University of North Carolina.

According to Binford, the original name of Ahoskie may have been spelled differently — such as "Auhotsky." But there are several other spellings over the years.

Binford wrote that he found the missing links in the mystery of how the town got its name by tracing the history of the Wyanoake Indians of Virginia in papers written by Philip Ludwell of Richmond, Va.

Ludwell's reports revealed that the Wyanoake Indians introduced the name, Auhotsky, in 1645, at least 10 years before settlers built cabins around the Albemarle Sound.

Auhotsky was Indian fort

Auhotsky was the name of the Wyanoakes' fort on what is now Ahoskie Creek from 1645 to 1653.

Binford believes that the Auhotsky fort was between what is now St. Johns and Ahoskie.

Tribal hostilities forced the Wyanoakes to flee from their homes in what is Charles County, Va. They crossed the James River, settled briefly on the Blackwater River but then left after another round of skirmishes and migrated south to the Roanoke River, near

the Tuscarora Indians.

However, the friendship between the Wyanoakes and the Tuscaroras soon cooled, and the Wyanoakes moved again, northward to the Notaway River in 1653.

Not until 66 years later, in 1719, was the name Auhotsky mentioned again in the colonial records of North Carolina, when John Cotton sought to renew a patent on 640 acres of land purchased from Thomas Dyal in Auhotsky.

Land patent in Auhotsky

In 1726, James Hamilton petitioned "showing that some time agoe James Howard obtained a patent for 440 acres lying in Bertie Precinct on Auhotsky Ridge which is now seated."

This was the first mention of the area being inhabited since the migration of the Wyanoakes to the Notaway decades earlier.

In other contemporary land grants, Ahoskie is spelled Ahostky, A Hosky and Hostky.

So law books tell of a place called Auhotsky 25 years before Hertford County was formed from sections of Bertie, Chowan and Northampton.

The name had two other important milestones in its history. The Bertie County courthouse was in Auhotsky in 1722 on the western end of Ahoskie ridge, now known as St. Johns.

In 1804, a Baptist church was organized six miles to the east at the present site of the town of Ahoskie and gave permanent residence to a name that had wandered almost as much as the oppressed Indians who planted it in Hertford County.

Smithsonian opinion

Meanwhile, J.N.B. Hewitt of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington had this to say about the name:

"The name Ahoskie is not derived from the Tuscarora language but is a corruption of 'Hanahaski'. No information is available concerning the latter name."

According to other authorities, the Tuscarora did not inhabit the Ahoskie area. It is not known which tribe did, but Indian relics have been found on farms and along

ginia.

William Hayes, who joined the Confederate Army at the age of 16, served until the war's end. He later was the father of Wade Hampton, Marcellus, Pearla, Nelic and Bledsoe Hayes.

Brig. Gen. Wade Hampton Hayes served on the staff of Gen. John J. Pershing in World War I.

Dr. Arnold Hayes, who became a Baptist missionary to Brazil, is a grandson of William Hayes and the son of Marcellus Hayes.

Descendants of Mrs. Ella Baker — daughter of the original home owner — include a daughter-in-law, Mrs. D.P. Baker; a granddaughter, Mrs. Orville Creech; and a grandson, Dr. Thomas Baker of Charlotte.


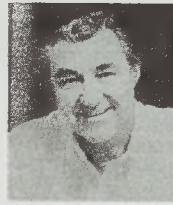

R.A. Hayes also was the father of Ernest Hayes, an Ahoskie businessman, Mrs. W.W. Rogers of Ahoskie, Mrs. Charlie Gaither, Miss Bertha Hayes of Elizabeth

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