

Ahoskie Men's Chorus

Charter members of the Ahoskie Men's Chorus in 1967 were (front row, from left) A.T. Canady, Godwin White, Mrs. E.Y. Jenkins, Charles H. Peele and George Harrell; (middle row) Henry L. Jones, Clarence S. Newsome, Paymond Control

and (top row) William Bazemore Jr., John Sessoms, Robert Ward, Willie Little, William Jones and Raymond Robinson, Not pictured were Hawley J. Newsome and Louis E. Newsome. Mrs. Jenkins organized the chorus. (Photo courtesy of Clarence S. Newsome)

Ahoskie Men's Chorus inspired by local woman

By Clarence S. Newsome Centennial Education Committee AHOSKIE — A group of men from Ahoskie and the surrounding communities met in February, 1969, to form what became known as the Ahoskie Men's Chorus.

The genesis of the organization was inspired and initiated by Mrs. Eliza Y. Jenkins, who, of her own intrinsic motivation, undertook the challenge of becoming the instrumentalist and director of the group for as long as it was active.

Little did the members know, at the beginning, that they would like

the beginning, that they would like what was started as much as they did, as time unfolded.

Original members of the chorus

First tenors: A.T. Canady, Louis E. Newsome, Godwin B. White and C.S. Yeates Jr.

C.S. Yeates Jr.
Second tenors: William Bazemore
Jr., George Harrell, Henry Lee
Jones, Charles H. Peele and Robert Ward. First basses: Clarence S. New-

Second basses: Raymond Grant, William Jones, Hawley J. New-some, Willie Little, Raymond Robinson and Malachi Staten.

The chorus entertained from 1969 to 1991 when adverse circumstances forced a suspension in its performances

The first appearance of the chorus was before a group of area ministers. It was well received; and from that first assignment on March 19, 1969, it moved steadily forward in building a repertoire and filling additional engagements.

The chorus appeared at many gatherings, including the National Elks Convention in Philadelphia; WTAR (Norfolk, Va.) and WITN (Washington, N.C.) television shows; the Scope in Norfolk;

churches in Elizabeth City, Suf-folk, Va., and Portsmouth, Va.; Chowan College in Murfreesboro; the Gallery Theatre in Ahoskie; and most of the area schools and churches.

churches.

The first president of the chorus was Raymond Robinson.

Through the years, death claims the lives of many original members. However, with replacements and the dedication of surviving members, the chorus continued to provide a service of music whenever. provide a service of music whenever possible — until adverse circum-stances in 1991 forced the group into inactive status indefinitely.

into mactive status indefinitely.

The last person to serve as president of was William D. Jones.

The Ahoskie Men's Chorus solicited and received abundant support and encouragement in its effort to make life a little better through

Believe it or not! 'USS Ahoskie' exists as large Navy tug

By Ramona S. Goode
Retired News Editor
Yes, Ralph, there is a ship named
USS Ahoskie.
There is a distinct possibility that
some might not refer to it as a
ship, because it is designated YTB
(Large Harbor Tug) 804 by the
Navy.
The fact there is such a boat came
to light in a rather unique and unusual way.

to light in a rather unsul usual way.

Back in August, 1978, Ralph
Basnight and his wife were on a
tour of Ireland with some University of North Carolina alumni.

While in a large Irish department
store, Switzer and Company Ltd.,
he was waiting "patiently" for his
wife to buy some material and was
browsing around when he saw three young Irish boys looking at some

"I noticed one of them, the smallest one, had a Navy patch of some type on his shoulder that read USS Ahoskie," Basnight explained.

OSS Anoskie," Basnight explained.

Irish boys wear patch
Basnight stopped the boy and asked him where he got the patch.
His older brother said he got it in Germany for his young brother.

"The older youth first told me the patch was bought in Germany," he said

Basnight said he explained to the boys that Ahoskie was his hometown of approximately 5,000 peo-

town of approximately 5,000 peo-ple.

"I even showed them my driver's license to show that I had not made up the story. They weren't too im-pressed," Basnight said with a laugh.

Basnight said the boys could not tell him what type of ship it was or why they bought that particular patch.

patch.
"I thought about asking him if I could buy the patch but then decided I would not," Basnight said.
He did not give the matter much more thought, he said, until he arrived home and mentioned it to Joe Parker, then the publisher of The News-Herald and other area non-daily newspapers.

Parker, then the publisher of The News-Herald and other area non-daily newspapers.

Search for ship
Then the search was on. With the help of a staff reporter, it was learned that a publication, called Jane's Fighting Ships, listed all such vessels that had been constructed.

structed. With the assistance of Louise Boone, director of the Albemarle Regional Library, it was soon discovered that there actually was and is a ship by the name of USS

Ahoskie.
Constructed by Peterson Builders Inc., the keel for the tug was laid June 6, 1970, at Sturgeon Bay, Wis, It was later launched on Jan. 14, 1969. The USS Ahoskie was delivered to the Navy on July 10, 1970.
Then a call was made to the naval base at Norfolk, Va., where Commander Jerry Pope said he would give all of the assistance that he could. Later a telephone call was received from Carl Nandrasy, deputy public affairs officers at the Charleston (S.C.) Naval Base.
Ship found at Charleston

Ship found at Charleston

Ship found at Charleston
"Yes, there is a USS Ahoskie and
it is now in service here in
Charleston," he said.
Asked where the name originated,
Nandrasy said he did not know but
that all naval tugs were named for
small Indian tribes.
The USS Ahoskie is one of the
83 largest harbor tugs in the Navy.
In addition to it, there are four other
YTBs assigned to the Service Craft
Branch in the Port Services Department at the Charleston Naval
Base.
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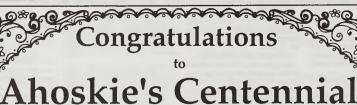
Base.

The primary mission of the USS Ahoskie is to assist in mooring and unmooring Naval ships entering and leaving the Naval station in the Cooper River, which is adjacent to the naval base, and in their docking

Cooper River, which is adjacent to the naval base, and in their docking and unloading at the shipyard.
YTB-804 displaces 350 tons fully loaded, is 109 feet long and 35 feet abeam and has a draft of 13.6 feet.
Propelled by one 10-cylinder Fairbanks-Morse diesel engine that drives the single shaft and propeller, she has a 2,000-gallon-per-minute fire pump that is used to fight fires on other ships and at piers.
Her crew of seven is headed by a chief boatswain's mate, Christopher C. Elmore of Blytheville, Ark. Rated as a tugmaster-craftmaster, Elmore is a Navy veteran of 18 years and has commanded the USS Ahoskie for 18 months.
The remainder of the crew is made up of two enginemen, an electrician, a fireman, a cook and a seaman. The seaman, Michalia Runice, is a woman.
The YTB-804 has living quarters for 10 persons and a galley (kitchen) where meals are prepared for the crew while the ship is a sea.

Editor's note: A copy of this article as it appeared in the Nov. 8, 1978 issue of The News-Herald was supplied by Mrs. Martha Hope Basnight Smith.





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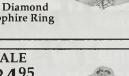
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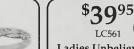
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