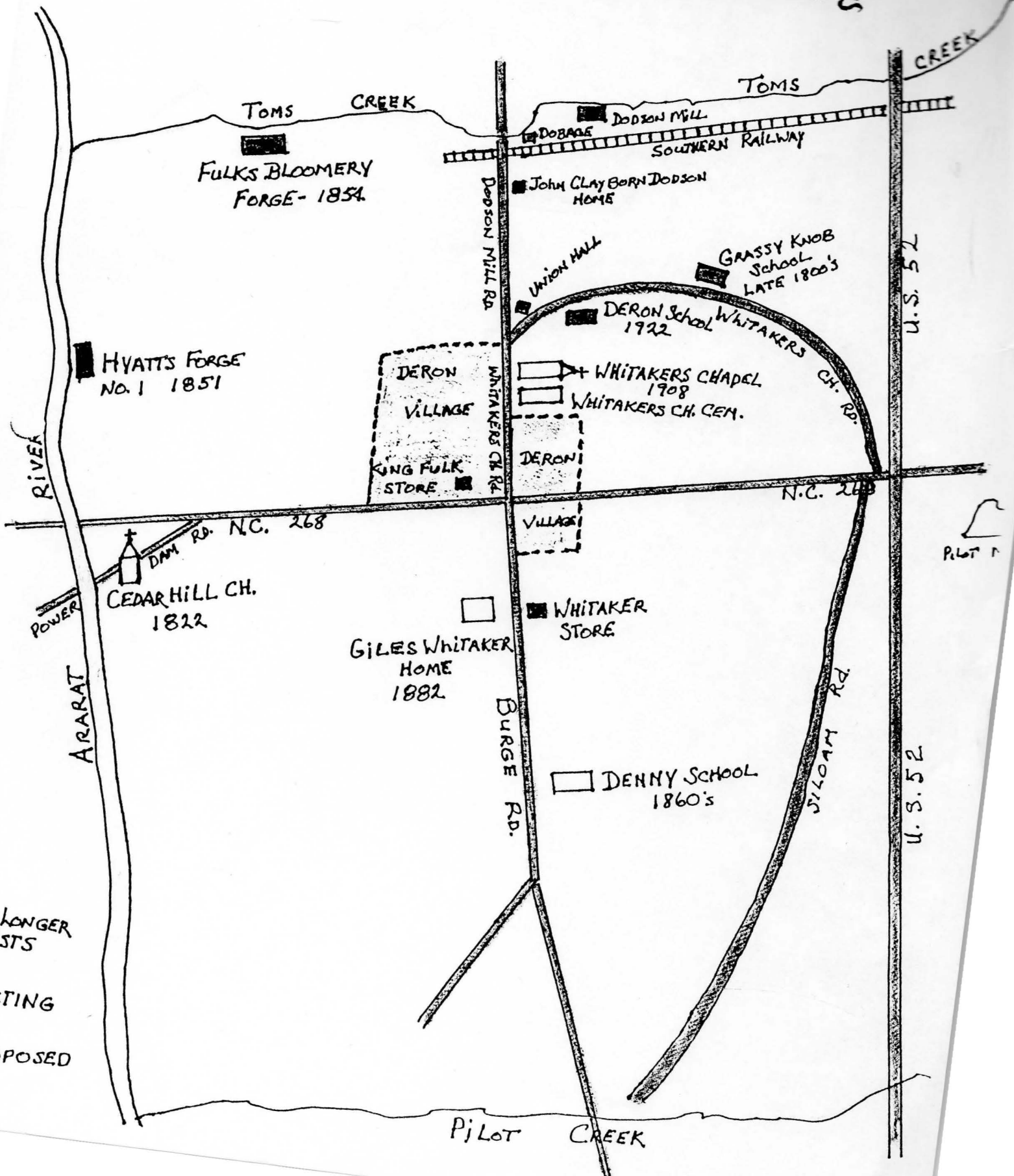


# THE DERON COMMUNITY



No longer  
exists  
Existing  
Proposed

## DERON VILLAGE

Welcome to Deron Village! We are pleased that you are considering making your home here with us in the old Deron community. Although the name Deron has not been used in recent years, the community has a long and interesting past, the highlights of which are presented in this paper. In order that you may better understand the history of our community, the enclosed map outlining the perimeters of the community, the important former schools, churches and commercial enterprises should help to orient you. It is our hope that this history will, in some small measure, convey to you the pride we have in our community and the warmth of our welcome to you.

The Deron community lies approximately two miles west of the town of Pilot Mountain, and is bounded on the west by the Ararat River, on the south by Pilot Creek, on the north by Toms Creek and on the east by the Shoals Road. The area was first settled by pioneers migrating from Virginia, Pennsylvania and other northern areas between 1784 and 1800. They brought with them names like; Sumner, Meeks, Denny, Johnson and Wooten, and as the migration continued names such as Fulk, Needham, Dodson, Jones and Chandler were added to the Deron community. Many direct descendents of those early pioneers still reside in the community today. As might be imagined agriculture was then as now the principal land use in the community with crops such

as tobacco, corn and wheat, along with the raising of livestock being the principal sources of income. During the period 1800-1860, the community grew slowly as more homes were established away from the river and streams where the first pioneers obtained their land grants. For the most part during these years families depended upon the food they raised, made their own clothing as well as shoes, thread and countless other items needed for survival. Quilts were hand made primarily from used clothing scraps, and were a necessity in poorly heated homes. It must be kept in mind that in these years roads ranged from poor to non-existent and self sufficiency was the order of the day. It was during this period in 1832 that the present day town of Pilot Mountain was established. In that year (1832) a post office was established in the settlement then known as Toms Creek named for a nearby stream, which was later to adopt the name of the nearby famous landmark, Pilot Mountain. During this period there were no known schools in the community as education was not yet prized very highly, and what education children received was given at home or they were sent to boarding schools outside the community. As the decade of the 1850's came to a close, tremendous changes were on the horizon that would change forever the way of life that had existed in our community since the first pioneers put a plow in the ground.

War, railroads, schools, churches all were waiting in the wings to be ushered in during the next three decades. As the country plunged into civil war in 1861, men of the Deron

community answered the call to the colors in large numbers. Their names can be found inscribed on many hallowed battle-grounds such as Cold Harbor, Gettysburg, Fredricksburg and many more. As the period of national fratricide ended in 1865, life in the community returned to more or less normal with the difficulties of reconstruction to follow. One far sighted member of the community, Joel Denny, had in the 1850's constructed a one room log school for his children and possibly some of the neighborhood children. Shortly after the Civil War, Joel Denny and his son Bird built a one room, weather boarded school on his land to insure that his grandchildren and others in the neighborhood were afforded the opportunity of at least a rudimentary education. This one room school house is still standing and is thought to be the only one of its type remaining in the county. It is interesting to note that the former Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, Emory Denny received his early education in this school. The school house is located on Burge Road at the home of Mrs. Nell McKinney, a great granddaughter of Joel Denny. This school marked the beginning of the formal education process in the Deron Community. In 1905 when the county and the state became actively involved in public education, David J. Denny and his wife deeded the one acre lot and the Denny school building to the Surry County Board of Education for \$8.00. The state operated the school until it was consolidated with the Grassy Knob School in 1922. The Board of Education then sold the old school and lot to J. Willis Denny for \$325.00. The Grassy Knob School

was located on the Whitakers Chapel Road on the site of the present day home of Mr. Tony Tucker. Mrs. Etta Venable had in her possession a photograph of the school and its students taken around 1909 and published in the Mt. Airy News in 1978. In this article she states that the school was a one room log structure with weather boarding on the outside. It met the same fate as the Denny school and was closed late in 1922. The property was sold to Mr. J.M. Napier by the Board of Education on April 16, 1923 for \$400.00. The students then transferred to the Deron school a short distance up the Whitakers Chapel Road to the present site of the Gerald Warde home. This school was a weather boarded building with long rows of windows on the front. A large central room could be used for plays or church services if needed, and when needed for classrooms a divider or partition was put in place. A photograph exists taken about 1925-26 of two teachers and a large group of the students. This school operated in the community until 1935-36 when it along with many outlying schools were consolidated into the county's nine high schools. The site and the building were sold by the Board of Education to J. Coy Smith and his wife on December 7, 1938 for \$286.00. Children from the Deron School then went to the Pilot Mountain High School which housed grades one through eleven.

Prior to the Civil War only one church stood in the community, that being the Cedar Hill Primitive Baptist Church which was organized in 1822 and is located on a hill near the

Ararat River, on land believed to have been donated by William or Azariah Denny. Additional land for the present structure was donated by the children of Azariah Denny on June 25, 1904. The first church was a log structure and was later replaced by a weather boarded building built by Bird Denny and later covered with brick. Windows that were hand built by Bird Denny were removed and given to those who gave financial support to the renovation project. It has a large well maintained cemetery. It was not until the founding of Whitakers Chapel United Methodist Church in 1908 that a second church came to the community. The land for the church was deeded to church trustees Giles Whitaker, Claude Jones and C.L. Chandler by Armita Flinchum, J. Luther and Betty Flinchum Holland, and Henry R. and Eliza Flinchum Denny. The building was completed in 1912 in the same location as the present day church. A fire completely destroyed the church in 1950 and was rebuilt the same year of brick. A new fellowship hall and front portico were added in 1995. Websters cemetery borders the church property and was the community cemetery prior to the establishment of the church. The cemetery is now known as the Whitakers Chapel cemetery.

During the long history of the Deron community, there were but few commercial enterprises. John Clayborn Dodson (1831-1891) a successful farmer established a mill on the banks of Toms Creek where he ground flour and corn meal for his customers. Thus todays Dodson Mill Road, and other road sections are named

for this early entrepreneur. The mill operated from 1872 until the early 1920's. He and his sons also founded a tobacco factory in Pilot Mountain. One of the earliest business activities in the Deron community were the iron forges. Iron ore was mined in the surrounding area and brought to one of two forges in the community. They were; Hyatts Forge No. 1 located on the Ararat River, and Fulks Bloomery Forge located on Toms Creek. Hyatts Forge dates from 1851 and Fulks Bloomery Forge dates from 1854. These forges were instrumental in providing iron works for the Confederacy during 1861-1865. Few traces of them survive today. A small store was operated in the Union Hall by Ellis Dodson serving the community with home and farm essentials. Likewise a small store building was erected across the road from the home of Giles Whitaker, later the home of Willis and Betty Denny. This store was located on the left side of the driveway entrance to the present day home of J.W. Denny Jr. on Burge Road. Another store was operated by King Fulk from his home located where the present home of Mrs. Helen Denny is situated on the corner of Whitakers Chapel Road and N.C. 268, The final thriving business in the community was Denny's Dairy, a large commercial dairy owned and operated by Gordon Denny and his sons. This dairy operated from 1926 until its closing in 1949. It was a grade A dairy and supplied milk to the residents of Pilot Mountain and to the schools. No present day businesses are in operation in the community. In the 1880's a remarkable event occurred with the inauguration of railway service between Winston Salem and

and Mt. Airy. This line provided both passenger and freight service. It was a boon to the community when a passenger stop began operation at Dobage which was located near the present day intersection of the Dodson Mill Road and Toms Creek. What was then an overnight trip to Winston Salem became a journey of a mere two hours. The railroad's contribution to the early development of commerce both by the influx and outflow of commodities to and from this community cannot be overstated. The railway station at Dobage was discontinued in 1925.

How did the Deron community get its name? Well, we know who named it, but we do not know the significance of the name. Up until the very late 1800's, there was no mail delivery nearer to the community than the post office in Pilot Mountain. Postal authorities came to David J. Denny in 1894 and sought his help in establishing three "Star" postal routes for this area. Mr. Denny was then a Magistrate and Justice of the Peace for the area. He was given the responsibility for naming the three routes on which mail would be delivered by coach or horseback and residents could come to that designated location and pick up their mail and post outgoing mail. Mr. Denny named the immediate area as the Deron Post Office, which was located in the home of Giles Whitaker. The post office was in the front room of his residence. The other "Star" routes named by Mr. Denny were the Wesley Post Office located near what is now the Siloam area, and the Dale Post Office located near the Shoals community. The Deron Post Office opened on June 7, 1894 and was closed



on August 15, 1904. After that date mail delivery for residents was divided between the Pilot Mountain and Pinnacle Post Offices.

The only organization that we know of that was located in the Deron community was that of the Union Hall or Lodge as it was called. It is believed that this organization was a fore runner of the present day Farm Bureau. Its membership was open to both men and women, and it sold farm essentials to its membership. The Union Hall was located on the land that forms the fork of the Dodson Mill Road and the Whitakers Chapel Road. It was however, situated much closer to the road than the present day home of Roland Chilton.

We realize that the history of the Deron community is really the stories of the hundreds of families that have gone before us, each of whom contributed to the wonderful community that we enjoy today. That time and space do not permit us to tell each of those stories, but rather only to relate some of the more significant events in the life of this community. We hope that this little history has given you some insight into the background of the area that we sincerely hope you will decide to call home. However that decision is made please know that you are always welcome in the old Deron community.