



On the earliest map of Surry County, the 1749 Peter Jefferson (father of Thomas)-Joshua Frye map, Fisher River is designated as "Fishe." A William Fishe lived at its mouth. The story, though, comes after the time of the map.

This is from Hollingsworth's history, the Archibald Murphey papers, and the Moravian Diary.

After the French and Indian War the Indians became more unfriendly. One could hardly blame them. Near the mouth of Fisher River a man named William Fishe and his son were killed by the Indians. A companion named Thompson was wounded. He was pierced with an arrow in his hip and, as he was trying to get away, he was shot through the shoulder with a second arrow which went all the way through. He was afraid to remove the arrow because of the danger of bleeding to death. So he made his way to the Moravian settlement at Bethabara. "In this condition he crossed the Yadkin River to escape the savages. As night approached it began to rain. A new band of warriors forced him to recross the Yadkin and make his way along the Little Yadkin, then to Town Fork, and at last coming from the Upper Sauratown (Indian village in the vicinity of Westfield), to Bethabara, he made his way to the settlement and gave the alarm. Thompson was twenty-four hours in making this journey. The following day the arrow was removed by Dr. Bonn, but the heroic Thompson died of his wound."

The Moravians' story had a happier ending. They said that Dr. Bonn took out the arrow from Thompson's shoulder and "saved his life." They also stated that they sent out a party the next day to bury the bodies of Fishe and his son but the Indians were out in full force and they had to turn back. They also said that Fishe and his son came by to get Thompson to go with them to get some provisions for the families gathered at a certain place on the Yadkin. Some miles up the river they happened upon a party of Indians, who fired at them and then shot many arrows." The date noted was March 9, 1760 when Thompson came into the Moravian settlement. Tradition states that Daniel Boone later came upon the bodies and buried them.



8-15-75 (News)



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Fisher River History

On the earliest map of Surry County, the 1749 Peter Jefferson (father of Thomas)—Joshua Frye map, Fisher River is designated as "Fishe". A William Fishe lived at its mouth. The story, though, comes after the time of the map.

This is from Hollingsworth's history, the Archibald Murphey papers, and the Moravian Diary.

After the French and Indian War the Indians became more unfriendly. One could hardly blame them. Near the mouth of Fisher River a man named William Fishe and his son were killed by the Indians. A companion named Thompson was wounded. He was pierced with an arrow at his hip and, as he was trying to get away, he was shot through the shoulder with a second arrow which went all the way through. He was afraid to remove the arrow because of the danger of bleeding to death. So he made his way to the Moravian settlement at Bethabara. "In this condition he crossed the Yadkin River to escape the savages. As night approached it began to rain. A new band of warriors forced him to recross the Yadkin and make his way along the Little Yadkin, then to Town Fork, and at last coming from the Upper Sauratown", (Indian village in the vicinity of Westfield), to Bethabara, he made his way to the settlement and gave the alarm. Thompson was twenty four hours in making this journey. The following day the arrow was removed by Dr. Bonn, but the heroic Thompson died of his wound."

The Moravians' story had a happier ending. They said that Dr. Bonn took out the arrow from Thompson's shoulder and "saved his life." They also stated that they sent out a party the next day to bury the bodies of Fishe and his son but the Indians were out in full force and they had to turn back. They also said that Fishe and his son came by to get Thompson to go with them to get some provisions for "the families gathered at a certain place on the Yadkin. Some miles up the river they happened upon a party of Indians, who fired at them and then shot many arrows." The date noted was March 9, 1760 when Thompson came into the Moravian settlement. Tradition states that Daniel Boone later came upon the bodies and buried them.





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Got His Come-Uppence

As late as 1770 marauding bands of Cherokees were still roving the Hollow which was the region drained roughly by the three forks of the "Tararat"; Stuart's (Stewart's) Creek, the "west fork"; Lovings (Lovill's), the "middle fork"; and Rentfrow's Creek, (We call it the Ararat), the "east fork".

The Indians had just cause for grievance. Treaties were habitually broken. One young fellow who broke one got his come-uppence. He trespassed upon Indian huntinggrounds where no white person was supposed to go.

This is the story from the Murphey papers at Chapel Hill.

"This incident is supposed to have occurred sometime between 1765 and 1770. A party of three white men were camped near the mouth of the Watauga River when they were attacked by a party of Indians. The two Linville brothers were killed while John Williams, a youth of sixteen years, was wounded.

"John Williams was shot through the thigh and the bone fractured severely. He ran about fifty yards before the bone gave way and he fell. The Indians did not go in search of him, but gathered up their skins and game, and catching up their best horses they went off.

"Williams, crawling on his hands, found an old horse at the camp. He tied a piece of rope in the horse's mouth for a bridle and then crawled on to a log and mounted the horse, and with his leg broken rode from near the mouth of the Watauga to the Hollows in Surry before he came to a house.

"He was five days on this journey without anything to eat except blackberries. He was nearly exhausted when he reached the house. He was taken care of, got nearly well, had another alarm and the bone was broken the second time. But he recovered and lived to an old age in Surry, where he later became a justice of the peace."

Men were tough in those days



*The Ireland  
Sept - 1975*

By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Land Speculators

Land speculators must have had fun a-plenty up in the Hollows (land around Mount Airy) and other Surry County places before the Revolutionary War. Many hundreds of acres were sold or given to certain individuals by the Earl of Granville and his heirs, and then sold and resold at a profit.

Granville grants are traced in some old Surry County deeds as far back as 1756 when land along Stewart's Creek was granted to our old shifty friend, Martin Armstrong, who also received grants up and down the Ararat as well, and to a Frederick Fulkerson who received land in that year along Lovill's Creek.

Another original Granville grant along Lovill's Creek was to a Patrick Coyle (Cole?). Land along Rentfrow's Creek (Mount Airy's Ararat) went to an Andrew Ferguson, a William Dalton, and to a William Hall.

Huge tracts along Stewart's Creek went to a "gentleman of Ireland", Major Andrew Bailey, who gave an American lawyer his power of attorney. Andrew Ferguson also bought up land along Stewart's Creek.

Morgan Bryant, who lived over in low Yadkin, had huge grants along the Yadkin at Siloam.

After 1777 grants were made to individuals by the state, North Carolina having seized the land from the Granville heirs. It is interesting to note that there were more grants because probably more settlers came in.

There must have been settlers here before 1749 when the first map of Surry County was drawn by Surveyors Jefferson and Frye. The name "Mount" is written where the town of Mount Airy is; Loven along Lovill's Creek—Loven being its original name; Peter King at the head of Little Fisher River. By 1170 there was a Johnson's Creek and there are plenty of Johnsons around; an Isaac's Creek and the name Isaac is still around; a King's Creek, a Mitchell's River, a Rentfrow Creek; a Stuart's Creek; a Paul's Creek; a Hogan's Creek, and, of course, Fishe River, changed before 1770 to Fisher River.

Such were the days before adequate record keeping.



**SURRY**

**76**

**SOMETHING  
MORE**

*The News  
Sept. 5-75*

By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### March Upcoming

We will just jump ahead of this little continuing historic narrative of Surry County to go to the Revolutionary War and to the Battle of Kings' Mountain which was a crucial turning point in our war for independence.

On September 26 a group of patriotic individuals and groups will begin a 150 mile march from Sycamore Shoals in Tennessee to King's Mountain to re-enact that historic march of the mountain men. Along the route they will be joined by other groups. If you are interested contact Bob Foy, 154 W. Elm St., Mount Airy, or Rip Torn, Appalachian Consortium, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C.

If you remember, we colonists were having a very hard time getting our independence. In 1780 Cornwallis was overrunning the south. Under him was a Major Ferguson who was stationed down around Charlotte and who was to help keep us patriots in line. But we stubborn mountaineers kept giving him trouble. Finally, Major Ferguson sent word that if we didn't stop harassing his troops he would cross the mountains, destroy our crops, and hang our leaders.

That did it. Our feisty mountaineers banded together from all over the mountains, overtook Ferguson at King's Mountain, and won one of the major victories of the war.

Our own Jesse Franklin, twenty years old, then living in the Mitchells River Valley, had a big part in the battle. He rounded up some neighbor boys, among them the Lewis' from around Mountain Park—Charles, James, Joel, John, Micajiah, and William—marched down to Ronda where he joined his Uncle Ben Cleveland who was one of the main leaders. Then, like a snowball, they gathered volunteers along the way, met other mountain men on Rendevous Mountain and at Morganton, and went on down to overtake Ferguson.

The Mountaineers were in such a hurry to get there that they stormed a mountain only to find it was the wrong mountain. To commerate this momentous occasion there is a monument there to the "Surry County Foxhunters."

But no matter, they went on, stormed King's Mountain. Jesse Franklin played so important a part that a British officer, Colonel Ryerson, surrendered his sword to the youth saying, "You deserve it, sir!"

General William Lenoir, whose home, Fort Defiance, near Lenoir is being restored and who was another major leader, afterwards writing about the battle had this to say:

"Before the battle, Adjutant Jesse Franklin, now governor of North Carolina, Captain Robert Cleveland, and myself, agreed to stand together and support each other; but at the commencement of the battle, enthusiastic zeal caused us all to separate. Each being anxious to effect the grand object, no one appeared to regard his own personal safety."

So, let no one belittle Surry County's part in our War for Independence.



*The Jones*  
*Sept. 12*  
*1975*



Land speculators must have had fun a-plenty up in the Hollows (land around Mount Airy) and other Surry County places before the Revolutionary War. Many hundreds of acres were sold or given to certain individuals by the Earl of Granville and his heirs, and then sold and resold at a profit.

Granville grants are traced in some old Surry County deeds as far back as 1756 when land along Stewart's Creek was granted to our old shifty friend, Martin Armstrong, who also received grants up and down the Ararat as well, and to a Frederick Fulkerson who received land in that year along Lovill's Creek.

Another original Granville grants along Lovill's Creek was to a Patrick Coyle (Cole?). Land along Rentfrow's Creek (Mount Airy's Ararat) went to an Andrew Ferguson, a William Dalton, and to a William Hall.

Huge tracts along Stewart's Creek went to a "gentleman of Ireland," Major Andrew Bailey, who gave an American lawyer his power of attorney. Andrew Ferguson also bought up land along Stewart's Creek.

Morgan Bryant, who lived over in now Yadkin, had huge grants along the Yadkin at Siloam.

After 1777 grants were made to individuals by the state, North Carolina having seized the land

from the Granville heirs. It is interesting to note that there were more grants because probably more settlers came in.

There must have been settlers here before 1749 when the first map of Surry County was drawn by Surveyors Jefferson and Frye. The name "Mount" is written where the town of Mount Airy is; Loven along Lovill's Creek—Loven being its original name; Peter King at the head of Little Fisher River. By 1770 there was a Johnson's Creek and there are plenty of Johnsons around; an Isaac's Creek and the name Isaac is still around; a King's Creek, a Mitchell's River, a Rentfrow Creek; a Stuart's Creek; a Paul's Creek; a Hogan's Creek, and of course Fishe River, changed before 1770 to Fisher River.

Such were the days before adequate record keeping.





*The News*  
*Sept. 26-1975*

By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Find Ancestor

Following are some names mentioned in Surry County deeds from 1770 to 1784. If your ancestors came to Surry County before or during that time, you might find an ancestor. "Furriners" whose families came in after 1784 will be excused from reading this column. For those who stick, remember that sometimes family names run out even if there are descendents—the sons might not have had children.

—Rentfrow's Creek (Mount Airy's Ararat). William Preece, Richard Lawrence, Thomas Smith, Nicholas Baker.

—Lovill's Creek. Susanna (Bledsoe) Stuart, Henry Manadue, William Robertson, James Roberts, Jonathan and Stephen Osburn, Thomas Smith, Solomon Nelson, Charles Work.

—Stewart's Creek. John and James Dorchester, James Brown, John Reed, John Roberts, William Porter, John McGee, James Matthews, Joseph Brown, John Fleming, John Lynch, David Stuart, William Phillips, John Lancaster, John Hanna, David Pain, John Bledsoe, William Hardin, Thomas Normand, Matthew Cox, William Rogers, John Burk.

—Johnson's Creek. Nicholas Baker.

—Paul's Creek. John McKinney, James, William and Hugh Armstrong.

—Fisher and Little Fisher's River. Thomas Norman, William Ramsey, Eliphalet Jarvis, James Byson, John Simpson, John and Richard Taliaferro, William Bledsoe, Thomas Dove.

—Tom's Creek. Lewis Conner, James Martin, William Daniel, Uriah Carsons, Micajah Clark, Spencer Ball, John Dunnagan, Nathaniel Joyce, Abraham Codey.

—Ararat River. Robert Harris, John Brown, Samuel Hide, John Johnson, Thomas Ball, Benjamin Cadle.

—Cedar Creek. Joseph Ruthedge.

—Bean Shoals on the Yadkin. (Shoals). James Brown, David Gordon, William Apperson.

—Rockford. John Horn, William Lane, William Burris, John Longino, George Carter.

If you are disturbed that some of your known ancestors are not listed, be calm. Some deeds were not even recorded. Besides, the writer might have overlooked his name.



For a settlement as old as ours there is precious little we know about early time in Surry. Thanks to the early Moravians who kept a Journal we know a little.

Does anybody know about this grave?

1768. Yesterday Br. Loesch went to the Hollow as Coroner, a man having been found dead. He took with him several Brethren from Bethania for the inquest. To all appearances the man was drunk, fell from his horse, and died from cold on the ground." At this point the Moravians later put in this insert: "Tradition says that he was buried where he fell, and the grave is pointed out beside the road from Mount Airy to Mt. Bethel, a little beyond the Virginia line." "The poor widow, who had six little children and expected another son, and was in great need, so a collection had been taken for them."

1768. "The company of Regulators came today with a prisoner and four stolen negroes from The Hollow, whom they were taking to Charleston. One of the Regulators told Br. Loesch confidentially that in fourteen days another and a stronger party would come, and then there would be more to hear. To all appearances the band of highwaymen, recently scattered in the south, have nested in The Hollow."

(We will hear more about this later.)

1774. "Joseph Muller and his wife visited us. He said it was reported that there were Cherokee Indians in The Hollow; that the older Indians did not want war, but the younger ones did, so the older ones were seeking the protection of the white people Time will show what truth there is in this."

It might be said in passing that, as far as this writer knows, the last mention of an Indian in these parts was in the time of the American Revolution when several were chased up as far as Fort Chiswell in Virginia.





Oct. 3-1975  
The News

By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Not Name Droppers

We in Surry County are lucky that the early Moravians of now Forsyth County kept records. They first mentioned us in 1753 when, after slipping and sliding along the wagon road from Pennsylvania, they "saw the Pilot Mountain in North Carolina, and rejoiced to think that we would soon see the boundary of Carolina, and set foot in our own dear land."

Unluckily, the early Moravians were not name droppers except when it came to their own members. We wish they had been.

Their entries of our peoples began in the 1760's. Our settlers, if you remember, had to take refuge from the Indians in their fort at Bethabara. They were probably there on that famous occasion when the Indians were about to attack when they were startled by the sound of the famous Moravian horns.

Our settlers also showed some spirit when a favorite leader of theirs was fired from his job and they threatened to quit work. Strike even then? But, thinking better of it since they were the dependents, they went back to work.

Following are some interesting entries from the Moravian Journals—interesting because nobody else wrote about us in the 1760's.

Feb. 20, 1762. "This week a wagon road has been opened from the Hollow to Bethania".

Nov. 12, 1762. "Several Virginia gentlemen came to see Bethabara...They went from here to the Hollow to survey some land."

Entries from 1763:

"Today Esquire Hughes married three couples from the Hollow in our Tavern."

"Two brothers had climbed the rock of the Pilot...From the top one sees the Brushy Mountains and the Blue Mountains and a high range beyond New River. Otherwise, the land, far and wide, looks like a beautiful plain."

"Today people from the Hollow brought 1200 lbs. of meal at our mill..."

"Several Brethren from Bethania went to the Pilot for whetstones."

"In these days we hear all manner of terrifying reports about the Indians. One was captured in the Hollow, but escaped as he was being brought hither."

"Jacob van der Mark has gone bear hunting. There are many bears this year in the Hollow and about Pilot Mountain."



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Early Religion

The Moravians in their early Journals told us the only things we know about religion in early times in our section, the Quakers of Westfield excepted. The following entries are enlightening.

From the Wachovia Summary of 1764. "At the request of neighbors Br. Ettwein preached at various places in English and German. During this time he preached for the first time in The Hollow."

—1764. "The Brn. Ettwein and Gammern rode to The Hollow, having been often invited to come and see the neighbors and their settlement."

—1765. "Br. Ettwein returned from The Hollow, where he preached yesterday morning in English in Dorchester's house, and baptized seven children of settlers in that neighborhood. As they asked for another service in the afternoon he read to them the story of Our Lord's Passion, to which they listened attentively." (Dorchester's house was probably on Stewart's Creek.)

—From the 1766 Memorabilia from Wachovia. "Br. Richard Utley came to us in October from Pennsylvania, and since then he has not only preached here in English from time to time, but he has done the same for our neighbors in The Hollow and on the Yadkin...."

—"Mr. Harris, a well-known Baptist from Virginia, visited here to acquaint himself with our doctrine and constitution and to talk with us. We hope this may be for his good and the good of those to whom he preaches, for at this time the Baptists are the only ones in the country who go far and wide preaching and caring for souls."

—(This should be interesting to Baptists. The Moravian account shows that they were in Surry before even the Quakers in Westfield. The Methodists did not come to these parts until around 1817—Bishop Asbury who came near The Hollow did not think we were important enough to bother with, evidently).

—1766. "Br. Utley has been to The Hollow, where he preached in Mr. Dorchester's house, to a fairly good audience. He declined to administer baptism, however, until he should know the people better, and could see whether the Word of God bore fruit among them, and whether they could promise to bring up their children in the right way—this precaution is very necessary with people of this kind." ("People of this kind", hurts, doesn't it? But it is true we were not educated, there being no schools. Many of our most prominent signed their names with an "X".)





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Looking For Graves

For a settlement as old as ours there is precious little we know about early time in Surry. Thanks to the early Moravians who kept a journal we know a little.

Does anybody know about this grave?

—1768. Yesterday Br. Loesch went to the Hollow as Coroner, a man having been found dead. He took with him several Brethren from Bethania for the inquest. To all appearances the man was drunk, fell from his horse, and died from cold on the ground." At this point the Moravians later put in this insert: "Tradition says that he was buried where he fell, and the grave is pointed out beside the road from Mount Airy to Mt. Bethel, a little beyond the Virginia line.") "The poor widow, who had six little children and expected another one, and was in great need, so a collection had been taken for them."

—1768. "The company of Regulators came today with a prisoner and four stolen negroes from The Hollow, whom they were taking to Charlestown. One of the Regulators told Br. Loesch confidentially that in fourteen days another and a stronger party would come, and then there would be more to hear. To all appearances the band of highwaymen, recently scattered in the south, have nested in The Hollow."

(We will hear more about this later.)

—1774. "Joseph Muller and his wife visited us. He said it was reported that there were Cherokee Indians in The Hollow; that the older Indians did not want war, but the younger ones did, so the older ones were seeking the protection of the white people. Time will show what truth there is in this."

It might be said in passing that, as far as this writer knows, the last mention of an Indian in these parts was in the time of the American Revolution when several were chased up as far as Fort Chiswell in Virginia.



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### JESSE FRANKLIN

Just what kind of a teenage boy could a father trust to ride through virgin wilderness in search of a home for his father in that wilderness?

Jesse Franklin (b.1760-d.1823) was that kind of a boy.

When just 16 or 17 years old Jesse left his home in Orange County, Virginia, rode down to beautiful Mitchell's River Valley in Surry County to choose a home for his father, Bernard, and family. Furthermore, his father trusted his judgment.

Jesse, the third son of his father, all through his life proved himself a most unusual fellow. He was Surry's greatest man, and a man of great national repute.

As a teenager, Jesse displayed such fighting skill at the Battle of King's Mountain that one of the major British officers surrendered his sword to him saying, "You deserve it, sir!" Since King's Mountain was one of the major turning points in the war and since Jesse played such a prominent part in that great victory, it just might be that without Jesse we would not have gotten our independence.

Jesse fought in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse which so weakened the British that they surrendered soon after. It was just by luck and his skill that Jesse narrowly missed being cut down by a British dragoon as his best friend, Richard Taliaferro. It fell to Jesse's lot to take home the possessions of his dead friend to the widow and children and to listen to the howls of the friend's hound dogs when they smelled the clothes of their master.

It was Jesse who narrowly missed being hanged when the Tories captured him when he was trying to slip home to take some salt. The Tories had strung up Jesse with his own horse's bridle, left him on his horse, and then commanded him to take the British oath of allegiance. This brave Jesse refused to do. The Tories gave the horse a whack which should have left Jesse dangling. Instead, the bridle broke and Jesse bounded off into the blue before his enemies could get their rifles cocked.

It was this plain country boy from the backwoods who was elected to Congress who so impressed his colleagues of the Senate that they made him speaker pro tem.

And it was this same Jesse who cut the ruffles off his new coat with his pen knife saying that he didn't like them, and that the folks back home wouldn't like it. And it was Jesse who declined to have his portrait painted so that even now we do not know what he looked like. And it was Jesse whom the people of North Carolina elected as the governor of their state.

A great, unusual public servant was Jesse Franklin.





The Moravians in their early Journals told us the only things we know about religion in early times in our section, the Quakers of Westfield excepted. The following entries are enlightening.

From the Wachovia Summary of 1764. "At the request of neighbors Br. Ettwein preached at various places in English and German. During this time he preached for the first time in The Hollow."

1764. "The Br. Ettwein and Gammern rode to The Hollow, having been often invited to come and see the neighbors and their settlement."

1765. "Br. Ettwein returned from The Hollow, where he preached yesterday morning in English in Dorchester's house, and baptized seven children of settlers in that neighborhood. As they asked for another service in the afternoon he read to them the story of Our Lord's Passion, to which they listened attentively." (Dorchester's house was probably on Stewart's Creek.)

From the 1766 Memorabilia

from Wachovia. "Br. Richard Utley came to us in October from Pennsylvania, and since then he has not only preached here in English from time to time, but he has done the same for our neighbors in The Hollow and on the Yadkin...."

"Mr. Harris, a well-known Baptist from Virginia, visited here to acquaint himself with our doctrine and constitution and to talk with us. We hope this may be for his good and the good of those to whom he preaches, for at this time the Baptists are the only ones in the country who go far and wide preaching and caring for souls."

(This should be interesting to Baptists. The Moravian account shows that they were in Surrey before even the Quakers in Westfield. The Methodists did not come to these parts until around 1817—Bishop Asbury who came near The Hollow did not think we were important enough to bother with, evidently.)

1766. "Br. Utley has been to the Hollow, where he preached in Mr. Dorchester's house, to a fairly good audience. He declined to administer baptism, however, until he should know the people better, and could see whether the Word of God bore fruit among them, and whether they could promise to bring up their children in the right way—this precaution is very necessary with people of this kind." (people of this kind", hurts, doesn't it?) But it is true we were not educated, there being no schools. Many of our most prominent signed their names with an "X".



7600.26-1975

## About Surry County

Hear ye, hear ye, of the account of Revolutionary War soldier James Boyd who, because he had lost his discharge papers, had to prove to an Oct., 1832, Patrick County court that he, indeed, had been a Revolutionary War soldier of Surry County and so was entitled to a pension.

So this is how Mr. Boyd stated his case before Witnesses Martin Cloud, William Carter, Arch. Stuart, Thomas Ayers and A. Staples. He got his pension.

As a boy of 14, James Boyd had first enlisted as a private in place of his father, Joseph, who had been so badly beaten by the Tories that he was unable to march. At that time the family was living in Surry County, maybe near the White Sulphur Springs.

James, for most of his terms, served under Cpt. James Giddens in a militia formed to keep down the Tories who had dens in the mountains from which they would swoop down and molest the citizens, maybe kill them. Militia headquarters were at Osburn's Mill on Loving's Creek. (Where was Osburn's Mill?) Twice James Boyd volunteered before he became of age. At the age of 16 he was put on the muster list.

At one time James was given to General Andrew Pickens who came up to help out the local militia. James, with about six others, was given to General Pickens to act as spies or pilots, "Pickens and his army being strangers to the country." Boyd's assignment was to chase away some Indians who had been lurking around New River. This was accomplished.

Most of James' work was with Cpt. Giddens who evidently put great faith in young Boyd. Boyd states that he "well recollected being present at the taking of Mark Adkins and Joseph Burk, Tories, who had come to William Griffin's, blocked and robbed said Griffin of his money and other valuable property." These Tories had been betrayed by another Tory who had led the soldiers to their hiding place in Grayson County, Va. They were promptly hanged and James witnessed it. He also witnessed the hanging of one Adam Short at Stuart's Creek.

Two other Tories were more fortunate. Boyd was present in the camp when "a file of men were sent out in pursuit of Gerald Adkins and William Morton, Tory robbers who when taken, were brought to headquarters and condemned to be hanged. They were marched to the gallows under guard.

While their funeral was being preached, only 15 minutes to live (according to orders), Colonel Shepherd arrived with a reprieve for them. They were accordingly reprieved. While one of the guards was standing, the breach of his gun on the ground, his hand on the muzzle, the gun went off and shot the whole contents through his hand."





The News  
Nov 27-75

By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Beginnings Of Towns

A university history professor once impressed the writer with two maxims of research: first, if you cannot prove that a fact that you believe to be true is true, then act upon the premise that nobody can prove that it is not true; second, that after the Revolutionary War our people were so busy trying to make a living nobody had time to write anything down, and consequently, information on the early days of our Republic is scarce. Both maxims apply, it seems to the writer, especially to Surry County.

After the war, people seemed to have come in great numbers to Surry County. Some came from other parts of our state, but most, it seems, came from nearby Virginia. The majority of our inhabitants were poor and illiterate; even Jesse Franklin had to quit school before he had reached his teens. But then, this lack of rudimentary education and of absence of personal niceties and comforts were true of most of the country. Even George Washington, the foremost gentleman of the land, was a lousy speller.

Our land as a whole was poor. Our bottom lands were good but the uplands left something to be desired. Mount Airy, especially, has very poor soil as those who try to farm on granite dust can testify. So the poor soil was no magnet for those people bent on making money from land.

There seemed to have been a big influx of settlers when the state took over the land in 1778, both permanent settlers and speculators. But until the 1830's and 40's, with the exception of the county seat of Rockford, does there seem to be any substantial settlements which could classify as towns. Maybe the settlements were sort of like our "communities".

Pilot Mountain was known as "Captain Lovill's District", named after Captain Edward Lovill, a Revolutionary War Soldier.

There was a small nucleus of quiet, law abiding Quakers at Westfield.

Elkin boasted of an iron forge, said to have been built in the middle 1770's by a man named Hughes, followed by a Mr. Shores and a Mr. Hanes. In 1872 a David Allen bought 640 acres "below the iron works" and established an iron works.

Mount Airy was still a region of scattered farms. Nobody seems to know exactly when the Blue Ridge Inn site first became a stagecoach stop between Salem and Wytheville. There were large farms along Lovill's Creek and Rentfrow's (now the Ararat Creeks).

Many settlements were along Stuart's Creek and along Paul's Creek. The farms along Fisher River were known as the "Fisher River Settlements."

The Cockerhams, Thompsons, Bryans, and Lewis' seemed to have already had a monopoly on most of the Mitchell River Valley. Maybe that is the reason Jesse Franklin and his father, Bernard, moved over to the headquarters of Fisher River.

There were farms up and down the Ararat and along the Yadkin, but no substantial settlements except for Rockford.

For the hard facts about the early history of Surry County there is not much material except for our excellent county records at Dobson.



Hardin "Skitt" Taliaferro's book, "Fisher River Scenes and Characters", published in 1858, made the big-time, "Harper's New Monthly Magazine" of June to November issue of 1862. The magazine reviewed Skitt's book, saying that "it is one of the half dozen clever books of American character and humor." It called Skitt "an esteemed Alabama clergyman, 'who was raised thar', and who under his boyish sobriquet of 'Skitt' veils the name of one of the first families of Virginia."

The writer, every now and then, comes across an old article describing the character of our early Surry County inhabitants and immediately becomes excited at another "Find." But invariably the source leads back to Skitt's "Fisher River Scenes." Therefore, we will just go to the original source and quote.

This is from Harper's of 1862.

"Travelers note the almost perfect uniformity of the American people in dress, manners, and speech...There are, however, among us some secluded regions, the inhabitants of which present marked peculiarities. Among these is Surry County, up among the Blue Mountains, in the northwestern corner of North Carolina. It is a sterile region, with long, cold winters. It was peopled mainly from emigrants from 'Old Fudginny', by those who did not profess to belong to the 'first families' of the state, and who brought with them and retained all the peculiarities of their homes...

"The people are almost wholly agricultural; there are two-thirds as many farms as houses, and less than one slave to a family. In education it probably ranks lowest of any county in the United States. By the census of 1850 it appears that almost one-third of the adult males, and more than half of the females were unable to read and write. They are in blissful ignorance of the latest fashions, making their own garments, material, and all. When "Skitt" revisited them, after many years' absence, in 1857, he found 'sacks' and 'joseys' in full vogue.

Almost the only opportunity which the young men had of seeing anything of the world beyond was when, in the autumn, a party would harness up their teams and carry their spare produce to the nearest town, some days' journey off. They would camp out at night, and as lucifer-matches had not yet reached them, they were obliged to trust for fire to a brand borrowed from the nearest house." (People used to have a fire going for cooking. When a fire would go out they would have to travel to a neighbor's house for a new start. Eventoday, in some communities, when a guest starts to leave the host will say, "What's your hurry? Carrying coals of fire?"

Folkways die hard.





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Meeting at Mulberry

Dec. 5, 1975

Just two people seemed to have left any kind of a record of how we poor, illiterate, but vigorous people of Surry County lived in the late 1770's and early 1800's: General William Lenoir and "Skitt" Taliaferro, author of "Fisher River Scenes and Characters". The former had this to say:

"In 1775 Surry was a frontier county. The Mulberry Fields ((Wilkesboro-Wilkes was then part of Surry))" in the upper end was the only place of meeting. The men generally dressed in hunting skirts, short breeches, leggings, and moccasins and the women in linsey petticoats and bedgowns, and in the summer, often without shoes. Some had bonnets made of calico, and others wore men's hats.

"The patriotism of the women of this region deserves a perpetual record. It was their heroic conduct that inspired their husbands and sons in the cause of liberty. They urged the men to leave home, and to prefer to die than be slaves; while they stayed at home and worked with their own hands at the plough and with the hoe, by day, to provide sustenance for their families, and at night with the spinning wheel and loom they made the clothing."

General Lenoir should have known what he was talking about. He lived at Lenior, was a personal friend of the Franklins, and was one of the greatest heroes of the Revolutionary War.

The other was Hardin "Skitt" Taliaferro, grandson of that great Christian doctor-preacher John Taliaferro, and himself a renowned "clergymen of Alabama". Skitt had lived with his family on Little Fisher River, cronied around with the neighborhood boys, often went to the musters at Shipp's Mustering Ground and remembered the tales that he had heard there.

In 1858 he wrote an amusing book called "Fisher River Scenes and Characters" which, like Tom Wolfe with his "Look Homeward Angel", is said to have made the down home folks less than happy, but who now read it with affection and amusement. People who are educated upright, and conventional do not make good copy. Individualists do. And Surry Countains were individualists.



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### "Fisher River Scenes"

Hardin "Skitt" Taliaferro's book, "Fisher River Scenes and Characters", published in 1858, made the big-time, "Harper's New Monthly Magazine" of June to November issue of 1862. The magazine reviewed Skitt's book, saying that "it is one of the half dozen clever books of American character and humor".

It called Skitt "an esteemed Alabama clergyman, 'who was raised thar', and who under his boyish sobriquet of 'Skitt' veils the name of one of the first families of Virginia."

The writer, every now and then, comes across an old article describing the character of our early Surry County inhabitants and immediately becomes excited at another "Find". But invariably the source leads back to Skitt's "Fisher River Scenes". Therefore, we will just go to the original source and quote.

This is from Harper's of 1862.

"Travelers note the almost perfect uniformity of the American people in dress, manners, and speech...There are, however, among us some secluded regions, the inhabitants of which present marked peculiarities. Among these is Surry County, up among the Blue Mountains, in the northwestern corner of North Carolina. It is a sterile region, with long, cold winters. It was peopled mainly from emigrants from 'Old Fudginny', by those who did not profess to belong to the 'first families' of the State, and who brought with them and retained all the peculiarities of their homes...

"The people are almost wholly agricultural; there are two-thirds as many farms as houses, and less than one slave to a family. In education it probably ranks lowest of any county in the United States. By the census of 1850 it appears that almost one-third of the adult males, and more than half of the females were unable to read and write. They are in blissful ignorance of the latest fashions, making their own garments, material, and all. When "Skitt" revisited them, after many years' absence in 1857, he found 'sacks' and 'joseys' in full vogue.

"Almost the only opportunity which the young men had of seeing anything of the world beyond was when, in the autumn, a party would harness up their teams and carry their spare produce to the nearest town, some days' journey off. They would camp out at night, and as lucifer-matches had not yet reached them, they were obliged to trust for fire to a brand borrowed from the nearest house."

(People used to have to keep a fire going for cooking. When a fire would go out they would have to travel to a neighbor's house for a new start.) Even today, in some communities, when a guest starts to leave the host will say, "What's your hurry? Carrying coals of fire?"

Folkways die hard.





The News  
Dec. 18, 75

By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Uneducated Pioneers

At the risk of being repetitious, the writer is going to quote from "Fisher River Scenes and Characters" written in 1858 by Hardin "Skitt" Taliaferro who was brought up in the Little Fisher River community, became a noted Alabama minister who revisited the scenes of his boyhood in 1857, and who wrote of the customs and characters of some of his boyhood chums.

"Near the base of the mountain" (Fisher's Peak, the highest in the Blue Ridges) "lived a healthy, hardy, honest, uneducated set of pioneers, unlike, in many respects, any set of pioneers that ever

peopled any other portion of the Lord's globe. They came mostly from Virginia, and a portion of them from the middle and lower parts of North Carolina, and a few from other sections...This section was settled between the years 1770 and 1780. They had stirring times during the Revolution. The early settlers were

pretty equally divided between Whigs and Tories. A majority were probably Tories, but the Whigs headed by a few daring spirits, held the Tories in check, and drove them to the mountain fastnesses...Well do I remember hearing the old soldiers of the Revolution tantalize the Tories and their descendents.

"A large portion of these early settlers were wholly uneducated, and the rest of them had but a rude and imperfect rudimental education. Each settler brought with him the rustic vernacular of his native section, and held on to it with great tenacity, thus making a common stock of the richest, unwritten, rustic literature that ever graced any community. They had no use for grammar nor for grammarians; they had no dictionaries; what few literary questions arose among them were decided by Meshack Franklin, for he was the only well-educated man in the community, and had been to Congress...But with most of the people a rifle, shot-pouch, butcher-knife, and an article they dubbed 'knock-'em-stiff' were of vastly more importance than 'larnin'; while the younger ones preferred the sound of the 'fiddle', a 'seven-handed reel', and 'Old Sister Phebe' to a log-pole schoolhouse. Yet, for all this, they were a clever folk, and one raised among them, who knows their worth every way, has ventured to record some few of their deeds of daring.

"It is emphatically a 'poor man's country'. There is but little good land in it. All the valuable land lies on the small rivers and creeks, in very narrow bottoms. No rich man will ever be tempted to live there. But notwithstanding their long, cold winters and poor lands, the inhabitants, by hard labor and by the most rigid economy, live well. All extravagance, however, is necessarily excluded, and the people make the greater part of their own apparel, material and all. Money is very scarce, and corrupting fashions seldom reach them.

That is one place where Paris, London, and Broadway seldom reach. I visited them in 1857, and found 'sacks' and 'joseys' in full fashion."

Some of the apparel (calico bannets) and picturesque speech we still have us—just as Skitt Taliaferro noted in 1858.



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## Dirty Britchies And Fine Furniture

"Skitt" Taliaferro was raised on Little Fisher River, went to Alabama where he became a noted clergyman, revisited the scenes of his youth in 1857, published a book of Fisher River tales in 1858 which became a "best-seller" of the time. Here is an incident as recounted in "Fisher River Scenes and Characters".

A band of men one night camped out near the home of one of the "quality" folk. One was sent to borrow a "brand" of fire. He was invited in by the lady who asked him to sit down in a parlor elegantly furnished with a carpet and half a dozen Windsor chairs. This is how he told of his adventure.

"I tell you, boys, with my dirty britches I sot right smack in one o' the finest Weasley chairs you ever seen in all yer borned days, and my beg, mudbustin', pis-ant-killin' shoes on thar fine carpet looked like two great big Injun conoes. I'll be poked ef I knowed how to hold my hands nur feet."

In the Round Peak Community still stands the home of Dick Snow. Let Skitt Taliaferro tell this.

"Dick was a man of respectibility, and had a wife whom he and everybody else considered number one. The best of company, even the 'quality' visited his house. The Misses Franklin, daughters of Meshach Franklin, 'the Congressman', went to a Methodist quarterly meeting near Dick's residence, called on, and stayed all night with him. Dick was unacquainted with 'quality ways', and when the ladies retired to bed upstairs, they bade the family goodnight. He didn't know what it meant, and it worried him worse than the nightmare.

At last he concluded it was some rig the young ladies were running on him, and he resolved to retrieve what he had lost, for he was a man who did not like to be outdone. So, early next morning, he rose, built his fire, and watched the stair-steps until he heard the ladies coming down, he then ran and hid himself near the foot of the stairway. As soon as they landed on the lower floor, Dick rushed out of his hiding place, scaring the misses not a little, and bawled out loudly, 'Good mornin' at ye, ladies! I's fast anuff fur you this time. Now I'll quit ye, es we's even. You got me last night: I's got ye this mornin'."





At the risk of being repetitious, the writer is going to quote from "Fisher River Scenes and Characters" written in 1858 by Hardin "Skitt" Taliaferro who was brought up in the Little Fisher River community, became a noted Alabama minister who revisited the scenes of his boyhood in 1857, and who wrote of the customs and characters of some of his boyhood chums.

"Near the base of the mountain" (Fisher's Peak, the highest in the Blue Ridges) "lived a healthy, hardy, honest, uneducated set of pioneers, unlike, in many respects, any set of pioneers that ever peopled any other portion of the Lord's globe. They came mostly from Virginia, and a portion of them from the middle and lower parts of North Carolina, and a few from other sections. This section was settled between the year 1770 and 1780. They had stirring times during the Revolution. The early settlers were pretty equally divided between Whigs and Tories. A majority were probably Tories, but the Whigs headed by a few daring spirits, held the Tories in check, and drove them to the mountain fastnesses....Well do I remember hearing the old soldiers of the Revolution tantalize the Tories and their descendents.

"A large portion of these early settlers were wholly uneducated, and the rest of them had but a rude and imperfect rudimental education. Each settler brought with him the rustic vernacular of his native section, and held on to it with great tenacity, thus making a common stock . . . of the richest, unwritten, rustic literature that ever graced any community. They had no use for grammar nor for grammarians; they had no dictionaries; what few literary questions arose among them were decided by Meshack Franklin, for he was the only well-educated man in the community, and had been to Congress.....But with most of the

people a rifle, shot-pouch, butcher-knife, and an article they dubbed 'knock-'em-stiff' were of vastly more importance than 'larnin'; while the younger ones preferred the sound of the 'fiddle', a 'seven-handed reel', and 'Old Sister Phebe' to a log-pole schoolhouse. Yet, for all this, they were a clever folk, and one raised among them, who knows their worth every way, has ventured to record some few of their deeds of daring.

"It is emphatically a 'poor man's country'. There is but little good land in it. All the valuable land lies on the small rivers and creeks, in very narrow bottoms. No rich man will ever be tempted to live there. But notwithstanding their long, cold winters and poor lands, the inhabitants, by hard labor and by the most rigid economy, live well. All extravagance, however, is necessarily excluded, and the people make the greater part of their own apparel, material and all. Money is very scarce, and corrupting fashions seldom reach them.

That is one place where Paris, London, and Broadway seldom reach. I visited them in 1857, and found 'sacks' and 'joseys' in full fashion."

Some of the apparel (calico bonnets) and picturesque speech we still have us--just as Skitt Taliaferro noted in 1858.





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### 'Mustering Ground'

It took the writer the better part of two years to definitely locate Shipp's Mustering Ground which was one of the last mustering places of Revolutionary War soldiers to "give up the ghost." For the reader's information it is about two miles out on rural road 1605 off N.C. 89 just after you cross Ring's Creek—on the right just at the foot of the hill and at the end of the pavement. The place has been known locally as "The Granary" because "so much liquor was made there." The most "Famus" story of "Fisher River Scenes" by Skitt Taliaferro might help to explain the name.

At the May and November musters, the old soldiers kept up the "militeer sperit", and "were proud to perform 'revolutions' before all the "offiffers". There was another matter of powerful attraction to the old 'Lutionaries' that was as punctual in attendance as any of the 'patriots'. 'Niger Josh Easley' with his 'gingy cakes' and Hamp Hudson with his 'likker' were men and things as much looked for as 'Capting Moore with his militeer uniform.'

"Hamp Hudson was the only man in that whole country who kept a still-house running all the year; the weaker ones would 'run dry'...Hamp also had a noted dog, named 'Famus,' as famous for being in the distillery as Hamp himself..."

"Now it came to pass...that Famus fell into a 'mash-tub' and was drowned. It was 'narrated' all through the country that Famus was drowned in a mash-tub, and Hamp had distilled the beer in which Famus was drowned, and was gwine to carry it to May muster to sell'. The report produced a powerful sensation in the community, and was the only topic of conversation. All appeared to believe it, and there was a general determination 'not to drink one drap of Hamp's nasty old Famus lickler'."

Muster day arrived. After deliberation it was decided that none of Famus' old lickler would be drunk. The old soldiers fell "into ranks with precision, order, dignity, and gravity, but there was no spirit nor life in the 'militeer'." Instead of following Duane they were whispering and talking about Hamp and Famus. Indeed, they greatly needed the inspiration of Hamp's barrel.

"But where was Hamp and Famus all this time? Yonder he sits, under the shade of a large apple-tree, solitary and alone, astride of his whiskey barrel...It is now one o'clock, and his chances look bad...Old 'nigger Josh Easley' has sold all his 'gingy cakes'...Josh is the only joyful man on the 'grit.' The rest are all melancholy, standing or sitting in little squads, debating the mash-tub question. Hamp is quite composed, and his looks say, 'Niver mind, gentlemen, I'll see you drink ever drap of my lickler yit!

"Two o'clock arrives, and no one approaches Hamp's apple-tree. His prospects are growing worse. But look yonder! The crowd has collected around Uncle Jimmy Smith. Let us approach and him him:" (Uncle Jimmy lisped.)

"Well, boyith, I don't know tho well about thith matter. Maybe we've accuthed thith feller Hamp wrongfully. He hath allerth been a clever feller and it ith a pity ef he ith innerthent uf thith charge. The fact ith, boyith, it ith mighty dull, dry timeth. Nuthin' ith a-gwine on right. Boyith, you air free men. I fout fer your freedom. I thay, boyith, you can do ath you pleath, but ath fur me—old Stony Pint Smith, famuth or no Famuth I mustht take a little."

"The speech of Uncle Jimmy was satisfactory and moving...His audience...moved up to Hamp's headquarters with a 'doublequick step', the 'bar'l was tapped'... by the generous Hamp who never reproached them for their severe accusations. Soon the condemned barrel was emptied, the money was in Hamp's pocket, and he was as merry as 'gingy-cake Josh'."

"Uncle Jimmy soon began to sing his Revolutionary ditties, spin his yarns, and was happy enough...The 'litia' and others fell to discussing questions of great moment; but the whole affair ended in skinned noses, gouged eyes, and bruised hands. That was a 'Famus' day in the annals of Shipp's Mustering Ground."





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## Still Plain Speaking

Edwin Newman, a noted TV personality, has written a book called "Strictly Speaking" in which he bemoans the fact that people couch the English language in such elaborate and obscure terms that no one, except those who use those distinctive words, can understand them. He advocates plain speaking.

The people of Surry County always had plain talk and some still do. It is much easier to say "I toted my vittles in a poke" than to say "I carried my groceries in a paper bag."

College graduates, especially those from the better liberal arts ones, have to be exposed to Chaucer in English literature courses. Chaucer, the first great English poet, lived from 1340 to 1400. Many of the words used in his noted "Canterbury Tales" are still in use today in Surry County. There is the prefix "a" used before a verb as in "a-goin', a-talkin', a-comin'". There is "holpen" for helped—we say "holped"; "ferre" (fur) for far; "tech" for touch; "swich" (sich) for such; "afeered" for afraid; "heered" for heard; "deef" for deaf; "betwixt" for between, and ten pound for ten pounds—the "s" being left off.

Queen Elizabeth I probably used "hit" instead of it; "jine" for join, "ax" for ask, "hern" for hers, and so on.

In some of the old English, Scottish, and Irish ballads which came over with some of the early settlers—"Barbara Allen" and "Lord Lovill" among them—the color yellow is written as "yallow"; "drap" for drop.

And both Chaucer and Queen Elizabeth I would know and probably used the still more ancient four letter words, now considered vulgar, but coming more often in use nevertheless. These familiar four letter words are old Anglo-Saxon and, in many cases, the sound of the word is suited to the sound of the action. Try it. Even one of the most common four letter words heard in Surry County—and now all over the United States—is in the seventeenth century King James version of the Bible.

Our two most famous Surry Countains, Andy Griffith and Donna Fargo, recognized the picturesque quality of our Surry County culture and capitalized on it, Andy in speech and mores and Donna on native music.

So we do have a salable, picturesque, treasury chest vocabulary of very ancient lineage here in Surry County. Let's preserve it.



If you remember, Surry County used to be not Just Surry County, but Yadkin, Stokes, Forsyth, and parts of our western counties as well. This sort of messes us up figure wise. When lists of Revolutionary War veterans, for example, are given we have to remember that these soldiers listed from Surry might not have been from Surry after all. Such illustrious names as Winston, Williams, Cross, Lenoir did not belong to us, we wish that they did. So might records of deeds or wills on file in our courthouse at Dobson not pertain to us at all. Neither did all the people the census people attribute to us really belong to us.

By the same token, we messed up Rowan. If we want to trace records before 1771, when our county really got started, we have to go to Salisbury in Rowan.

In 1789 things became a little easier because we were left with only Yadkin to muddy up the waters. But we must remember that the waters have been muddy for Yadkin as well as for us. Reputable writers very often have been guilty of not taking in the above considerations in their writings, and so their writings have been somewhat misleading.

In 1789 when Stokes and Forsyth left us, we both had to start new county seats. They established theirs at Germanton—Richmond had already been destroyed by a cyclone. We chose a hill site in the center of our then county—Yadkin was with us, remember, near the White Rock Ford of the Yadkin. We might have been a little lazy or unimaginative about its naming because we called the new town Rock-ford. And there it is today, just a little bit west of the rocky ford. Incidentally, when one crossed this ford he had to follow an arc marked by a ripple in order to avoid rocks and holes. Hence the Yadkin paper, the Yadkin Ripple.

This land belonged to a Thomas and Moses Ayers—53 acres of it. Until town plats could be marked off and streets laid court was held at the farm of a Richard Horne about one mile east of the present town. A shell of the old house is still there, luckily preserved for sentimental reasons by its present owner, Ralph McCormick.





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

Feb. 5, 1976

On the Yadkin, about halfway between the east and west borders of Surry County lies the picturesque village of Rockford, the first county seat within our Surry County borders.

In 1789 a new county seat was to be established—we then had Yadkin, remember. After the first court had been held at the Richard Horne plantation, just east of Rockford, for about a year, court was moved to the new village at the White Rock Ford.

The first court is thought to have been held at the home of Elihu Ayers. Then a wooden courthouse, reputedly held together with nails from a forge on the river, was said to have been built. It was not until 1830 that the majestic courthouse was built on the commanding hill overlooking the village. The offices were on the ground floor; the court room upstairs. Unfortunately, a fire gutted the structure in 1925 so that only the outside walls give us an idea of what the courthouse must have been like.

On the fifty three acre tract bought from Thomas and Moses Ayers were laid out the three main streets, High, Water, and Cabin. Around them sprung up dwelling houses, law offices—said to have been just down the hill from the courthouse—boarding houses, stores, and what have you.

In 1771 a boarding house license was given to Jesse Lester; in 1797 one to Reuben Grant. Moses Ayers received a ferry license in 1795. A grist mill, a forge, a blacksmith shop, a tinsmith shop, a tannery and other businesses soon appeared.

Since the terrain was rocky and hilly, well water was hard to come by in most places. So the inhabitants were dependent on the public spring, Tanyard Spring, for drinking water, to do their washing, and to receive and dispense gossip. Incidentally, Tanyard Spring got its name from the tannery there.

The stocks were put down near the river and a jail erected, no doubt leaving room for the gallows.

Last, but not least, was the Masonic Hall, built a little way up the hill across from the courthouse. This old building housed Unaminty Lodge No. 34, chartered in 1797, probably the oldest lodge in northwest North Carolina, and one which is being remembered by present day Surry Masons who seek to restore the building.

100  
Tribune  
Feb. 16-76



## About Surry County

### *Famous visitors*

"All roads lead to Rockford" was a favorite saying about this new frontier village on the Yadkin, county seat of Surry County. Rockford wasn't much, but it was the best the county had with the possible exceptions of Huntsville and Jonesville located across the river now in Yadkin. Here the town and county fathers quickly learned how to issue licenses, set fees, make political appointments—some no doubt to their advantage—mete out justice, see what the rest of the world was doing by reading the few precious newspapers, etc.

Lucy Houck in her "Story of Rockford" aptly put it when she said that "fashion and education could be passed by, but politics never."

And no doubt the small town of Rockford began with a bang, literally. Andrew Jackson came to town.

Andrew was something of a roughneck and a hot tempered one at that. He had studied law at Salisbury, received his law license in Richmond—not the Virginia but the Forsyth County one.

He undoubtedly came to Rockford at one time, probably several, since, as Mrs. Houck says, he liked to follow circuit courts and keep up with his friends at Rockford. It is said that Andrew kept the townspeople awake from his all night carousing and that is certainly in keeping. Andrew still had many rough edges on him by the time he reached the White House.

He left Rockford, so the well-known story goes, owing a board bill to Jesse Lester which he later sought to pay. (Maybe he had come to the conclusion that a rising politician should not leave a reputation of a deadbeat to an up-and-coming county seat.) And he found beside the cancelled bill a notation "Paid in full by the Battle of New Orleans."

#### **Andrew Johnson's Visit**

The story that Andrew Johnson also practiced law in Rockford had just as well be laid to rest here. Johnson moved to Tennessee around 1827, set up a tailor shop there, and became interested in Tennessee politics, which, you remember, did not want to have too much dealings with North Carolina's. Perhaps Johnson did come by Rockford, as tradition says, but hardly to practice law.

Chances are, though, that Aaron Burr did visit Rockford and stay all night at the Grant Hotel. It is said that he became interested in a promising apprentice of the tavern keeper, Watson Holyfield, offered to take him with him and give him an education which offer Watson declined.

There is no doubt that James K. Polk would visit his cousin, William Polk Dobson, at Dobson Hill. The two cousins were good friends and were in close touch when James K. Polk made the presidency.





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## Remembering Rockford

Can't you just see court day in the hilly town of Rockford down on the banks of the Yadkin? Milling around the dusty streets would be preoccupied lawyer, hustling housewives, bustling tavern keepers, pressured storekeepers, apprehensive defendants, their anxious families, girl and boy show-offs, and all the thrill seekers who came to get some kicks. Even old Jenkins was there.

Mr. Rom Folger, one of Rockford's native sons, tells the story like this.

"There lived south of the river an old man named Jenkins who, for some meritorious service to the county in the time of W. P. Dobson was granted privilege of retailing 'spirits' in small quantities without license. On Sunday evening before each court session one could see Jenkins wending his way up through Rockford to the lot known as 'the devil's half-acre'. It was named because a 'grog shop' was operated there by an old woman, and with its attendant evils the place was notorious. Early Monday morning Jenkins would procure four forked sticks, drive them in the ground, lay his crossed pieces on with a board on these, and, setting his jug and a half-pint cup on his improvised counter, he drew up a white flint stone upon which he sat and was ready for business. Upon one occasion Lincoln Smith, editor of "The Greensboro Patriot," visited Rockford during court in interest of his paper and upon his return wrote for his paper about this visit. He described Rockford as being a city set on a hill, or a hill successively terraced. He also described what he saw on the courtyard, with Landlord Jenkins prominent in the midst with his cup and jug ready and anxious to wait upon the thirsty public."

What a formidable obstacle old Jenkins made for the keepers of the public morals and for Solomon Graves of Mount Airy and to Charles Taliaferro of Fisher River, both boluble opponents of spirits.

And what a let down for Rockford people, the Dobsons, the Holyfields, the Burruses, the Humlins, the Ayers, the Hughes, the Yorks, the Brays, and all their Surry neighbors when court was over.



## About Surrey County

Can't you just see court day in the hilly town of Rockford down on the banks of the Yadkin? Milling around the dusty streets would be preoccupied lawyers, hustling housewives, bustling tavern keepers, pressured store-keepers, apprehensive defendants, their anxious families, girl and boy show-offs, and all the thrill seekers who came to get some kicks. Even old Jenkins was there.

Mr. Rom Folger, one of Rockford's native sons, tells the story like this.

"There lived south of the river an old man named Jenkins who, for some meritorious service to the county in the time of W.P. Dobson, was granted privilege of retailing 'spirits' in small quantities without license.

On Sunday evening before each court session one could see Jenkins wending his way up through Rockford to the lot known as 'the devil's half-acre.' It was named because a 'grog shop' was operated there by an old woman, and with its attendant evils the place was notorious.

Early Monday morning Jenkins would procure four forked sticks, drive them in the ground, lay his crossed pieces on with a board on these, and, setting his jug and a half-pint cup on his improvised counter, he drew up a white flint stone upon which he sat and was ready for business.

Upon one occasion Lincoln Smith, editor of "The Greensboro Patriot," visited Rockford during court in interest of his paper and upon his return wrote for his paper about this visit. He described Rockford as being a city set on a hill, or a hill successively terraced. He also described what he saw on the courtyard, with Landlord Jenkins prominent in the midst with his cup and jug ready and anxious to wait upon the thirsty public."

What a formidable obstacle old Jenkins made for the keepers of the public morals and for Solomon Graves of Mount Airy and to Charles Taliaferro of Fisher River, both voluble opponents of spirits.

And what a let down for Rockford people, the Dobsons, the Holyfields, the Burruses, the Hamlins, the Ayers, the Hughes, the Yorks, the Brays, and all their Surrey neighbors when court was over.





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

Wouldn't it be fascinating if the air around the courts at Rockford would suddenly bust forth with some revelations? The writer would like, for example, for it to straighten out land boundaries and point out the location of this post, that white pine, that chestnut, that white oak, that poplar, so and so's boundary.

But along with the mundane things like issuing licenses, setting fees, mapping out roads, making appointments, probating wills, the court had some interesting tasks to perform.

It doubtless was in a dither about the unfavorable report which Dorothea Dix made to the General Assembly after a visit to the poor house to the north of town. It helped in poor house and asylum reform, though.

The courthouse steps were used as a slave block. One respected negro remembered being sold three times from the steps of Rockford courthouse.

The court snickered, no doubt, when a bastardy case came up, became self righteous when it required a father to help support his illegitimate child.

It mulled long about how to build a jail before it came to these dimensions: double walls, timbers a foot thick and square hewed 1 foot apart, space fitted up with stones; double floors, lower rooms fitted for criminals, upper floor walls double but close together, both stories to be ceiled with 1½ inch thick oak plank, outside walls same and well nailed with long board spikes".

The jailer was to receive 35 cents for each prisoner held.

Along with the above, Mrs. Lucy Houck in her "Story of Rockford" has noted some grimmer cases. (Relax, Mrs. Houck was considerate and named no names. You can ferret them out at the Dobson courthouse, if you like.)

Not only were stocks erected but a pillory too. Sometimes not only was the defendant fined, put in the pillory, but his ears were cut off and nailed to the pillory until sundown.

Often, offenders were sentenced to receive twenty-twenty-five, thirty-nine, or whatever, lashes on his bare back, the sentence to be "executed immediately." Effective too, no doubt. Sometimes, the criminal had to receive lashes as well as stand in the pillory.

Then there were the hangings, not too many maybe. But when there was one there was no dilly dallying. The hangings took place at a convenient hour in the daytime so that all who were interested could come to see justice done.

No lengthy, expensive delays at our Rockford.



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## Religion And Salt

Surry Conty in the early 1800's was rural. People had to work so hard for a mere living that they did not have time for much socializing. The great religious revival of the early 1800's inspired meetings and the meetings gave a good opportunity for getting to know neighbors. Members could talk over their crops, their housekeeping chores, their families. And where better could people learn to know one another?

These protracted meetings, of course, served another purpose. They gave the young people their chance to see what boys had suddenly become handsome men and what pretty girls had suddenly grown up.

It also gave the less romantically inclined to get into scrapes such as pouring salt into the open mouth of one fellow whose brethren were trying to convert him even if he responded by going to sleep with his mouth open. (This fellow decided, in his haste to get water, it is said, that he didn't want any part of religion—it tasted too much of salt.)

The Baptists held their gatherings in two day meetings and week end associations which customs still exists today among the Primitive Baptists. The members were housed and fed by the host members.

The Methodists had camp meetings which could last as long as a week. In August, between cultivation and crop gathering time, the people took off. They would camp out, put up in tents, build rough shelters, and build a brush arbor for the preaching. Early camp meetings around Mount Airy were said to have been held at Brower's Springs out on the Quarry Road, in the grove across from Salem Church, at the crossroads at Toast, and at White Sulphur Springs where the sulphur water could easily mix with the brimstone sermons.

Like at their fellow Baptist meetings, preacher after preacher, preached. The longest sermon which a very prominent Methodist preacher, Peter Doub, who was up here in the 1840's and who is said to have preached at Brower's Springs, was four hours and fifteen minutes! This might have been a little long for even the most pious preachers because it is said that Doub's presiding elder said to him:

"Doub, you have sense and you know how to preach, but your sermons are too long, you wear the people out. You are like a man looking up a river, who turns as if to fish in every little creek or branch that runs into the main stream. Keep to the main channel. You do not need to tell all you know in one sermon." Enough said!





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## Quakers Hated Slavery

When Quakers are good they are good. They traditionally hated slavery. The following story comes from Mrs. Dellie Owens of Westfield. William Jessup of Westfield "for the love and respect that I do hold for the Society of Friends, called Quakers, do hereby give—certain negroes: namely, Richard Annis, Richard Asson, Ausy, Martin, George, Rache, Robbin, Jim, Nancy, Mills, Isaac, Annis and Merriam" to the Society." This was duly recorded in court. It was a generous gift. Negroes were a very expensive commodity.

Incidentally, until after the Civil War, negroes worshipped with the whites. They were listed as members with the Mount Airy Methodists until 1872. By 1889 they had left the Primitive Baptists and had formed their own Association.

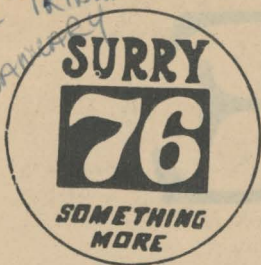
Two early preachers, who did not have much formal education, but who surely must have had the grace of God, were Elder Johnny Jones of the Primitive Baptist faith, and James Needham of the Methodist.

Johnny Jones lived down near Level Cross off the Jones Road on the Wesley Taylor farm. His wife probably planted what is now the second largest boxwood in North Carolina. It is a sight to behold down behind his house. Elder Jones served as moderator of the Fisher River Association from 1848 until his death in 1876.

James Needham, better known as "Father Needham," was born in 1799 and preached a sermon just before his 100th birthday which he didn't live to see.

Father Needham was a supply preacher—that is, he was never a member of the Methodist Conference, but he filled in everywhere. He is buried down at New Hope Church at Ararat in which yard stands a tree. Father Needham is said to have been sitting under this tree when, suddenly, he heard a voice say, "Get out from under there!" He got, and just as he moved, Father Needham reported that a big limb fell just where he had been sitting.

Another time, during a big drought, the Methodists got together with Father Needham to pray for rain. There was not a cloud in the sky, not even one "as big as a pocket handkerchief." Father Needham prayed, then told the people to go home, that there would be rain. Somebody asked Father Needham hadn't he better hurry since it was going to rain. It is said that Father Needham replied that he had prayed for rain and that he could take it. It is well known old Surry County tale that before the congregation got home, the heavens opened and the land was drenched.



## About Surry County

### Early customs

At the risk of being repetitious, the writer is going to quote from "Fisher River Scenes and Characters" written in 1858 by Hardin "Skitt" Taliaferro who was brought up in the Little Fisher River Community, became a noted Alabama minister who revisited the scenes of his boyhood in 1857 and who wrote of the customs and characters of some of his boyhood chums.

"Near the base of the mountain" (Fisher's Peak, the highest in the Blue Ridges) "lived a healthy, hardy, honest, uneducated set of pioneers, unlike, in many respects, any set of pioneers that ever peopled any other portion of the Lord's globe. They came mostly from Virginia and a portion of them from the middle and lower parts of North Carolina, and a few from other sections . . . This section was settled between the year 1770 and 1780. They had stirring times during the Revolution. The early settlers were pretty equally divided between Whigs and Tories. A majority were probably Tories, but the Whigs headed by a few daring spirits, held the Tories in check, and drove them to the mountain fastnesses . . . Well do I remember hearing the old soldiers of the Revolution tantalize the Tories and their descendents.

"A large portion of these early settlers were wholly uneducated, and the rest of them had but a rude and imperfect rudimental education. Each settler brought with him the rustic vernacular of his native section, and held on to it with great tenacity, thus making a common stock of the richest, unwritten, rustic literature that ever graced any community. They had no use for grammar nor for grammarians; they had no dictionaries; what few literary questions arose among them were decided by Meshack Franklin, for he was the only well-educated man in the community, and had been to Congress . . . But with most of the people a rifle, shot-pouch, butcher-knife, and an article they dubbed 'knock-'em-stiff' were of vastly more importance than 'larnin'; while the younger ones preferred the sound of the 'fiddle,' a 'seven-handed reel,' and 'Old Sister Phebe' to a log-pole schoolhouse. Yet, for all this, they were a clever folk, and one raised among them, who knows their worth every way, has ventured to record some few of their deeds of daring.

"It is emphatically a 'poor man's country.' There is but little good land in it. All the valuable land lies on the small rivers and creeks, in very narrow bottoms. No rich man will ever be tempted to live there. But notwithstanding their long, cold winters and poor lands, the inhabitants, by hard labor and by the most rigid economy, live well. All extravagance, however, is necessarily excluded, and the people make the greater part of their own apparel, material and all. Money is very scarce, and corrupting fashions seldom reach them.

That is one place where Paris, London, and Broadway seldom reach. I visited them in 1857, and found 'sacks' and 'joseys' in full fashion."

Some of the apparel (calico bonnets) and picturesque speech we still have us — just as Skitt Taliaferro noted in 1858.





## About Surry County

*The Tribune* is presenting a series of articles on Surry County history. This column is provided by the Surry American Revolution Bicentennial Commission.

### Got His Come-Uppence

As late as 1770 marauding bands of Cherokees were still roving the Hollow which was the region drained roughly by the three forks of the "Tararat"; Stuart's (Stewart's) Creek, the "west fork"; Lovings (Lovill's), the "middle fork"; and Rentfrow's Creek, (We call it the Ararat), the "east fork."

The Indians had just cause for grievance. Treaties were habitually broken. One young fellow who broke one got his come-uppence. He trespassed upon Indian hunting grounds where no white person was supposed to go.

This is the story from the Murphey papers at Chapel Hill.

### Attacked By Indians

"This incident is supposed to have occurred sometime between 1765 and 1770. A party of three white men were camped near the mouth of the Watauga River when they were attacked by a party of Indians. The two Linville brothers were killed while John Williams, a youth of 16 years, was wounded.

"John Williams was shot through the thigh and the bone fractured severely. He ran about 50 yards before the bone gave way and he fell. The Indians did not go in search of him, but gathered up their skins and game, and catching up their best horses they went off.

"Williams, crawling on his hands, found an old horse at the camp. He tied a piece of rope in the horse's mouth for a bridle and then crawled on to a log and mounted the horse, and with his leg broken rode from near the mouth of the Watauga to the Hollows in Surry before he came to a house.

"He was five days on this journey without anything to eat except blackberries. He was nearly exhausted when he reached the house. He was taken care of, got nearly well, had another alarm and the bone was broken the second time. But he recovered and lived to an old age in Surry, where he later became a justice of the peace."

Men were tough in those days.



What's in a name? Plenty, maybe.

Most names of Surry County rivers, mountains, hollows, etc. seem to bear the names of families of individuals who either owned land or lived in their vicinities. There is Stewart's Creek, named for a family of Stuarts living or owning land along its banks; Lovens, afterwards evolving into Loving's, then Lovill's, after a man named Loven who once owned land at its headwaters. But was the Paul of Paul's Creek, the Hogan of Hogan's Creek, the Stott of Stott's Knob, the Ring of Ring's Creek, the Turner of Turner's Mountain, the Butler of Butler's Creek, the Mitchell of Mitchell's River? Anybody know?

Tales pretty nearly agree about how Fisher's Peak got its name. It seems that a man named Daniel Fisher who was surveying the state line climbed to the top and dropped dead from the exertion—a heart attack, no doubt. Native lore says that it was because he drank very cold water, there being a very cold spring on top.

Fisher River probably took its name from the same Fisher. At one time it was named Fishe River after a William Fishe who lived at its mouth. This Fishe was afterwards killed by the Indians, you remember. Even today some natives refer to "Big Fish" and "Little Fish."

Our two most important rivers originally had Indian names—the Yadkin was Yattkin, and the Ararat Tarrarat. Yattkin was eventually corrupted into Yadkin. (Have you ever heard a Yadkinville native pronounce the "d"? No, it is Yattkinville.) It was a coincidence that like Fishe and Fisher Tarrarat sounded like the Biblical name of Ararat. Even Pilot Mountain, named by the Moravians Pilot, was once called Mount Ararat, no doubt because Noah could not have missed it had he and his ark been up this way.

Then there were the intriguing descriptive names. How about Buffalo Wallow? It is well known that Buffalo used to roam these woods before the coming of the white man. But how did a stream get to be called Skin Cabin? How did Warrior Mountain get its name? Possum Trot Road, Cracker's Neck Road?

Of all the descriptive names probably Skull Camp Mountain is the most intriguing. Our local resident says that a man named Gentry, while camping on the mountain, accidentally kicked his foot against a human skull. Skitt Taliaferro wrote in 1858 that in the first settling of the county one or two skeletons were found at what at one time was a hunter's camp. Both tales agree in essential details. And the legend persists that a cave on this mountain was long a hideout for runaway slaves and for Civil War deserters.

There are many interesting names of purely local interest around. Do you know any or any other interesting county names? If you do, please write to this paper or to the Surry County Historical Society, 341 Franklin Street, Mount Airy, N. C. 27030.





*The*  
*TRIBUNE*  
**About  
Surry  
County**

*The Tribune is presenting a series of articles on Surry County history. This column is provided by the Surry American Revolution Bicentennial Commission.*

Very few stories have come down to us from colonial times. Three we will tell you about in the next columns deal with Indians' attacks upon the settlers.

The Indians were the Cherokees, honest, peaceful at first, but warlike later when they saw their lands being taken and their treaties broken.

The nearest fort to which our settlers could go was at Bethabara in the Moravian settlement. There are several entries in their diaries where the Moravians noted that settlers from "The Hollows" came for refuge. "The Hollows" was roughly the land drained by the upper Ararat and its tributaries.

Jesse Hollingsworth noted these stories in his "History of Surry County." He, in turn, got them from the Archibald Murphey papers at Chapel Hill. The Moravians noted the following story in their diary of June 13, 1760. Mulberry Fields is present Wilkesboro.

#### **Protection from Indians**

There were forts stationed here and there for protection from the Indians. From them went companies of rangers to patrol the regions around. Anthony Hampton, the father of General Wade Hampton, was in charge of the patrol which went out from Mulberry Fields and which patrolled our region. The men "were clad in hunting shirts with white buckskin leggins; they ranged the woods in all directions and slept wherever night came on. They generally made a tour or circuit once a month.

"On one of their tours through the Hollows they were passing along a small Indian trace when they were hailed by a man at a little distance from them. They went up and found him to be one William McAfee, who had left the fort at Bethabara in company with another man to hunt in the Hollows. Here they were attacked by some Indians." (The Moravians said that the man was Woodman and that he was killed.)

McAfee was shot through the thigh which was broken and his horse killed, but his horse ran off with him about three hundred yards before he fell dead. Here was McAfee with his thigh broken 33 miles from the fort or from any house where white people lived, in woods, and unable to move.

In the evening of the day Hampton and his rangers passed and discovered him, they placed him on a horse and brought him to the fort where he was attended to and his wound cured. He lived for many years and lame as he was he would follow his favorite pursuit of killing deer."

# SURRY

# 76

## SOMETHING MORE

Just what kind of a man would trust his teenage son to set out through a virgin wilderness in search for a future home for him, his father? And what kind of a man would take his son's word as to the suitability of that home in virgin land, this land of Surry County?

Bernard Farnklin (b. 1731 - d. 1828) would and did.

The son, Jesse Franklin, when 16 or 17 years old—a teenager—came down through the virgin forests of southeast Virginia and chose an unclaimed tract in beautiful Mitchell's River Valley for his father, Bernard, who moved there with his family. Probably Bernard did not even check it out.

Bernard was smart and he was industrious. He, unlike many of his contemporaries could read and write. He wrested a living from the virgin soil and died a comparatively rich man.

Bernard was religious. He was a Primitive Baptist. What other father would have named four of his sons Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednigo—and Jesse?

Bernard was patriotic and he was courageous.

Bernard, when the conflict between the colonies and the British crown broke out, threw his sympathies and support to the colonists. Moreover, he made no bones about it. For his pains, he and his family were continually harassed by the Surry County Tories who were little more than desperados. (More about this later.) They often made Bernard the target of their wrath.

On one occasion, one of a group of ruffians grabbed Bernard's new hat off his head and put it on his own. He then put his old and dirty hat on Bernard's. Angered, Bernard grabbed it off, stamped it on the ground under his feet, and exclaimed, "Would that I could do that for every Tory in this land!"

Neither was Bernard's home safe. His household buried many of its valuables in the garden and planted potato hills over them. They were never found. Neither was a socol full of gold and silver coins which an intrepid old aunt living in the home had hidden under her apron while she calmly went away and watched the ransack the home.

at man, Bernard



7/29 M.H.A. News



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## Pre-Civil War Politics

The Civil War came to Surry as it did everywhere else. In general, politics in North Carolina before the Civil War was controlled by the large land owners and they were in the east. So were the large slave holders.

Surry had only a handful of large slave owners, and even their holdings were not great. Many farmers had just one or two slaves; more had none. And there was no need for them. Farmland in general in Surry was poor, and, consequently, farms were small.

Naturally this had an effect on Civil War sympathizers. Not all Surry Counties—and this also applied to other western North Carolina counties—were for the south and secession. Combined with this lack of incentive for secession was the old stubborn and individual Scotch-Irish and German temperament of Surry residents. Hollingsworth in his history estimated that about seven hundred Surry County men joined the Confederate army, and one hundred the Union.

Near Dobson there was a skirmish at a certain house because the owner was suspected of being a Union sympathizer.

The great grandfather of a Blackwater community resident was shot and killed by neighbors, maybe a self-appointed Home Guard, in a rye field as he was trying to slip in to home to eat his supper. Ironically, his wife would not be buried beside him because his grave was on land which came into possession of his suspected murderers.

Skull Camp Mountain was said to have been a favorite hideout for Union sympathizers.

But, anyway, volunteers did sign up. Richard E. Reeves commanded one regiment; B. Y. Graves another; J. R. Waugh a third; and John C. Gilmer still a fourth.

Some volunteers enlisted from Virginia—we being so near the border. A son of one of the Siamese Twins was among them.

And some of the Union sympathizers went to goodness knows where.



Just what kind of a teenage boy could a father trust to ride through virgin wilderness in search of a home for his father in that wilderness?

Jesse Franklin (b. 1760-d1823) was that kind of a boy.

When just 16 or 17 years old Jesse left his home in Orange County, Virginia, rode down to beautiful Mitchell's River Vally in Surry County to choose a home for his father, Bernard, and family. Furthermore, his father trusted his judgment.

Jesse, the third son of his father, all through his life proved himself a most unusual fellow. He was Surry's greatest man, and a man of great national repute.

As a teenager, Jesse displayed such fighting skill at the Battle of King's Mountain that one of the major British officers surrendered his sword to him saying, "You deserve it, sir!" Since King's Mountain was one of the major turning points in the war and since Jesse played such a prominent part in that great victory, it just might be that without Jesse we would not have gotten our independence.

Jesse fought in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse which so weakened the British that they

surrendered soon after. It was just by luck and his skill that Jesse narrowly missed being cut down by a British dragoon as was his best friend, Richard Taliaferro. It fell to Jesse's lot to take home the possessions of his dead friend to the widow and children, and to listen to the howls of the friend's hound dogs when they smelled the clothes of their master.

It was Jesse who narrowly missed being hanged when the Tories captured him when he was trying to slip home to take some salt. The Tories had strung up Jesse with his own horse's bridle, left him on his horse, and then commanded him to take the British oath of allegiance. This, brave Jesse refused to do. The Tories gave the horse a whack which should have left Jesse dangling. Instead, the bridle broke and Jesse bounded off into the blue before his enemies could get their rifles cocked.

It was this plain country boy from the backwoods who was elected to Congress who so impressed his colleagues of the Senate that they made him speaker pro tem.

And it was this same Jesse who cut the ruffles off his new coat with his pen knife saying that he didn't like them, and that the folks back home wouldn't like it. And it was Jesse who declined to have his portrait painted so that even now we do not know what he looked like. And it was Jesse whom the people of North Carolina elected as the governor of their state.

A great, unusual public servant was Jesse Franklin.



Chaucer in English literature courses. Chaucer, the first great English poet, lived from 1340 to 1400. Many of the words used in his noted "Canterbury Tales" are still in use today in Surry County. There is the prefix "a" used before a verb as in "a-goin', a-talkin', a-comin'." There is "holpen" for helped—we say "holped"; "ferre" (fur) for far; "tech" for touch; "swich" (sich) for such; "afeered" for afraid; "heered" for heard; "deef" for deaf, "betwixt" for between, and ten pound for ten pounds—the "s" being left off.

Queen Elizabeth I probably used "hit" instead of it; "jine" for join, "ax" for ask, "hern" for hers, and so on.

In some of the old English, Scottish, and Irish ballads which came over with some of the early settlers—"Barbara Allen" and "Lord Lovill" among them—the color yellow is written as "yallow"; "drap" for drop.

And both Chaucer and Queen Elizabeth I would know and probably used the still more ancient four letter words, now considered vulgar, but coming more often in use nevertheless. These familiar four letter words are old Anglo-Saxon and, in many cases, the sound of the word is suited to the sound of the action. Try it. Even one of the most common four letter words heard in Surry County—and now all over the United States—is in the seventeenth century King James version of the Bible.

Our two most famous Surry Countians, Andy Griffith and Donna Fargo, recognized the picturesque quality of our Surry County culture and capitalized on it, Andy in speece and mores, and Donna on native music.

So we do have a salable, picturesque, treasury chest vocabulary of very ancient lineage here in Surry County. Let's preserve it.



Edwin Newman, a noted TV personality, has written a book called "Strictly Speaking" in which he bemoans the fact that people couch the English language in such elaborate and obscure terms that no one, except those who use those distinctive words, can understand them. He advocates plain speaking.

The people of Surry County always had plain talk and some still do. It is much easier to say "I toted my vittles in a poke" than to say "I carried by my groceries in a paper bag."

College graduates, especially those from the better liberal arts ones, have to be exposed to



## About Surry County

If you were buying a cleared off piece of property and your fifty year old deed said "forty feet to a climbing rose and 50 feet to a lilac," wouldn't you be in a quandary?

So it is with two hundred year old Surry County deeds, only a thousand times worse. A 1775 deed might say "fifty chains to a chestnut," or "one hundred chains to a white oak," or so many chains to so-and-so's line when you have no idea where so-and-so's property was. Once in a while, though, there is a clue.

In the old 1770-80 deeds "Rentfrow's Creek" was obligingly designated as the "east fork of the Tararat" which means our Ararat River east of Mount Airy. But there is "75 chains to a sycamore on an island" in the river: There seems to be another island in these 1770 deeds, but where? Anybody know?

"Loving's Creek" is noted as "the middle fork of the Tararat." We know it as Lovill's Creek. But where was Osburn's Mill — at Green Hill, now Cross Creek, where the old Green Hill woolen mills were? Or was it at the Allred's Mill site? A Jonathan and Stephen Osburn bought property along Loving's Creek in the 1770's and 1780's and we presume they had a mill. But where? And where is "Bledsoe's or Osburn's Creek?" Is it along Loving's Creek or along Stewart's?

Stewart's Creek was known as the "west fork of the Ararat." We know about where John Hanna lived because his graveyard was there until recently — it was on Sparger's Road. But where is Stuart's Little Creek?

Where was the "Naked Bottom" on Paul's Creek? Where was the "Three Mile Bottom, both sides of Paul's Creek, at the fork of the Tararat?" Where was "Lem Jones' old place near the county line?"

We know where Hogan's Creek is down near Siloam and about where the Freemans bought land. But where is the place "both sides of the Tararat River between Two Race Paths?"

We might find Cedar Creek but where is Elk Creek, alias Reddy's River?

We know where Bean Shoals was and probably "Bean Shoals on an island," but where is Bean Shoal Creek?

Oh, brother! If anybody has a clue, give!





like to be outdone. So, early next morning, he rose, built his fire, and watched the stair-steps until he heard the ladies coming down, he then ran and hid himself near the foot of the stairway. As soon as they landed on the lower floor, Dick rushed out of his hiding-place, scaring the misses not a little, and bawled out loudly, 'Good mornin' at ye., ladies! I's fast anuff fur you this time. Now I'll quit yet, es we's even. You got me last night: I's got ye this mornin'.'

"Skitt" Taliaferro was raised on Little Fisher River, went to Alabama where he became a noted clergyman, revisited the scenes of his youth in 1857, published a book of Fisher River tales in 1858 which became a "best-seller" of the time. Here is an incident as recounted in "Fisher River Scenes and Characters."

A band of men one night camped out near the home of one of the "quality" folk. One was sent to borrow a "brand" of fire. He was invited in by the lady who asked him to sit down in a parlor elegantly furnished with a carpet and half a dozen Windsor chairs. This is how he told of his adventure.

"I tell you, boys, with my dirty britches I sot right smack in one o' the finest Weesley chairs you ever seen in all yer borned days, and my beg, mudbustin', pis-ant-killin shoes on thar fine carpet looked like two great big Injun coonoes. I'll be poxed ef I knowed how to hold my hands nur feet."

In the Round Peak community still stands the home of Dick Snow. Let Skitt Taliaferro tell this.

"Dick was a man of respectability, and had a wife whom he and everybody else considered number one. The best of company, even the 'quality' visited his house. The Misses Franklin, daughters of Meshach Franklin, 'the Congressman', went to a Methodist quarterly meeting near Dick's residence, called on, and stayed all night with him. Dick was unacquainted with 'quality ways,' and when the ladies retired to bed upstairs, they bade the family goodnight. He didn't know what it meant, and it worried him worse than the nightmare. At last he concluded it was some rig the young ladies were running on him, and he resolved to retrieve what he had lost, for he was a man who did not

The  
Tribune



# About Surry County

It took the writer the better part of two years to definitely locate Shipp's Mustering Ground which was one of the last mustering places of Revolutionary War soldiers to "give up the ghost." For the reader's information it is about two miles out on S.R. 1605 off S.R. 89 just after you cross Ring's Creek—on the right just at the foot of the hill and at the end of the pavement.

The place has been known locally as "The Granary" because "so much liquor was made there." The most "Famus" story of "Fisher River Scenes" by Skitt Taliaferro might help to explain the name.

At the May and November musters, the old soldiers kept up the "militeer sperit," and "were proud to perform 'revolutions' before all the 'offiffers.'" There was another matter of powerful attraction to the old 'Lutionaries' that was as punctual in attendance as any of the 'patriots.' Josh Easley with his 'gingy cakes' and Hamp Hudson with his 'likker' were men and things as much looked for as 'Capt-ing Moore with his militeer uniform.'

"Hamp Hudson was the only man in that whole country who kept a still-house running all the year; the weaker ones would 'run dry'

...moved up to Hamp's headquarters with a 'doublequick step,' the 'bar'l was tapped'...by the generous Hamp who never reporaced them for their severe accusations. Soon the condemned barrel was emptied, the money was in Hamp's pocket, and he was as merry as 'gingy-Cake Josh.'"

"Uncle Jimmy soon began to sing his Revolutionary ditties, spin his yarns, and was happy enough... The 'litia' and others fell to discussing questions of great moment; but the whole affair ended in skinned noses, gouged eyes, and bruised hands. That was a 'Famus' day in the annals of Shipp's Mustering Ground."





## About Surry County

Up the Sulphur Springs way near the Virginia line, in Virginia, lies the body of one William Letcher, great grandfather of General J.E.B. Stuart, brilliant Civil War cavalry officer, in what is reputedly the oldest known grave in Patrick County. It is rather an elaborate tomb for this part of the country.

William Letcher was a Patriot, a Whig, who gave his life for the cause just as did any other soldier. He was murdered by one Nichols and three or four other Tories, members of a band of desperados who would hide in the nearby mountains, swoop down upon the settlers, rob and harass, and sometimes murder them. Letcher was one of the victims.

To keep these desperados in check, Surry County kept a militia under the leadership of a Captain James Giddens, whose own kinsmen had been killed by the Tories. Giddens lost no time in going after Nichols. He caught him and he hanged him then and there.

Serving under Giddens as scout and spy was James Boyd, a young fellow of another prominent family living near the Virginia line in North Carolina. Boyd later moved to Patrick County, and, in applying for a pension many years later, told the court in Stuart of this incident, and of many of his other adventures of the War.

### Cornwallis On Way

In the late years of the war, word came to the garrison that Cornwallis was on his way to the Moravian community in Forsyth. Also, that Cornwallis would be up this way on their way to the lead mines in Virginia. But how to be sure? Through the faithful and trustworthy young scout, James Boyd, of course.

Boyd went down to the Moravian town of Bethania, found out, but found that Cornwallis was on his way, not to the lead mines, but to Guilford Court House. Hot footing it back, Boyd told his commander who sent his militia post haste down to Guilford.

Several times this writer has heard the tradition that the Mount Airy section had sent some soldiers to the battle of Guilford Court House but that they got there too late.

"So what," the writer thought, "we killed a bear!" In other words, the writer did not believe a word of it. But lo, the almost 200 year old tradition turned out to be correct. The militia from The Hollows did get to Guilford; but when they did get there, the battle had already been fought the day before; the bodies still lying around and unburied. Greene had beaten the Surry men to Cornwallis.

Just think, this hallowed tradition would never have been confirmed; Mount Airy's and vicinity's role in the Revolutionary War would never have come to light if Private James Boyd had not lost his discharge papers!

Added note: It was at the battle of Guilford Courthouse that Richard Taliaferro, son of Dr. John Taliaferro of Little Fisher's River, lost his life. And even if he had lost his son, Dr. Taliaferro worked with the Quakers over the wounded and reprimanded his daughter, Judith, for not attending to the British wounded as well as to the American. A great Christian was Dr. John Taliaferro.



## About Surry County

Just two people seem to have left any kind of a record of how we poor, illiterate, but vigorous people of Surry County lived in the late 1770's and early 1800's — General William Lenoir and "Skitt" Taliaferro, author of "Fisher River Scenes and Characters." General Lenoir had this to say:

"In 1775 Surry was a frontier county. The Mulberry Fields" (Wilkesboro — Wilkes was then part of Surry)" in the upper end was the only place of meeting. The men generally dressed in hunting shirts, short breeches, leggins and moccasins and the women in linsey petticoats and bedgowns and in the summer often without shoes. Some had bonnets made of calico and others wore men's hats.

"The patriotism of the women of this region deserves a perpetual record. It was their heroic conduct that inspired their husbands and sons in the cause of liberty. They urged the men to leave home, and to prefer to die than be slaves, while they stayed home and worked with their own hands at the plough and with the hoe, by day, to provide their husbands and sons in the cause of liberty. They urged the men to leave home, and to prefer to die than be slaves, while they stayed at home and worked with their own hands at the plough and with the hoe, by day, to provide sustenance for their families, and at night with the spinning wheel and loom they made the clothing."

The other was Hardin "Skitt" Taliaferro, grandson of that Great Christian doctor-preacher John Taliaferro and himself a renowned clergyman of Alabama. Skitt had lived with his family on Little Fisher River, cronied around with the neighborhood boys, often went to the muster at Shipp's Mustering Ground and remembered the tales that he had heard there.

In 1858 he wrote an amusing book called "Fisher River Scenes and Characters" which, like Tom Wolfe with his "Look Homeward, Angel," is said to have made the down home folks less than happy, but who now read it with affection and amusement. People who are educated, upright and conventional do not make good copy. Individualists do. And Surry Countians were individualists.



The  
TRIBUNE



# About Surry County

Most names of Surry County rivers, mountains, hollows, etc. seem to bear the names of families of individuals who either owned land or lived in their vicinities. There is Stewart's Creek, named for a family of Stuarts living or owning land along its banks; Lovens, afterwards evolving into Loving's, then Lovill's, after a man named Loven who once owned land at its headwaters. But who was the Paul of Paul's Creek, the Turner of Turner's Mountain, the Butler of Butler's Creek, the Mitchell of Mitchell's River? Anybody know?

Tales pretty nearly agree about how Fisher's Peak got its name. It seems that a man named Daniel Fisher who was surveying the state line climbed to the top and dropped dead from the exertion—a heart attack, no doubt. Native lore says that it was because he drank very cold water, there being a very cold spring on top.

## Fisher River

Fisher River probably took its name from the same Fisher. At one time it was named Fishe River after a William Fishe who lived at its mouth. This Fishe was afterwards killed by the Indians, you remember. Even today some natives refer to "Big Fish" and "Little Fish."

Our two most important rivers originally had Indian names—the Yadkin was Yattkin, and the Ararat Tarrarat. Yattkin was eventually corrupted into Yadkin. (Have you ever heard a Yadkinville native pronounce the "d"? No, it is Yattkinville.) Again, it was a coincidence that like Fishe and Fisher, Tarrarat sounded like the Biblical name of Ararat. Even Pilot Mountain, named by the Moravians Pilot, was once called Mount Ararat, no doubt because Noah could not have missed it had he and his ark been up this way.

Then there were the intriguing descriptive names. How about Buffalo Wallow? It is well known that Buffalo used to roam these woods before the coming of the white man. But how did a stream get to be called Skin Cabin? How did Warrior Mountain get its name? Possum Trot Road, Cracker's Neck Road?

## Skull Camp Mountain

Of all the descriptive names probably Skull Camp Mountain is the most intriguing. One local resident says that a man named Gentry, while camping on the muntain, accidently kicked his foot against a human skull. Skitt Taliaferro wrote in 1858 that in the first settling of the county one or two skeletons were found at what at one time was a hunter's camp. Both tales agree in essential details. And the legend persists that a cave on this mountain was long a hideout for runaway slaves and for Civil War deserters.



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Fisher River History

On the earliest map of Surry County, the 1749 Peter Jefferson (father of Thomas)—Joshua Frye map, Fisher River is designated as "Fishe". A William Fishe lived at its mouth. The story, though, comes after the time of the map.

This is from Hollingsworth's history, the Archibald Murphey papers, and the Moravian Diary.

After the French and Indian War the Indians became more unfriendly. One could hardly blame them. Near the mouth of Fisher River a man named William Fishe and his son were killed by the Indians. A companion named Thompson was wounded. He was pierced with an arrow at his hip and, as he was trying to get away, he was shot through the shoulder with a second arrow which went all the way through. He was afraid to remove the arrow because of the danger of bleeding to death. So he made his way to the Moravian settlement at Bethabara. "In this condition he crossed the Yadkin River to escape the savages. As night approached it began to rain. A new band of warriors forced him to recross the Yadkin and make his way along the Little Yadkin, then to Town Fork, and at last coming from the Upper Sauratown", (Indian village in the vicinity of Westfield), to Bethabara, he made his way to the settlement and gave the alarm. Thompson was twenty four hours in making this journey. The following day the arrow was removed by Dr. Bonn, but the heroic Thompson died of his wound."

The Moravians' story had a happier ending. They said that Dr. Bonn took out the arrow from Thompson's shoulder and "saved his life." They also stated that they sent out a party the next day to bury the bodies of Fishe and his son but the Indians were out in full force and they had to turn back. They also said that Fishe and his son came by to get Thompson to go with them to get some provisions for "the families gathered at a certain place on the Yadkin. Some miles up the river they happened upon a party of Indians, who fired at them and then shot many arrows." The date noted was March 9, 1760 when Thompson came into the Moravian settlement. Tradition states that Daniel Boone later came upon the bodies and buried them.





Hear ye, hear ye, of the account of Revolutionary War soldier James Boyd who, because he had lost his discharge papers, had to prove to an October 1832 Patrick County court that he, indeed, had been a Revolutionary War soldier of Surry County and so was entitled to a pension.

So this is how Mr. Boyd stated his case before Witnesses Martin Cloud, William Carter, Arch. Stuart, Thomas Ayers, and A. Staples. He got his pension.

As a boy of fourteen, James Boyd had first enlisted as a private in place of his father, Joseph, who had been so badly beaten by the Tories that he was unable to march. At that time the family was living in Surry County, maybe near the White Sulphur Springs. James, for most

of his terms, served under Private James Giddens in a militia formed to keep down the Tories who had dens in the mountains from which they would swoop down and molest the citizens, maybe kill them. Militia headquarters were at Osburn's Mill on Loving's Creek. (Where was Osburn's Mill?) Twice James Boyd volunteered before he became of age. At the age of sixteen he was put on the muster list.

At one time James was given to General Andrew Pickens who came up to help out the local militia. James, with "about six others, were given to General Pickens to act as spies or pilots, Pickens and his army being strangers to the country." Boyd's assignment was to chase away



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Son Searched For Home Site

Just what kind of a man would trust his teenage son to set out through a virgin wilderness in search for a future home for him? His father?

And what kind of a man would take his son's word as to the suitability of that home in virgin land, this land of Surry County?

Bernard Franklin (b. 1731—d.1828) would and did.

The son, Jesse Franklin, when 16 or 17 years old—a teenager—came down through the virgin forests of southeast Virginia and chose an unclaimed tract in beautiful Mitchell's River Valley for his father, Bernard, who moved there with his family. Probably Bernard did not even check it out.

Bernard was smart and he was industrious. He, unlike many of his contemporaries could read and write. He wrested a living from the virgin soil and died a comparatively rich man.

Bernard was religious. He was a Primitive Baptist. What other father would have named four of his sons Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednigo—and Jesse?

Bernard was patriotic and he was courageous.

Bernard, when the conflict between the colonies and the British crown broke out, threw his sympathies and support to the colonists. Moreover, he made no bones about it. For his pains, he and his family were continually harassed by the Surry County Tories who were little more than desperados. (More about this later). They often made Bernard the target of their wrath.

On one occasion, one of a group of ruffians grabbed Bernard's new hat off his head and put it on his own. He then put his old and dirty hat on Bernard's. Angered, Bernard grabbed it off, stamped it on the ground under his feet and exclaimed, "Would that I could do that for every Tory in this land!"

Neither was Bernard's home safe. His household buried many of its valuables in the garden and planted potato hills over them. They were never found. Neither was a sock full of gold and silver coins which an intrepid old aunt living in the home had hidden under her apron while she calmly knitted away and watched the Tories ransack the home.

Great man, Bernard.





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## Religion—Catch If You Can

Early religion in Surry County had sort of “catch if you can” quality. At first there were no churches, no church organizations, only scattered preaching services.

As early as 1760 the Moravians had noted that Baptist ministers were preaching up in “The Hollow.” So the Baptists could well be the first church represented in Surry County.

At this time the Moravians were sending missionaries up to preach in “The Hollows” at “Dorchester’s house”. They noted that they preached in English, for of course the Surry County people of British descent could not understand the native German language of the Moravians.

Not until 1772 was a formal church formed. The Quakers from New Garden, now Guilford College, came through Quaker Gap in the Sauratowns and established a church in the “west fields” which name stuck. The congregation and cemetery still exist on the very spot on which the church got started.

In 1788 the first Methodist “circuit rider”, Bishop Asbury, came riding down through Flower Gap (between Piper’s and Fancy) on his way to Clemmons in now Forsyth County. Asbury spent the night with the Armstrongs on Paul’s Creek, went down Stuart’s to the Ararat, and entered the Yadkin at Siloam. In his wake—he came through two more times—Methodist “societies” were formed, Surry’s first most probably at Siloam. Even though the first authenticated Methodist preacher came up Surry way in 1815 it was not until the late 1820’s and 30’s that more organizations were formed.

Meanwhile, by 1794 the Baptists had taken root at Stuart’s Creek which is called “Old Hollow” to this day in what is probably the oldest organized Baptist congregation in Surry.

The Presbyterians did not organize until 1858.

The Baptists most likely were the most in number with the Methodists next. Surry Countains have always been somewhat scrappy, and when the Methodists and Baptist got wound up the fur began to fly and the fun began.

# SURRY

# 76

## SOMETHING MORE

Early religion in Surry County had sort of "catch if you can" quality. At first there were no churches, no church organizations, only scattered preaching services.

As early as 1760 the Moravians had noted that Baptist ministers were preaching up in "The Hollow. So the Baptist could well be

the first church represented in Surry County.

At this time the Moravians were sending missionaries up to preach in "The Hollows" at "Dorchester's house." They noted that they preached in English, for of course the Surry County people of British descent could not understand the native German language of the Moravians.

Not until 1772 was a formal church formed. The Quakers from New Garden, now Guilford College, came through Quaker Gap in the Sauratowns and established a church in the "west fields" which name stuck. The congregation and cemetery will exist on the very spot on which the church got started.

In 1788 the first Methodist "circuit rider," Bishop Asbury, came riding down through Flower Gap (between Piper's and Fancy) on his way to Clemmons in the present Forsyth County. Asbury spent the night with the Armstrongs on Paul's Creek, traveled down Stuart's to the Ararat, and entered the Yadkin at Siloam. In his wake—he came through two more times—Methodist "societies" were formed, Surry's first most probably at Siloam. Even though the first authenticated Methodist preacher came up Surry way in 1815 it was not until the late 1820's and 30's that more organizations were formed.

Meanwhile, by 1794 the

Baptist had taken root at Stuart's Creek which is called "Old Hollow" to this day is what is probably the oldest organized Baptist congregation in Surry.

The Presbyterians did not organize until 1858.

The Baptist most likely were the most in number with the Methodists next. Surry Countains have always been somewhat scrappy, and when the Methodists and Baptist got wound up the fur began to fly and the fun began. (More Next Week)



# SURRY

# 76

## SOMETHING MORE

Good men there were in the early 1800's.

When Quakers are good they are good. They traditionally hated slavery. The following story comes from Mrs. Dellie Owens of Westfield. William Jessup of Westfield "for the love and respect that I do hold for the Society of Friends, called Quakers, do hereby give...certain negroes: namely, Richard Annis, Richard Asson, Ausy, Martin, George, Rachel, Robbin, Jim, Nancy, Mills, Issac, Annis and Merriam" to the Society." This was duly recorded in court. It was a generous gift. Negroes were a very expensive commodity.

Incidentally, until after the Civil War, negroes worshipped with the whites. They were listed as members with the Mount Airy Methodists until 1872. By 1889 they had left the Primitive Baptists and had formed their Association.

Two early preachers, who did not have much formal education, but who surely must had the grace of God, were Elder Johnny Jones of the Primitive Baptist faith, and James Needham of the Methodist.

Johnny Jones lived down near Level Cross off the Jones Road on the Wesley Taylor farm. His wife probably planted what is now the

second largest boxwood in North Carolina. It is a sight to behold down there behind his house. Edler Jones served as moderator of the Fisher River Association from 1848 until his death in 1876.

James Needham, better known as "Father Needham", was born in 1799 and preached a sermon just before his 100th birthday which he didn't live to see.

Father Needham was a supply preacher—that is, he was never a member of the Methodist Conference, but he filled in everywhere. He is buried down at New Hope Church at Ararat in which yard stands a tree. Father Needham is said to have been sitting under this tree when, suddenly, he heard a voice say, "Get out from under there!" He got, and just as he moved, Father Needham reported that a big limb fell just where he had been sitting.

Another time, during a big drought, the Methodists got together with Father Needham to pray for rain. There was not a cloud in the sky, not even one "as big as a pocket handkerchief." Father Needham prayed, then told the people to go home, that there would be rain. Somebody asked Father Needham hadn't he better hurry since it was going to rain. It is said that Father Needham replied that he had prayed for rain and that he could take it. It is a well known old Surry County tale that before the congregation got home, the heavens opened and the land was drenched.

\* \* \*

Surry County in the early 1800's was rural. People had to work so hard for a mere living that they did not have

time for much socializing. The great religious revival of the early 1800's inspired meetings and the meetings gave a good opportunity for getting to know neighbors. Members could talk over their crops, their housekeeping chores, their families. And where better could people learn to know one another?

These protracted meetings, of course, served another purpose. They gave the young people their chance to see what boys had suddenly become handsome men, and what pretty girls had suddenly grown up. It also gave the less romantically inclined to get into scrapes such as pouring salt into the open mouth of one fellow whose brethren were trying to convert him even if he responded by going to sleep with his mouth open. (This fellow decided, in his haste to get water, it is said, that he didn't want any part of religion—it tasted too much of salt.)

The Baptists held their gatherings in two day meetings and weekend associations which custom still exists today among the Primitive Baptists. The members were housed and fed by the host members.

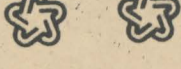
The Methodists had camp meetings which could last as long as a week. In August, between cultivation and crop gathering time, the people took off. They would camp out, put up in tents, build rough shelters, and build a brush arbor for the preaching. Early camp meetings around Mount Airy were said to have been held at Brower's Springs out on the Quarry Road, in the grove across from Salem Church, at the crossroads at Toast, and at White Sulphur

Springs where the sulphur water could easily mix with the brimstone sermons.

Like at their fellow Baptist meetings, preacher after preacher preached. The longest sermon which a very prominent Methodist preacher, Peter Doub, who was up here in the 1840's and who is said to have preached at Brower's Springs, was four hours and fifteen minutes! This might have been a little long for even the most pious preachers because it is said that Doub's presiding elder said to him,

"Doub, you have sense and you know how to preach, but your sermons are too long, you wear the people out. You are like a man looking up a river, who turns as if to fish in every little creek or branch that runs into the main stream. Keep to the main channel. You do not need to tell all you know in one mon," Enough said.





# SURRY



## SOMETHING MORE

Around about 1800 a great religious revival swept over the young United States, and in Great Britain as well. Surry County was not immune.

The Quakers were already going their quiet way at Westfield. The Baptist had established a few scattered churches; and Methodist Bishop Asbury had planted a seed at Siloam and at Jonesville through his friendship with Hardy Jones—he did not seem to tarry long the other citizens of Surry County.

Along around 1830 or 40, religion seemed to have taken on new life. In 1838 a great missionary, Jedidah McCraw, had come to Surry in interest of his new Mormon faith and had started work in the Westfield-Pilot Mountain area. New Baptist and Methodist churches seemed to have sprung up like seed after a rain in the 1830's. Their preaching was of the hell fire and brimstone type which carried over into their dealings with one another. Here is an account innocently record by an 1858 Methodist preacher diarist:

“Met up with old Bro. Hicks who I saw at a camp meeting on the Blue Ridge Mission in 1846. Bro. Hicks is a local preacher on the Surry Circuit. He told me he was converted under the preaching of Waddel Johnson, the first Methodist preacher that came through this country. He said that he had often heard of the Methodist preachers, and had always heard them represented as false prophets. But when they came in reach he was determined to go to hear them and accordingly when Rev. Johnson preached in some five or six miles of him he was present, and under conviction, before going to hear him, and had the horrors of hell so depicted and the beauties of heaven so portrayed that he could not longer and fell as a dead man thinking he was going to die. After passing a few days between hope and fear while lying upon his bed of rest, meditating upon his condition, and the mercy of God, the Lord caused gladness to fill his soul and joy to spring up in his heart.

Doubtless, this experience was repeated over and over in early Surry County. There are still vestiges of it to be seen in some of our rural churches. That early Surry County humorist preacher, “Skitt” Taliaferro, author of the 1858 “Fisher River Scenes” in which he poked gentle fun at some of these meetings, was himself accused of letting his feelings run away with him in the pulpit.





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## Revival Swept Area

Around about 1800 a great religious revival swept over the young United States and in Great Britain as well. Surry County was not immune.

The Quakers were already going their quiet way at Westfield. The Baptists had established a few scattered churches; and Methodist Bishop Asbury had planted a seed at Siloam and at Jonesville through his friendship with Hardy Jones—he did not seem to tarry with the other citizens of Surry County.

Along around 1830 or '40, religion seemed to have taken on new life. In 1838 a great missionary, Jehediah McCraw, had come to Surry in interest of his new Mormon faith and had started work in the Westfield-Pilot Mountain area. New Baptist and Methodist churches seemed to have sprung up like seed after a rain in the 1830's. Their preaching was of the hell fire and brimstone type which carried over into their dealings with one another. Here is an account innocently recorded by an 1858 Methodist preacher diarist:

"met up with old Brother Hicks who I saw at a camp meeting on the Blue Ridge Mission in 1856. Bro. Hicks is a local preacher on the Surry Circuit. He told me he was converted under the preaching of Waddle Johnson, the first Methodist preacher that came through this country. He said that he had often heard of the Methodist preachers, and had always heard them represented as false prophets. But when they came in reach he was determined to go to hear them and accordingly then Rev. Johnson preached in some five or six miles of him he was present, and under conviction, before going to hear him, and had the horrors of hell so depicted and the beauties of heaven so portrayed that he could hold out no longer and fell as a dead man thinking he was going to die. After passing a few days between hope and fear while lying upon his bed of rest, meditating upon his condition, and the mercy of God, the Lord caused gladness to fill his soul and joy to spring up in his heart."

Doubtless, this experience was repeated over and over in early Surry County. There are still vestiges of it to be seen in some of our rural churches. That early Surry County humorist preacher, "Skitt" Taliaferro, author of the 1858 "Fisher River Scenes" in which he poked gentle fun at some of these meetings, was himself accused of letting his feelings run away with him in the pulpit.



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## Hunting Historical Sites

The Surry County Bicentennial Commission is in the process of erecting Bicentennial markers pointing out some sites of interest to Surry County's history. Have you ever wondered how these sites came to be authenticated?

Well, in many cases it is not easy. Take the site of the Jonathan Unthank plantation, for example. Jonathan Unthank was Mount Airy's first postmaster, and it was from his plantation name, Mount Airy, from which it is said that the town of Mount Airy got its name.

Tradition, and it is mostly tradition, puts the house down on old 52 just south of town where the Moose Lodge is being built. Nothing is left there to authenticate the site. The writer and Doris Belton Allred, whose father's farm it once was, tramped it looking for clues. We did find the old road bed crossing the brow of the hill which would have gone by his house.

We do know where Mount Airy's first textile mill, started by Jacob Brower in the 1840's, stood. It is down on Hamburg Street, on that unsightly dump heap, just across from the stockyards. Mr. Porter Cooke of Pilot Mountain who used to live nearby and who helped tear the old building down, verified this. And, by the way, notice that old arched stone bridge across the road, built without mortar, which once spanned the old mill race. The road went over the bridge, crossed the present road at right angles, curved around the hill and crossed the river a little way down the stream. The bridge site is marked by a very huge tree.

But why were the Hamburg Mill and the Unthank place connected? Simply because Mr. Brower mentioned the Widow Unthank's house in one of his deeds which made the writer have the gnawing thought that maybe the Unthank house was on the old Brower house site. So off to Dobson to look up deeds.

But how do you interpret this 1836 deed in which the Widow Unthank's dower rights were being established? (She received one third of her husband's extensive land holdings, and her home site covered almost a square mile.) The deed runs like this: "Beginning at a dogwood stump at the old Still" (Steele?) "place...four chains to a Spanish oak...eighteen chains to a black oak at H. Samuel's corner west on his line fifty five chains to a post oak...eighty five chains to a hickory" and and so on until every kind of tree which grew in our forests were covered, it seems.

But happily the magic word "and" was inserted which seemed to have saved the day. It said that the Widow Unthank, who was one of Jesse Franklin's daughters, incidently, received a tract along the Ararat River, the "Harris tract". This could have been the land to which Mr. Brower's deed referred.

So the Unthank must have been at its traditional site. The distance between this site and the location of the known Brower house site was very short as the crow files. The two houses must have been contemporaries.

But this reasoning might at some future date turn out to be wrong. Who knows?



# About Surry County

Wouldn't it be fascinating if the air around the courts at Rockford would suddenly bust forth with some revelations? The writer would like, for example, for it to straighten out land boundaries and point out the location of this post, that white pine, that chestnut, that white oak that poplar, so and so's boundary.

But along with the mundane things like issuing licenses, setting fees, mapping out roads, making appointments, probating wills, the court had some interesting tasks to perform.

It doubtless was in a dither about the unfavorable report which Dorothea Dix made to the General Assembly after a visit to the poor house to the north of town. However, it did help in poor house and asylum reform.

The courthouse steps were used as a slave block. One respected Negro remembered being sold three times from the steps of Rockford courthouse.

The court snickered, no doubt, when a bastardy case came up, and became self righteous when it required a father to help support his illegitimate child.

## Jail Dimensions

It mulled long about how to build a jail before it came to these dimensions: double walls, timbers a foot thick and square hewed one foot apart, space fitted up with stones; double floors, lower rooms fitted for criminals, upper floor walls double but close together, both stories to be ceiled with one and one-half inch thick oak plank, outside walls same and well nailed with long board spikes.

The jailer was to receive 35 cents for each prisoner held.

Along with the above, Mrs. Lucy Houck in her "Story of

Rockford" has noted some grimmer cases. (Relax, Mrs. Houck was considerate and named no names. You can ferret them out at the Dobson courthouse, if you like.)

Not only were stocks erected but a pillory too. Sometimes not only was the defendant fined, put in the pillory, but his ears were cut off and nailed to the pillory until sundown.

Often, offenders were sentenced to receive twenty, twenty-five, thirty-nine, or whatever, lashes on his bare back, the sentence to be "executed immediately." Effective too, no doubt. Sometimes, the criminal had to receive lashes as well as stand in the pillory.


Then there were the hangings, not too many maybe. But when one took place there was no dilly dallying. The hangings took place at a convenient hour in the daytime so that all who were interested could come to see justice done.

No lengthy, expensive delays at our Rockford.



**Keepsake**  
REGISTERED DIAMOND RINGS

When you see "Keepsake" in the ring and on the tag, you can buy with confidence... because Keepsake guarantees a diamond of superior cut and color. You simply can't buy any finer diamond ring.



**Wall's**  
Elkin's Leading Jeweler  
East Main Street

# SURRY

# 76

## SOMETHING MORE

Can't you just see court day in the hilly town of Rockford down on the banks of the Yadkin? Milling around the dusty streets would be preoccupied lawyers, hustling housewives, bustling tavern keepers, pressured storekeepers, apprehensive defendants, their anxious families, girl and boy show-offs, and all the thrill seekers who came to get some kicks. Even old Jenkins was there.

Mr. Rom Folger, one of Rockford's native sons, tells the story like this.

"There lived south of the river an old man named Jenkins who, for some meritorious service to the county in the time of W. P. Dobson was granted privilege of retailing 'spirits' in small quantities without license. On Sunday evening before each court session one could see Jenkins wending his way up through Rockford to the lot known as 'the devil's half-acre.' It was named because a 'grog shop' was operated there by an old woman, and with its attendant evils the place was notorious. Early Monday morning Jenkins would procure four forked sticks, drive them in the ground, lay his crossed pieces on with a board on these, and, setting his jug and a half-pint cup on his improvised counter, he drew up a white flint stone upon which he sat and was ready for business. Upon one occasion Lincoln Smith, editor of *The Greensboro Patriot*, visited Rockford during court in interest of his paper and upon his return wrote for his paper about this visit. He described Rockford as being a city set on a hill, or a hill successively terraced. He also described what he saw on the courtyard, with Landlord Jenkins prominent in the midst with his cup and jug ready and anxious to wait upon the thirsty public."

What a formidable obstacle old Jenkins made for the keepers of the public morals and for Solomon Graves of Mount Airy and to Charles Taliaferro of Fisher River, both boluble opponents of spirits.

And what a let down for Rockford people, the Dobsons, the Holyfields, the Burruses, the Hamlins, the Ayers, the Hughes, the Yorks, the Brays, and all their Surry neighbors when court was over.





# SURRY

# 76

## SOMETHING MORE

On the Yadkin, about halfway between the east and west borders of Surry County lies the picturesque village of Rockford, the first county seat within our Surry County borders.

In 1789 a new county seat was to be established—we then had Yadkin, remember. After the first court had been held at the Richard Horne plantation, just east of Rockford, for about a year, court was moved to the new village at the White Rock Ford.

The first court is thought to have been held at the home of Elihu Ayers. Then a wooden courthouse, reputedly held together with nails from a forge on the river, was said to have been built. It was not until 1830 that the majestic courthouse was built on the commanding hill overlooking the village. The offices were on the ground floor; the court room upstairs. Unfortunately, a fire gutted the structure in 1925 so that only the outside walls give us an idea of what the courthouse must have been like.

On the fifty three acre tract bought from Thomas and Moses Ayers were laid out the three main streets, High, Water, and Cabin. Around them sprung up dwelling houses, law offices—said to have been just down the hill from the courthouse—boarding houses, stores, and what have you. In 1791 a boarding house license was given to Jesse Lester; in 1797 one to Reuben Grant. Moses Ayers received a ferry license in 1795. A grist mill, a forge, a blacksmith shop, a tinsmith shop, a tannery and other businesses soon appeared.

Since the terrain was rocky and hilly, well water was hard to come by in most places. So the inhabitants hid themselves to the public spring, Tanyard Spring, to get drinking water, do their washing, and to receive and dispense gossip. Incidentally, Tanyard Spring got its name from the tannery there.

The stocks were put down

near the river and a jail erected, no doubt leaving room for the gallows.

Last, but not least, was the Masonic Hall, built a little way up the hill across from the courthouse. This old building housed Unaminty Lodge No. 34, chartered in 1797, probably the oldest lodge in northwest North Carolina, and one which is being remembered by present day Surry Masons who seek to restore the building.

# SURRY

# 76

## SOMETHING MORE

Wouldn't it be fascinating if the air around the courts at Rockford would suddenly bust forth with some revelations? The writer would like, for example, for it to straighten out land boundaries and point out the location of this post, that white pine, that chestnut, that white oak, that poplar, so and so's boundary.

But along with the mundane things like issuing licenses, setting fees, mapping out roads, making appointments, probating wills, the court had some interesting tasks to perform.

It doubtless was in a dither about the unfavorable report which Dorothea Dix made to the General Assembly after a visit to the poor house to the north of town. It helps in poor house and asylum reform, though.

The courthouse steps were used as a slave block. One respected negro remembered being sold three times from the steps of Rockford courthouse.

The court snickered, no doubt, when a bastardy case came up, became self righteous when it required a father to help support his illegitimate child.

It mulled long about how to build a jail before it came to these dimensions: double walls, timbers a foot thick and square hewed 1 foot apart, space fitted up with stones; double floors, lower rooms fitted for criminals, upper floor walls double but close together, both stories to be ceiled with 1½ inch thick oak plank, outside walls same and well nailed with long board spikes."

The jailer was to receive 35 cents for each prisoner held.

Along with the above, Mrs. Lucy Houck in her "Story of Rockford" has noted some grimmer cases. (Relax, Mrs. Houck was considerate and named no names. You can ferret them out at the Dobson courthouse, if you like.)

Not only were stocks erected but a pillory too. Sometimes not only was the defendant fined, put in the pillory, but his ears were cut off and nailed to the pillory until sundown.

Often, offenders were sentenced to receive twenty, twenty-five, thirty-nine, or whatever, lashes on his bare back, the sentence to be "executed immediately." Effective too, no doubt. Sometimes, the criminal had to receive lashes as well as stand in the pillory.

Then there were the hangings, not too many maybe. But when there was one there was no dilly dallying. The hangings took place at a convenient hour in the daytime so that all who were interested could come to see justice done.

No lengthy, expensive delays at our Rockford.







Our papers are full of accounts of "rotten politics", either real or implied. We should have been living during the early days of our country. Some of the maneuverings were beauts. Take the case of the first two county seats, for example.

In the early days, in the 1700's, Surry County included Surry, Yadkin, Forsyth, Stokes, as well as Ashe, Wilkes, Allegheny, etc.—in fact all of the northwestern counties. A county seat should be in the center of things. So a good site was chosen at Mulberry Fields which is now Wilkesboro.

But do you know where it landed? At Gideon Wright's farm down on the Yadkin in Forsyth. There it stayed until Martin Armstrong outsmarted Gideon in just a few years.

Martin convinced his gullible constituents that Gideon's place was too far away from things and should be moved. So it came to pass—at Martin's place just two miles to the east!

"Little Richmond" was quite a place, evidently. Folks said that it was so wicked that if you wanted to go to Hell, you needn't go any further than to Richmond. The good Lord must have agreed because, in a few years, he sent a cyclone which wiped Richmond off the face of the earth and it went, presumedly, to a more congenial climate. Now only a few stones, ground depressions, and an old lock are all that is left of Surry's first and second county seats.

To finish briefly with the county seats—when Stokes and Forsyth were taken from Surry in 1787, things were better. This time the county seat was moved peaceably to Rockford which was in the center of the then county, Yadkin and Surry.

When Yadkin was lopped off in 1850, again the people chose a county seat to be put in the center, Dobson. By then things were not so perfect.

The county dilly-dallied about building a courthouse so long that a visiting judge stated flatly that he would not return until a better courthouse was started. So one was built.

In 1917 the first courthouse was adjudged obsolete and it was decided to build a new one. Then Elkin and Mount Airy got into it—each stating that the courthouse should be built in its respective town and threatened to secede if it wasn't. While they were sputtering, the county commissioners got busy, blew up the old brick courthouse, and started on the present one. So there it is, in the center of things.

# SURRY

# 76

## SOMETHING MORE

"All roads lead to Rockford" was a favorite saying about this new frontier village on the Yadkin, county seat of Surry County. Rockford wasn't much, but it was the best the county had with the possible exceptions of Huntsville and Jonesville, across the river in now Yadkin. Here the town and county fathers quickly learned how to issue licenses, set fees, make political appointments—some no doubt to their advantage—mete out justice, see what the rest of the world was doing by reading the few precious newspapers, etc. Mrs. Lucy Houck in her "Story of Rockford" aptly put it when she said that "fashion and education could be passed by, but politics never."

And no doubt the small town of Rockford began with a bang, literally. Andrew Jackson came to town.

Andrew was something of a roughneck, and a hot tempered one at that. He had studied law at Salisbury, received his law license in Richmond—not the Virginia but the Forsyth County one. He undoubtedly came to Rockford at one time, probably several, since, as Mrs. Houck says, he liked to follow circuit courts and keep up with his friends at Rockford. It is said that Andrew kept the townspeople awake from his all night carousing, and that is certainly in keeping. Andrew still had many rough edges on him by the time he reached the White House. He left Rockford, so the well known story goes, owing a board bill to Jesse Lester which he later sought to pay. (Maybe he had come to the conclusion that a rising politician should not leave a reputation of a deadbeat to an up-and-coming county seat.) And he found beside the cancelled bill a notation "Paid in full by the Battle of New Orleans."

The story that Andrew Johnson also practiced law in Rockford had just as well be laid to rest here. Johnson moved to Tennessee around 1827, set up a tailor shop there, and became interested in Tennessee politics, which, you remember, did not want to have too much dealings with North Carolina's. Perhaps Johnson did come by Rockford, as tradition says, but hardly to practice law.

Chances are, though, that Aaron Burr did visit Rockford and stay all night at the Grant Hotel. It is said that he became interested in a promising apprentice of the tavern keeper, Watson Holyfield, offered to take him with him and give him an education, which offer Watson declined.

There is no doubt that James K. Polk would visit his cousin, William Polk Dobson, at Dobson Hill. The two cousins were good friends, were in close touch when James K. Polk made the presidency.







## About Surry County

*The Tribune is presenting a series of articles on Surry County history. This column is provided by the Surry American Revolution Bicentennial Commission.*

Now that the Bicentennial year has officially opened, we in Surry County need to sit back and do a little snobbery act. The official Bicentennial date is July 4, 1976, two hundred years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence which event made us officially a nation.

We in Surry County are five and one half years older than that. We were designated as a county in the latter part of 1770 but were not officially made a county until 1771. But for the purpose of boasting, let's use the 1770 date.

**We were the frontier of one of the original 13 colonies.** What we have by right of birth, other states would give their eye teeth to have—a pedigree.

### **Early Settlers**

Our county is so old that we really do not know when our first settlers came. This is especially true about the region around Mount Airy. There were enough inhabitants in this section for the Salem Moravians to have noted it as a settlement in their Journal in 1762. That was a good 14 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

And a man named Morgan Bryant sold his land located around Siloam in 1771, which he had already bought from original owner, Lord Granville, many years before, to a settler named Samuel Freeman. That was five years before the Declaration of Independence.

By 1776 Westfield was already four years old.



The Times



A university history professor once impressed the writer with two maxims of research: first, if you cannot prove that a fact that you believe to be true is true, then act upon the premise that nobody can prove that it is **not** true; second, that after the Revolutionary War our people were so busy trying to make a living nobody had time to write anything down, and, consequently, information on the early days of our Republic is scarce. Both maxims apply, it seems to the writer, especially to Surry County.

After the War, people seemed to have come in great numbers to Surry County. Some came from other parts of our state, but most, it seems, came from nearby

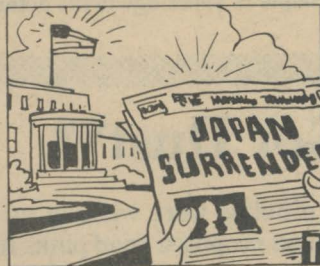
Virginia. The majority of our inhabitants were poor and illiterate; even Jesse Franklin had to quit school before he had reached his teens. But then, this lack of rudimentary education and of absence of personal niceties and comforts were true of most of the country. Even George Washington, the foremost gentleman of the land, was a lousy speller.

Our land as a whole was poor. Our bottom lands were good but the uplands left something to be desired. Mount Airy, especially, has very poor soil as those who try to farm on granite dust can testify. So the rich soil was no magnet for those people bent on making money from land.

There seemed to have been a

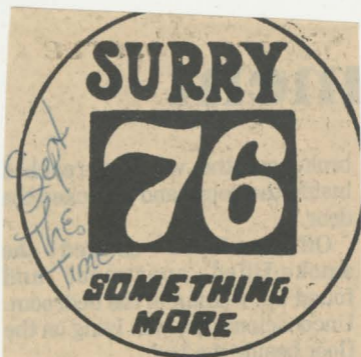


### HISTORIC BANNER



The Stars and Stripes that flew over Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, rippled above the United Nations Charter meeting at San Francisco and over the Big Three conference at Potsdam, according to the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. This same flag was flying over the White House on August 14, 1945, when the Japanese accepted surrender terms.





We will just jump ahead of this little continuing historic narrative of Surry County to go to the Revolutionary War and to the Battle of Kings' Mountain which was a crucial turning point in our war for independence.

On September 26 a group of patriotic individuals and groups will begin a 150 mile march from Scycamore Shoals in Tennessee to Kings' Mountain to reenact that historic march of the mountain men. Along the route they will be joined by other groups. If you are interested contact Bob Foy, 154 West Elm Street, Mount Airy, North Carolina or Rip Torn, Appalachian Consortium, Appalachian State University, Boone, N. C.

If you remember, we colonist were having a very hard time getting our independence. In 1780 Cornwallis was overrunning the south. Under him was a Major Ferguson who was stationed down around Charlotte and who was to help keep us patriots in line. But we stubborn mountaineers kept giving him trouble. Finally, Major Ferguson sent word that if we didn't stop harassing his troops he would cross the mountain, destroy our crops, and hang our leaders.

That did it. Our feisty mountaineers banded together from all over the mountains, overtook Ferguson at Kings' Mountain, and won one of the major victories of the war.

Our own Jesse Franklin, twenty years old, then living in the Mitchells River valley, had a big part in the battle. He rounded up some neighbor boys, among them the Lewis's from around Mountain Park—Charles, James, Joel, John, Micajah, and William—marched down to Ronda where he joined his Uncle Ben Cleveland who was one of the main leaders. Then, like snowball, they gathered volunteers along the way, met other mountain men on Rendevous Mountain and at Morganton, went on down to overtake Ferguson.

The mountaineers were in such a hurry to get there that they stormed a mountain only to find it was the wrong mountain. To commemorate this momentous



## About Surry County

*The Tribune is presenting a series of articles on Surry County history. This column is provided by the Surry American Revolution Bicentennial Commission.*

### History of Fisher River

On the earliest map of Surry County, the 1749 Peter Jefferson (father of Thomas)—Joshua Frye map, Fisher River is designated as "Fishe". A William Fishe lived at its mouth. The story, though, comes after the time of the map.

This is from Hollingsworth's history, the Archibald Murphey papers and the Moravian Diary.

After the French and Indian War the Indians became more unfriendly. One could hardly blame them. Near the mouth of Fisher River a man named William Fishe and his son were killed by the Indians. A companion named Thompson was wounded. He was pierced with an arrow at his hip and, as he was trying to get away, he was shot through the shoulder with a second arrow which went all the way through.

He was afraid to remove the arrow because of the danger of bleeding to death. So he made his way to the Moravian settlement at Bethabara. "In this condition he crossed the Yadkin River to escape the savages. As night approached it began to rain. A new band of warriors forced him to recross the Yadkin and make his way along the Little Yadkin, then to Town Fork, and at last coming from the Upper Sauratown," (Indian village in the vicinity of Westfield), to Bethabara, he made his way to the settlement and gave the alarm. Thompson was 24 hours in making this journey. The following day the arrow was removed by Dr. Bonn, but the heroic Thompson died of his wound."

#### Moravians' Story

The Moravians' story had a happier ending. They said that Dr. Bonn took out the arrow from Thompson's shoulder and "saved his life." They also stated that they sent out a party the next day to bury the bodies of Fishe and his son but the Indians were out in full force and they had to turn back.

They also said that Fishe and his son came by to get Thompson to go with them to get some provisions for "the families gathered at a certain place on the Yadkin. Some miles up the river they happened upon a party of Indians, who fired at them and then shot many arrows." The date noted was March 9, 1760, when Thompson came into the Moravian settlement. Tradition states that Daniel Boone later came upon the bodies and buried them.





*The Times*



When one is doing research, he never knows when some word, phrase, fact, seemingly insignificant, becomes a key of primary importance which will unlock the mysteries of the subject under consideration.

In this case, a former area resident, in looking up family

history in the National Archives in Washington, came across the records of one James Boyd, an ancestor who ordinarily would not have been of any importance whatsoever to the Revolutionary War history of Mount Airy and vicinity.

But James Boyd had been a

Revolutionary War soldier.

And, luckily, James Boyd, Revolutionary War soldier, had lost his discharge papers.

In consequence, Mr. Boyd, 69 years old, then living in Patrick County, in 1932, had to appear in the Stuart court, before witnesses, to prove to the said court that he, indeed, was entitled to a soldier's pension granted by the 1832 Congress.

In so doing, Mr. Boyd opened up an entirely new chapter of the Revolutionary War as it was fought in Mount Airy and vicinity; it clarified certain references to this section in the Moravian records; and it confirmed the truth of a long standing tradition held in Mount Airy and vicinity for almost two hundred years.

The Salem Moravians had stated in their Journal that The Hollows (region around Mount Airy) was overrun by Tories who were little more than desperados. These bands would hide in the mountains, swoop down upon the settlers, destroy their homes and crops, and, in some cases, kill them. To combat this lawlessness a militia had to be stationed in The Hollows. General Andrew Pickens was in general charge, and on at least one occasion made a stay up here.

Mr. Boyd stated that his leader was Captain James Giddens and that their headquarters were at Osburn's Mill on Loving's Creek, about "ten miles from the mountains." (Now where was Osburn's Mill—Green Hill now Cross Creek, Allred's Mill, Sides' Mill?)

James Boyd, himself, was a victim of Tory outrage. They had so crippled his father, Joseph Boyd, that he was unable to march. So his fourteen year old son, James, volunteered as a private to serve in his father's place.

Two times underage James signed up—because of his youth he could not be drafted. On one of these stints, he pursued the notorious Edmund Fanning (of Alamance Battle fame) to the Reft Swamps in the eastern part of the state; on another he fought in the skirmish at Shallowford in Yadkin County.

Then James became of age and really signed up for regular duty. And it was his activities around Mount Airy that will interest us. So, more about James Boyd, Revolutionary War soldier, next week.

# The TRIBUNE About Surry County

"Skitt" Taliaferro was raised on Little Fisher River, went to Alabama where he became a noted clergyman, revisited the scenes of his youth in 1857 and published a book of Fisher River tales in 1858 which became a "best-seller" of the time. Here is an incident as recounted in "Fisher River Scenes and Characters."

A band of men one night camped out near the home of one of the "quality" folk. One was sent to borrow a "brand" of fire. He was invited in by the lady who asked him to sit down in a parlor elegantly furnished with a carpet and half a dozen Windsor chairs. This is how he told of his adventure.

"I tell you, boys, with my dirty britches I sot right smack in one o' the finest Weesley chairs you ever seen in all yer borned days, and my beg, mudbustin', pis-ant-killin shoes on thar fine carpet looked like two great big Injun coonoes. I'll be oxed ef I knowed how to hold my hands nur feet.

"Dick was a man of respectability, and had a wife whom he and everybody else considered number one. The best of company, even the 'quality' visited his house. The Misses Franklin, daughters of Meshack Franklin, 'the Congressman,' went to a Methodist quarterly meeting near Dick's residence, called on, and stayed all night with him.

"Dick was unacquainted with 'quality ways,' and when the ladies retired to bed upstairs, they bade the family goodnight. He didn't know what it meant, and it worried him worse than the nightmare. At last he concluded it was some rig the young ladies were running on him, and he

resolved to retrieve what he had lost, for he was a man who did not like to be outdone.

"So, early next morning, he rose, built his fire, and watched the stair-steps until he heard the ladies coming down, he then ran and hid himself near the foot of the stairway. As soon as they landed on the lower floor, Dick rushed out of his hiding-place, scaring the misses not a little, and bawled out loudly, 'Good mornin' at ye, ladies! I's fast anuff fur you this time. Now I'll quit ye, es we's even. You got me last night: I's got ye this mornin'."





It took the writer the better part of two years to definitely locate Shipp's Mustering Ground which was one of the last mustering places of Revolutionary War soldiers to "give up the ghost." For the reader's information it is about two miles out on #1605 off #89 just after you cross Ring's Creek—on the right just at the foot of the hill and at the end of the pavement. The place had been known locally as "The Granary" because "so much liquor was made there." The most "Famus" story of "Fisher River Scenes" by Skitt Taliaferro might help to explain the name.

At the May and November musters, the old soldiers kept up the "militeer sperit," and "were proud to perform 'revolutions' before all the 'offiffers.' There was another matter of powerful attraction to the old 'lutionaries' that was as punctual in attendance as any of the 'atriots.' 'Nigger Josh Easley with his 'gingy cakes' and Hamp Hudson with his 'likker' were men and things as much looked for as 'Captin Moore with his militeer uniform.'

"Hamp Hudson was the only man in that whole country who kept a still-house running all the year; the weaker ones would 'run dry'...Hamp also had a noted dog, named 'Famus,' as famous for being in the distillery as Hamp himself.

"Now it came to pass...that Famus fell into a 'mash-tub' and was drowned. It was 'narrated' all through the country that Famus was drowned in a mash-tub, and Hamp had distilled the beer in which Famus was drowned, and was gwine to carry it to May muster to sell. The report produced a powerful sensation in the community, and was the only topic of conversation. All appeared to believe it, and there was a general determination 'not to drink one drap of Hamp's nasty old Famus lick'er'."

Muster day arrived. After deliberation it was decided that none of Famus' old lick'er would be drunk. The old soldiers fell "into ranks with precision, order, dignity, and gravity, but there was no spirit nor life in the 'militeer.' Instead of following Duane they were whispering and talking about Hamp and Famus. Indeed, they greatly needed the inspiration of Hamp's barrel.

"But where was Hamp and Famus all this time? Yonder he sits, under the shade of a large apple-tree, solitary and alone, astride of his whiskey barrel...It is now one o'clock, and his chances look bad...Old 'nigger Josh Easley has sold all his 'gingy cakes'....Josh is the only joyful man on the 'grit.' The rest are all melancholy, standing or sitting in little squads, debating the mash-tub question. Hamp is quite composed, and his looks say, 'Niver mind, gentlemen, I'll see you drink ever drap of my lick'er yit!'

"Two o'clock arrives, and no one approaches Hamp's apple-tree. His prospects are growing worse. But look yonder! The crowd has collected around Uncle Jimmy Smith. Let us approach and hear him:" (Uncle Jimmy lisped.)

"Well, boyith, I don't know tho well about thith matter. Maybe

we've accuthed thith feller Hamp wrongfully. He hath allerth been a clever feller and it ith a pity of he ith innerthent of thith charge. The fact ith, boyith, it ith mighty dull, dry timeth. Nuthin ith a-gwine on right. Boyith, you air free men. I fout fer your freedom. I thay, boyith, you can do ath you pleath, but ath fur me—old Stony Pint Smith, famuth or no Famuth I mustht take a little."

"The speech of Uncle Jimmy was satisfactory and moving...His audience moved up to Hamp's headquarters with a 'doublequick step,' the 'bar'l was tapped'...by the generous Hamp who never reproached them for their sever accusations. Soon the condemned barrel was emptied, the money was in Hamp's pocket, and he was as merry as 'gingy-Cake Josh'."

"Uncle Jimmy soon began to sing his Revolutionary ditties, spin his yarns, and was happy enough...The 'litia' and others fell to discussing questions of great moment; but the whole affair ended in skinned noses, gouged eyes, and bruised hands. That was a 'Famus' day in the annals of Shipp's Mustering Ground."



Just two people seemed to have left any kind of a record of how we poor, illiterate, but vigorous people of Surry County lived in the late 1770's and early 1800's: General William Lenoir and "Skitt" Taliaferro, author of "Fisher River Scenes and Characters." The former had this to say:

"In 1775 Surry was a frontier county. The Mulberry Fields" (Wilkesboro--Wilkes was then part of Surry)" in the upper end was the only place of meeting. The men generally dressed in hunting shirts, short breeches,

leggings, and moccasins and the women in linsey petticoats and bedgowns, and in the summer, often without shoes. Some had bonnets made of calico, and others wore men's hats.

"The patriotism of the women of this region deserves a perpetual record. It was their heroic conduct that inspired their husbands and sons in the cause of liberty. They urged the men to leave home, and to prefer to die than be slaves; while they stayed at home and worked with their own hands at the plough and with the hoe, by day, to provide sustenance for their families, and at night with the spinning wheel and loom they made the clothing."

General Lenoir should have known what he was talking about. He lived at Lenoir, was a personal friend of the Franklins, and

was one of the greatest heroes of the Revolutionary War.

The other was Hardin "Skitt" Taliaferro, grandson of that great Christian doctor-preacher John Taliaferro, and himself a renowned clergyman of Alabama. Skitt had lived with his family on Little Fisher River, cronied around with the neighborhood boys, often went to the musters at Shipp's Mustering Ground, and remembered the tales that he had heard there. In 1858 he wrote an amusing book called "Fisher River Scenes and Characters" which, like Tom Wolfe with his "Look Homeward, Angel," is said to have made the down home folks less than happy, but who now read it with affection and amusement. People who are educated, upright, and conventional do not make good copy. Individualists do. And Surry Countains were individualists.



# SURRY

# 76

## SOMETHING MORE

Up the Sulphur Springs way, near the Virginia line, in Virginia, lies the body of one William Letcher in what is reputedly the oldest known grave in Patrick County. It is rather an elaborate tomb for this part of the country.

William Letcher was a Patriot, a Whig, who gave his life for the cause just as did any other soldier. He was murdered by one Nichols and three or four other Tories, members of a band of desperados who would hide in the nearby mountains, swoop down upon the settlers, rob and harass, and sometimes murder them. Letcher was one of the victims.

To keep these desperados in check Surry County kept a militia under the leadership of a Captain James Giddens, whose own kinsman had been killed by the Tories. Giddens lost no time in going after Nichols. He caught him, and he hanged him then and there.

Serving under Giddens as scout and spy was James Boyd, a young fellow of another prominent family living near the Virginia line in North Carolina. Boyd later moved to Patrick County, and, in applying for a pension many years later, told the court in Stuart of this incident, and of many of his other



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

### Surry Was A Lot Bigger

If you remember, Surry County used to be not just Surry County, but Yadkin, Stokes, Forsyth and parts of our western counties as well. This sort of messes us up figure wise.

When lists of Revolutionary War veterans, for example, are given we have to remember that these soldiers listed from Surry might not have been from Surry after all. Such illustrious names as Winston, Williams, Crosse, Lenoir did not belong to us—we wish that they did. So might records of deeds or wills on file in our courthouse at Dobson not pertain to us at all. Neither did all the people the census people attribute to us really belong to us.

By the same token, we messed up Rowan. If we want to trace records before 1771, when our county really got started, we have to go to Salisbury in Rowan.

In 1789 things became a little easier because we were left with only Yadkin to muddy up the waters. But we must remember that the waters have been muddy for Yadkin as well as for us. Reputable writers very often have been guilty of not taking in the above considerations in their writings, and so their writings have been somewhat misleading.

In 1789 when Stokes and Forsyth left us we both had to start new county seats. They established theirs at Germanton—Richmond had already been destroyed by a cyclone. We chose a hilly site in the center of our then-county—Yadkin was with us, remember, near the White Rock Ford of the Yadkin. We might have been a little lazy or unimaginative about its naming because we called the new town Rock-ford. And there it is today, just a little bit west of the rocky ford. Incidentally, when one crossed this ford he had to follow an arc marked by a ripple in order to avoid rocks and holes. Hence the Yadkin paper, the Yadkin Rippler.

This land belonged to a Thomas and Moses Ayers—53 acres of it. Until town plats could be marked off and streets laid court was held at the farm of a Richard Horne about one mile east of the present town. A shell of the old house is still there, luckily preserved for sentimental reasons by its present owner, Ralph McCormick.





## About Surry County

The Surry County Bicentennial Commission is in the process of erecting Bicentennial markers pointing out some sites of interest to Surry County's history. Have you ever wondered how these sites came to be authenticated?

Everybody who has paid any attention to the subject knows how the town of Elkin got started, when the first cotton mill was built, etc. But do you know where the iron works which pre-dated the town of Elkin by about 80 years were?

No? Neither does the Bicentennial Commission know exactly. They would like to put up signs commemorating the site.

Up Elkin Creek, just behind the Elkin Waterworks, across the creek at the old dam, on the east side, stood the old Chatham mill. This is easy. Old photographs prove it.

But where were the two forge sites, the Shores Iron Works of the 1760's or before, and the David Allen Works of the 1770's or 80's which followed it? Somebody has to take the clue and then go tramp out the terrain.

### Clues

Here are the clues.

The late T.L. Gwyn told a reporter of the Elkin Tribune, now The Tribune, in 1914 that the "earliest authenticated records to be found in this section is a grant given to a Mr. Shores of 10,000 acres of land on the north side of the Yadkin River and included the mouth of the Elkin Creek. The only consideration was that he establish an iron forge.

Traces of this forge, the depressions of the furnace, the rough brick used in the furnace and lumps of slack may still be seen on the west edge of the cotton mill pond, a few yards above the dam, although a part of it is covered by the pond water. He secured this grant about the middle of the 18th century and lived here and worked his forge for about 20 years."

So much for the Shores Iron Works. His grant is probably on file at Salisbury in Rowan County (there was no Surry County at that time).

Now to the Allen Works. The following is taken from a letter dated 1955 belonging to Mrs. J.F. McNeely from Dr. J.E. Hodges of Maiden.

"Allen conducted a saw mill, as the Moravians mention buying boards from his saw mill in 1768, floating them down the Yadkin to a landing and then hauling them to salem. . . . ."

### Located On Big Elkin

"Mr Atkinson" (the late J.S. Atkinson) "tells me the works were located on Elkin Creek somewhere from its entry into the Yadkin and the falls about five miles distant.

"Surely, some signs of its location could be found. The iron works in Lincoln and Catawba counties, many of them have the furnace stacks still standing. They were built in massive stories, about 20-feet square at the base and 30-feet high. It would take something terrible to completely obliterate all traces of the iron works."

Incidentally, huge stone stacks are still standing along the river banks at Ararat. They were part of a forge which used to be at the Ararat during the time of the Civil War.

Then there is this deed abstract: "On October 24, 1782, grant to David Allen...640 acres Big Elkin Creek...Salathiel Martin's line, N. side Big Elkin Creek, below iron works...Wright Daniel's line...."

Could the Chatham plant have covered up signs of either of these forges when it built its plant? The only thing is to go to see. Otherwise, the Bicentennial signs will have to go up at an approximate site.



## About Surry County

Edwin Newman, a noted TV personality, has written a book called "Strictly Speaking" in which he bemoans the fact that people couch the English language in such elaborate and obscure terms that no one, except those who use those distinctive words, can understand them. He advocates plain speaking.

The people of Surry County always had plain talk and some still do. It is much easier to say "I tote my vittles in a poke" than to say "I carry my groceries in a paper bag."

College graduates, especially those from the better liberal arts ones, have to be exposed to Chaucer in English literature courses. Chaucer, the first great English poet, lived from 1340 to 1400.

Many of the words used in his noted "Canterbury Tales" are still in use today in Surry County. There is the prefix "a" used before a verb as in "agoin', a-talkin', a-comin'". There is "holpen" for helped—we say "holped"; "ferre" (fur) for far; "tech" for touch; "swich" (sich) for such; "afeered" for afraid; "heered" for heard; "deef" for deaf, "betwixt" for between, and ten pound for ten pounds—the "s" being left off.

Queen Elizabeth I probably used "hit" instead of it; "jine" for join, "ax" for ask, "hern" for hers, and so on.

In some of the old English, Scottish and Irish ballads which came over with some of the early settlers—"Barbara Allen" and "Lord Lovill" among them—the color yellow is written as "Yallow;" "drap" for drop.

And both Chaucer and Queen Elizabeth I would know and probably used the still more ancient four letter words, now considered vulgar, but coming more often in use nevertheless. These familiar four letter words are old Anglo-Saxon and, in many cases, the sound of the word is suited to the sound of the action. Try it. Even one of the most common four letter words heard in Surry County—and now all over the United States—is in the 17th century King James version of the Bible.

Our two most famous Surry Countians, Andy Griffith and Donna Fargo, recognized the picturesque quality of our Surry County culture and capitalized on it, Andy in speech and mores, and Donna on native music.

So we do have a salable, picturesque, treasury chest vocabulary of very ancient lineage here in Surry County. Let's preserve it.





## About Surry County

On the Yadkin, about halfway between the east and west borders of Surry County lies the picturesque village of Rockford, the first county seat within our Surry County borders.

In 1789 a new county seat was to be established—we then had Yadkin, remember. After the first court had been held at the Richard Horne plantation, just east of Rockford, for about a year, court was moved to the new village at the White Rock Ford.

The first court is thought to have been held at the home of Elihu Ayers. Then a wooden courthouse, reputedly held together with nails from a forge on the river, was said to have been built. It was not until 1830 that the majestic courthouse was built on the commanding hill overlooking the village. The offices were on the ground floor; the court room upstairs. Unfortunately, a fire gutted the structure in 1925 so that only the outside walls give us an idea of what the courthouse must have been like.

On the 53 acre tract bought from Thomas and Moses Ayers were laid out the three main streets, High, Water and Cabin. Around them sprung up dwelling houses, law offices—said to have been just down the hill from the courthouse—boarding houses, stores and what have you. In 1791 a boarding house license was given to Jesse Lester; in 1797 one to Reuben Grant. Moses Ayers received a ferry license in 1795. A grist mill, a forge, a blacksmith shop, a tinsmith shop, a tannery and other businesses soon appeared.

Since the terrain was rocky and hilly. Well water was hard to come by in most places so the inhabitants hid themselves to the public spring, Tanyard Spring, to get drinking water, do their washing and to receive and dispense gossip. Incidentally, Tanyard Spring got its name from the tannery there.

The stocks were put down near the river and a jail erected, no doubt leaving room for the gallows.

Last, but not least was the Masonic Hall built a little way up the hill across from the courthouse. This old building housed Unaminty Lodge No. 34, chartered in 1797, probably the oldest lodge in northwest North Carolina and one which is being remembered by present day Surry Masons who seek to restore the building.



## About Surry County

If you remember, Surry County used to be not just Surry County, but Yadkin, Stokes Forsyth and parts of our western counties as well. This sort of messes us up figure wise. When lists of Revolutionary War veterans, for example, are given we have to remember that these soldiers listed from Surry might not have been from Surry after all.

Such illustrious names as Winston, Williams, Cross, Lenoir did not belong to us—we wish that they did. So might records of deeds or wills on file in our courthouse at Dobson not pertain to us at all. Neither did all the people the census people attribute to us really belong to us.

By the same token, we messed up Rowan. If we want to trace records before 1771, when our county really got started, we have to go to Salisbury in Rowan.

In 1789, things became a little easier because we were left with only Yadkin to muddy up the waters. But we must remember that the waters have been muddy for Yadkin as well as for us. Reputable writers very often have been guilty of not taking in the above considerations in their writings and so

their writings have been somewhat misleading.

### New County Seat

In 1789 when Stokes and Forsyth left us we both had to start new county seats. They established theirs at Germanton—Richmond had already been destroyed by a cyclone. We chose a hilly site in the center of our then county—Yadkin was with us, remember—near the White Rock Ford of the Yadkin.

We might have been a little lazy or unimaginative about its naming because we called the new town Rock-ford. And there it is today, just a little bit west of the rocky ford. Incidentally, when one crossed this ford he had to follow an arc marked by a ripple in order to avoid rocks and holes. Hence the Yadkin paper, Yadkin Ripple.

This land belonged to a Thomas and Moses Ayers—53 acres of it. Until town plats could be marked off and streets laid court was held at the farm of a Richard Horne about one mile east of the present town. A shell of the old house is still there, luckily preserved for sentimental reasons by its present owner, Ralph McCormick.





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## *Roads Lead To Rockford*

"All roads lead to Rockford" was a favorite saying about this new frontier village on the Yadkin, county seat of Surry County. Rockford wasn't much, but it was the best the county had with the possible exceptions of Huntsville and Jonesville, across the river in now Yadkin. Here the town and county fathers quickly learned how to issue licenses, set fees, make political appointments—some no doubt to their advantage—mete out justice, see what the rest of the world was doing by reading the few precious newspapers, etc. Mrs. Luch Houck in her "Story of Rockford" aptly put it when she said that "fashion and education could be passed by, but politics never".

And no doubt the small town of Rockford began with a bang, literally. Andrew Jackson came to town.

Andrew was something of a roughneck, and a hot tempered one at that. He had studied law at Salisbury, received his law license in Richmond—not the Virginia but the Forsyth County one. He undoubtedly came to Rockford at one time, probably several, since, as Mrs. Houck says, he liked to follow circuit courts and keep up with his friends at Rockford. It is said that Andrew kept the townspeople awake from his all night carousing, and that is certainly in keeping. Andrew still had many rough edges on him by the time he reached the White House. He left Rockford, so the well known story goes, owning a board bill to Jesse Lester which he later sought to pay. (Maybe he had come to the conclusion that a rising politician should not leave a reputation of a deadbeat to an up-and-coming county seat.) And he found beside the cancelled bill a notation "Paid in full by the Battle of New Orleans."

The story that Andrew Johnson also practiced law in Rockford had just as well be laid to rest there. Johnson moved to Tennessee around 1827, set up a tailor shop there, and became interested in Tennessee politics, which, you remember, did not want to have too much dealings with North Carolina's. Perhaps Johnson did come by Rockford, as tradition says, but hardly to practice law.

Chances are, though, that Aaron Burr did visit Rockford and stay all night at the Grant Hotel. It is said that he became interested in a promising apprentice of the tavern keeper, Watson Holyfield, offered to take him with him and give him an education, which offer Watson declined.

There is no doubt that James K. Polk would visit his cousin, William Polk Dobson, at Dobson Hill. The two cousins were good friends, were in close touch when James K. Polk made the presidency.



By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

## What's In A Name?

What's in a name? Plenty, maybe.

Most names of Surry County rivers, mountains, hollows, etc. seem to bear the names of families of individuals who either owned land or lived in their vicinities. There is Stewart's Creek, named for a family of Stuarts living or owning land along its banks; Lovens, afterwards evolving into Loving's, then Lovill's, after a man named Loven who once owned land at its headwaters. But who was the Paul of Paul's Creek, the Hogan of Hogan's Creek, the Scott of Scott's Knob, the Ring of Ring's Creek, the Turner of Turner's Mountain, the Butler of Butler's Creek, the Mitchell of Mitchell's River? Anybody know?

Tales pretty nearly agree about how Fisher's Peak got its name. It seems that a man named Daniel Fisher who was surveying the state line climbed to the top and dropped dead from the exertion—a heart attack, no doubt. Native lore says that it was because he drank very cold water, there being a very cold spring on top.

Fisher River probably took its name from the same Fisher. At one time it was named Fishe River after a William Fishe who lived at its mouth. This Fishe was afterwards killed by Indians, you remember. Even today some natives refer to "Big Fish" and "Little Fish".

Our two most important rivers originally had Indian names—the Yadkin was Yattkin, and the Ararat was Tarrarat. Yattkin was eventually corrupted into Yadkin. (Have you ever heard a Yadkinville native pronounce the "d"? No, it is Yattkinville.) Again, it was a coincidence that like Fishe and Fisher, Tarrarat sounded like the Biblical name of Ararat. Even Pilot Mountain, named by the Moravians Pilot, was once called Mount Ararat, no doubt because Noah could not have missed it had he and his ark been up his way.

Then there were the intriguing descriptive names. How about Buffalo Wallow? It is well known that Buffalo used to roam these woods before the coming of the white man. But how did a stream get to be called Skin Cabin? How did Warrior Mountain get its name? Possum Trot Road, Cracker's Neck Road?

Of all the descriptive names probably Skull Camp Mountain is the most intriguing. One local resident says that a man named Gentry, while camping on the mountain, accidentally kicked his foot against a human skull. Skill Taliaferro wrote in 1858 that in the first settling of the county one or two skeletons were found at what at one time was a hunter's camp. Both tales agree in essential details. And the legend persists that a cave on this mountain was long a hideout for runaway slaves and for Civil War deserters.





By Surry County  
Historical Society  
And Bicentennial  
Commission.

#### Joined Militia at Age 14

When one is doing research, he never knows when some word, phrase, fact, seemingly insignificant, becomes a key of primary importance which will unlock the mysteries of the subject under consideration.

In this case, a former area resident, is looking up family history in the National Archives in Washington, came across the records of one James Boyd, an ancestor who ordinarily would not have been of any importance whatsoever to the Revolutionary War history of Mount Airy and vicinity.

But James Boyd has been a Revolutionary War soldier.

And, luckily, James Boyd, Revolutionary War soldier, had lost his discharge papers.

In consequence, Mr. Boyd, 69 years old, then living in Patrick County, in 1832, had to appear in the Stuart court, before witnesses, to prove to the said court that he, indeed, was entitled to a soldier's pension granted by the 1832 Congress.

In so doing, Mr. Boyd opened up an entirely new chapter of the Revolutionary War as it was fought in Mount Airy and vicinity; it clarified certain references to this section in the Moravian records; and it confirmed the truth of a long standing tradition held in Mount Airy and vicinity for almost two hundred years.

The Salem Moravians had stated in their Journal that The Hollows (region around Mount Airy) was overrun by Tories who were little more than desperados. These bands would hide in the mountains, swoop down upon the settlers, destroy their homes and crops, and, in some cases, kill them. To combat this lawlessness a militia had to be stationed in The Hollows. General Andrew Pickens was in general charge, and on at least one occasion made a stay up here.

Mr. Boyd stated that his leader was Captain James Giddens and that their headquarters was at Osburn's Mill on Loving's Creek, about "ten miles from the mountains". (Now where was Osburn's Mill — Green Hill now Cross Creek, Allred's Mill, Sides Mill?)

James Boyd, himself, was a victim of Tory outrage. They had so crippled his father, Joseph Boyd, that he was unable to march.

So his fourteen year old son, James, volunteered as a private to serve in his father's place.

Two times underage James signed up — because of his youth he could not be drafted. On one of these stints, he pursued the notorious Edmund Fanning (of Alamance Battle fame) to the Raft Swamps in the eastern part of the state; on another he fought in the skirmish at Shallowford in Yadkin County.

Then James became of age and really signed up for regular duty. And it was his activities around Mount Airy that will interest us. So, more about James Boyd, Revolutionary War soldier, next week.