



**Atlantic District Fairgrounds**

The Atlantic District Fair Association has maintained these grounds on Holloman Avenue in Ahoskie for 73 years. Among

the festivities planned for this fair in September is standardbred horse racing on the half-mile oval track.

# 73-year-old Atlantic District Fair promotes agriculture, citizenship

By Clarence S. Newsome  
*ADFA President*

The Atlantic District Fair Association was organized Oct. 28, 1919, with headquarters in Ahoskie. W.D. Brown of Winton was elected temporary chairman.

A board of directors, consisting of 13 members, was elected Nov. 11, 1919, and capital stock of \$10,000 was established.

On Dec. 16, 1919, the capital stock was increased to \$20,000.

Other members of the board of directors were Wright J. Jenkins, J.S. Sills, C.P. McGlohon, C.S. Yeates and J.E. Hall, all of Ahoskie; C.C. Watson of Harrellsville; G.C. Reid of Murfreesboro; P.A. Bishop and W.S. Creecy, both of Rich Square; G.W. Watford of Colerain; Luke Moore of Cofield; and C.D. Nickens of Winton.

Then the stockholders relieved Brown as temporary chairman, and Wright J. Jenkins, great-uncle of the current president, was elected the first president of the Atlantic District Fair Association.

At the end of December the asso-

ciation provided the president with the necessary amount of money to pay on real estate as due by or on Jan. 1, 1920.

**25-acre plot bought**

Subsequently, a 25-acre plot of pristine property was purchased to become the fairgrounds. It is on the north side of East Holloman Avenue, just west of the campus of Robert L. Vann School.

The association's meeting on Jan. 12, 1920, was highlighted by a report from the bylaws committee which, after reiterating the name and home office of the association, stipulated that "the object of the Association shall be: To promote the Agricultural, Industrial, Educational and Moral development of the people."

The following month, on Feb. 16, the association received its charter of incorporation.

Some years after formulating the original objective of the Atlantic District Fair Association and after having been approved by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture

and having become a member of the North Carolina Association of Agricultural Fairs, the bylaws were modified to say that the aims and purposes of the association shall be:

- 1, To cooperate with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and the North Carolina Association of Agricultural Fairs.

- 2, To promote the development and improvement of the community in the areas of economics, environmental protection and human resources.

- 3, To foster programs and activities which will develop leadership and promote the general welfare of the citizens of the area.

On Sept. 28, 1920, an advertising committee was appointed, and the general secretary, Brown, was empowered to appoint a race track committee.

**The early years**

In the early years, before the state made health requirements necessary for the handling of food, many stockholder families owned wooden concession stands which they oper-

ated for a minimal fee paid to the association. The stands were operated in a line on the southwest side of the midway, close to the fence.

Also, constructed out of wood, was a combination grandstand and a two-story exhibition building, a judges' stand across the racetrack in front of the grandstand, stalls for livestock and many stables for race horses in the far northwest corner of the fairgrounds.

In 1947, a 500-seat brick and masonry grandstand and two-story exhibit building were constructed to replace the wooden structure that had been destroyed by fire. Later a cement-block judges' stand, multi-unit concession stand and 30 race horse stables were constructed to replace wooden structures.

Since 1920, the Atlantic District Fairgrounds have been the site of such recreational and commercial activities as baseball games, Fourth of July celebrations, outdoor Easter events, picnics, cookouts, a landing strip for aircraft, family reunions,

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# Life was different almost 100 years ago for resident

Life was different for Mrs. Vancie Flood Parker as a child than it is for children of today.

This is her story as it was told to the R.L. Vann School Junior Historians in 1983 almost 100 years after her birth.

They had horses and carts instead of cars for transportation.

Mrs. Parker lived in Winton, near C.S. Brown School, one of seven children in the family. They worked on a farm, although they didn't always live on one.

She worked for 30 cents a day, from sunrise to sundown, chopping the fields with a hoe. The family worked in cotton, corn and peanuts. Later they worked in tobacco. But she worked one day in tobacco, and that was enough.

**Kerosene lamps, stoves**  
Mrs. Parker's early home had kerosene lamps for light and wood stoves to cook and to keep warm. The toilet was outside — as most were in those days. Newspapers and magazines were used for tissue.

Ice boxes — not electric refrigerators — kept food cool. A man would come around selling ice that home owners would buy and store in the ice boxes.

When family members got sick, other relatives would try to take care of them as best they could. For a cold or cough, turpentine would be mixed with sugar and swallowed, and tallow (fat meat) would be rubbed on the chest. For fevers, a "planter's lead" would be crushed and put on the head.

Mrs. Parker attended Waters Training School, which is today's C.S. Brown School. She lived close enough to walk to school and go home for lunch, but some students boarded there. The school had a well for water and a coal stove for heat.

School was fun for her. It began at about 8:30 a.m., when the bell was rung.

Children who lived out of town would be brought to school by their parents. They would stay in the dormitory and go home on the weekend or the end of the month.

The students were taught the three R's — reading, writing and arithmetic. Mrs. Parker finished the second year of high school.

She got a job as a cook at one of the two hotels in Winton. She also helped her family around the house.

**Parents make everything**

Her parents made everything they needed, including pillows and mattresses. To make pillows, they would use soft downy feathers from chickens, geese, turkeys and ducks, saving the feathers until they had enough. Mothers would hand down their mattresses or pillows when the children married.

Sometimes, Mrs. Parker said, they would order from catalogs. The goods would come by train. They could go to Norfolk by train to shop, leaving at 5 a.m. and getting back at 8 p.m.

The railroad came through Ahoskie in 1885. Many passengers and merchants used it. It would have four or five passenger cars and then some for parcels.

The first car that her father bought was an Overland in 1910.

**Likes to play outside**

"I used to love to play out of doors," Mrs. Parker said. "We played baseball, and I rode horseback. I had dolls to play with — both China dolls and rag dolls. My playmate was Annie Parker, whose father was *The Herald* newspaperman."

"My earliest school was heated with a tin heater. It was in a wooden building that was on the corner where *The* (former) *News-Herald* is today. The school went through the eighth grade. In the ninth, I went to Chowan to attend high school. I specialized in art and music. I went there for four-and-a-half years and then stopped to get married."

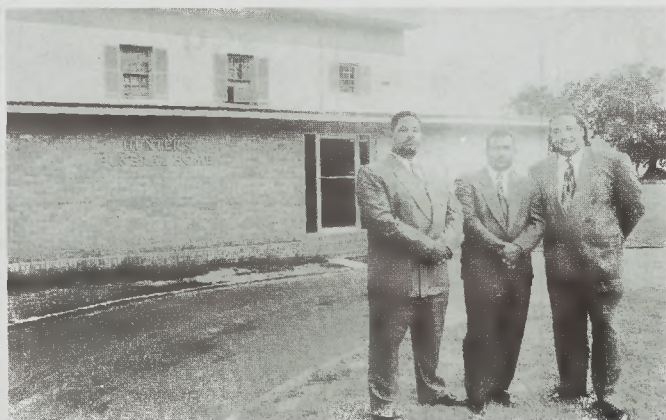
"When I went to Chowan, I would go from here to Tunis on the train, get on a boat called the *Calumet* and ride it to Murfreesboro. Someone from the college would meet the boat and take us in a carriage up the hill to the college."

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