

HISTORY OF
MOUNT AIRY

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while in High School
(about 1921 or 1922)

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about 1921 or 1922

History of Mount Airy

In colonial days there was established a road known as the Old Hollow road. It started at the Wachovia settlement near Salem and ~~it~~ passed north west through Pilot Mountain, then up through the hollows, ~~and it~~ crossed the Blue Ridge mountains and the New River at Fort Chiswell. The land this road passed through was part of the grant of Lord Granville, an English lord.

On this highway, two miles before you reach the present site of Mount Airy, there was a high hill, and on this hill was a store operated by a man named Urthank. The stage coach stopped at this store. Because of the unusual elevation and because the air there was always cold and bracing the place was called Mount Airy.

The present site of Mount Airy was at that time a valley hemmed in by mountains with only one outlet for water. That outlet

y. 111. 154 over some W. W. W.

was at the place now known as Buck Shoals. Settlers from Guilford County and some of the eastern counties, also from Virginia, settled along the highway. The settlers were men of property and industry.

Later a hotel was built in Mount Airy at the present site of the Blue Ridge Inn. The stage station was changed from Unthank's store to the hotel where Mount Airy is now located. Later still another hotel was built in Mount Airy. At this hotel school teachers and men engaged in education stopped.

There were no active stores in Mount Airy until Galibugh Moore owned a tract of land on the Ararat River, with a partner Dabney Walker opened a dry goods and grocery store. Subsequently William Boyles established a store at the place where N. P. Short now lives. William Bray, a tailor had a shop and residence at the place now occupied by George Fawcett.

- J. M. Brewer son of W. Moore

Another hotel was built at the present site of the Blue Ridge Inn, the old one having been removed. It was operated by a Mr. Walker, the Sheriff of Surry county. It being one of the finest buildings in the country it was patronized freely by the public.

The Siamese Twins purchased the lot now occupied by W. E. Merritt's residence. They also owned the lot now occupied by a Mr. ^{Hoffman} Hopkins, who married Governor Glenn's daughter.

A man Samuel Moore, brother of Galiburg Moore, located and lived at the place known till this day as the Rachel Moore place.

He was father of the family of Moores now in Mount Airy. One of his sons W. A. Moore grew to manhood in Mount Airy and was a soldier in the Mexican War. After the war he returned to Mount Airy and opened a store in partnership with a Mr. J. F. Moore. It was known as the J. F. and W. A. Moore Company.

J. M. Brewer son of W. A. Moore

Possibly a little before this J. F. Paather, a Kentuckian by birth, came to Mount Airy. He owned a store of considerable dimensions at the place now occupied by Mrs. Katherine Banner. He was the head of the prominent and thrifty Paather family, some of whom live in Mount Airy at present.

Across the street lived Dr. Joseph Hollingworth, the descendant of an old English family. Joseph obtained license to practice medicine in the year 1846. He became distinguished in his profession and the first doctor Mount Airy had. He married Miss Mary Banner, the daughter of John Banner, who lived where Bannertown now is. Dr. Hollingworth's family composes the Hollingworths now in Mount Airy.

Solomon Graves, clerk of the county court of Surry, and noted for his learning and intellectual attainments lived south of Mount Airy at the place now known as J. M. Brewer some 1/2 W. ^{12 miles}

as the John Nichols. His son Jesse F. Graves
of the stock of his father for mentality
studied law and after 1877 was a
superior court judge of North Carolina.
He lived and reared a family in
house occupied now by his son S. P.
Graves now Solicitor of the 11th judicial
district.

Jacob W. ^{now} Brower, in the forties,
came to Mt. ^{Mount.} Airy and established a
cotton factory at Hamburg just out
side the city limits eastward. He was
followed by R. S. Gilmer who bought
the house on the present site of high
school building. Gilmer also bought
the Flat Rock for fifty cents an acre
and considered it a hard bargain
even at that price. Subsequently he
sold it to the North Carolina Granite
Corporation for \$5000.

J. M. Brower son of J. W. Brower

while serving in the legislature of North Carolina secured a legislative act authorizing the state to employ convict labor to construct a railroad to be known as the Mount Airy and Ore Knob railroad. Later an amendment was secured for the consolidation with the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley road. (Through the influence of all the prominent men of Mount Airy the arrival of the railroad to Mount Airy on June, 20, 1888.) This railroad caused a tax of \$20,000 on the town part of which is yet unpaid.

Since that time the population of the town has grown from 1100 to over 5000 people. And since 1850 the town has grown from a little straggling settlement until now there is over forty stores of different kinds, seven garages, ^{two} warehouses, four furniture stores

Textile mill, one tobacco sack factory
three soft drink bottling works, two banks
of over \$1,000,000 capital each, one ice
factory, also one foundry. The town has
seven white churches and six negro churches
, three white schools and one negro school
and it has modern lighting and water
systems. There are two miles of paved
streets in the town also sidewalk over
most all of town.

~~The government~~