# THE STORY OF LENOIR COUNTY

## AND

# KINSTON, NORTH CAROLINA


General William Lenoir for whom Lenoir County was named. From an original pencil sketch in the possession of Mrs. Mary Fisher Patterson, Chapel Hill.

# Annals of Progress

## THE STORY OF LENOIR COUNTY

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## KINSTON, NORTH CAROLINA

WILLIAM S. POWELL

RALEIGH
STATE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
1963

The seal of the City of Kinston, reproduced on the cover and title page, was granted by the College of Arms, London, during the City's two hundredth anniversary celebration in 1962.

# PREFACE

This is the first of an anticipated series of 100 county histories written for use in the public schools of North Carolina and intended as a supplement to the regularly prescribed North Carolina history textbook. By its nature it cannot delve deeply into the origins of all aspects of the County's history nor can it fully relate everything to similar or related events elsewhere in the State. It is hoped that young readers will be inspired to undertake their own research on local topics which trigger their interest and that they will make use of other published local and State histories for further information.

For his generosity in permitting me to make extensive use of *The Story of Kinston and Lenoir County,* which he and Talmage C. Johnson published in 1954. I am deeply indebted to Charles R. Holloman of Raleigh. The staff of the State Department of Archives and History assisted in the preliminary planning of this history and later read the manuscript and made suggestions. For reading the manuscript I am also grateful to Bertha Mae Strowd, eighth-grade teacher in Grainger High School, Kinston; to Mrs. Martha L. Harrelson, eighth-grade teacher in Leroy Martin Junior High School in Raleigh; and to Samuel M. Gainor of Raleigh, an eighth-grade student. Their comments as teachers and pupil of North Carolina history were most helpful.

Many Lenoir County citizens responded willingly to my requests for information. Among those most attentive to my pleas were Mrs. Stella K. Barbee, H. Galt Braxton, Dr. Rachel D. Davis, Col. Meriwether Lewis, and Marion A. Parrott. J. C. Billings of the Kinston Chamber of Commerce and Miriam O. Irby of the Kinston-Lenoir County Public Library came to my aid on several occasions. Kinston Mayor Guy Elliott and City Manager James E. Blue provided the map of Kinston. McDaniel Lewis of Greensboro, a misplaced son of Lenoir, supplied facts from his vast file of resources. The North Carolina Society of County and Local Historians, long an advocate of histories of this type, lent encouragement to my work, and Dr. D. J. Whitener, Dean of Appalachian State Teachers College, made numerous specific suggestions.

Last and most sincerely I thank the Richardson Foundation for its grant to the State Department of Archives and History which made possible the preparation of this history.

WILLIAM S. POWELL

Chapel Hill
January 1, 1963

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

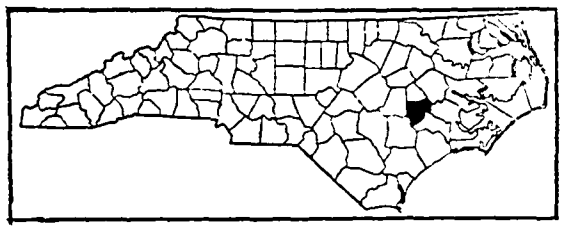


## MAPS

# I. Natural Setting and Geography

## Geographical Facts

Lenoir County, in eastern North Carolina about midway between Virginia and South Carolina, is divided into two almost equal parts by the Neuse River which flows from west to east. It lies about 40 miles upstream from New Bern. An additional 37 miles or so downstream, the Neuse enters Pamlico Sound. The County is quite irregular in shape and is bounded on the north by Greene County, on the west by Wayne and Duplin counties, on the south and east by Jones County, and also on the east by Craven and Pitt counties. The area included is 399 square miles.



Sketch map showing Lenoir County

The County generally is an almost level plain crossed by shallow valleys, but there are some gently rolling sections near some of the streams. Along the Neuse River and Contentnea Creek and a few of the other larger creeks there are "second bottoms" or terraces made in the distant past as the courses of the streams were changed or as the banks crumbled when water rushed downstream in times of storm or heavy rain. These terraces range in width from a few hundred feet to about four miles from stream to their edge. In between the land is nearly flat. All through the County the slopes leading down to the streams are gentle, but there is frequently a well-defined bluff between the uplands and the lower plains. These are silent evidence of long periods of change over the face of the County, changes which took thousands of years to complete.

The soil of Lenoir County is mostly sandy and gray in color. Beneath the sandy surface layer there is a subsoil of clay, sandy clay, and sand which ranges in color to black and contains much organic matter most of which accumulated in past ages under swampy conditions.

The elevation above sea level ranges from about 25 feet in the southeastern part of the County around the headwaters of Trent River and Bearwell Pocosin, to around 125 feet in the western part. The little community of Dawson in the north is 100 feet above sea level while Kinston, some six miles southeast, is 44 feet. It will be seen, therefore, that the land in Lenoir County slopes eastward.

Most of the streams in the County flow into the Neuse River or its tributaries. There are numerous small streams and nearly every farm is drained by a natural stream or a ditch leading into one. There are a few broad, flat, and level areas, poorly drained, called pocosins, which lie in the northern and southern parts of the County. Some of the lowland along the larger streams is marshy and subject to flooding. A few of the streams are 10 to 50 feet below the general upland surface and their currents are sluggish.

## Early Description of Lenoir County

Much of the face of Lenoir County as seen today was described very dramatically in 1810 by John Washington, a town commissioner of Kinston and later postmaster there. He pictured the bluffs above the streams, which then were 20 to 30 feet high, as "beautiful places for building." He said that a portion of the County could be described as hilly only when "compared to the very level state of the rest of the County." Washington spoke of a border of from a quarter to a half mile wide on one side or the other of the Neuse River which was often subject to flooding. The soil of these flooded borders was poorer than along other rivers of the State, but it grew oak, gum, poplar, birch, and some cypress trees. In the western part of the County the oak swamps provided excellent range for hogs and cattle. All in all, Washington observed, "the soil of our better lands being of a happy . . . [medium] between the fine and the coarse, the hot and the cold, perhaps no part of the State is generally more favourable to the production of vegetables and herbage."

## Climate

The climate of Lenoir County is described as "oceanic"—that is, the seasonal changes in temperature are not so great as they are farther inland. Bogue Inlet, the nearest point on the Atlantic Ocean, lies some 50 miles southeast of Kinston. The heat of summer and the cold of winter are moderated by breezes from the ocean. The climate is marked by short mild winters and long but not excessively hot summers. Temperatures are pleasant during spring and fall. Snow occasionally falls but seldom lies on the ground for more than a day or two. Rainfall is well distributed throughout the year and is sufficient for the crops commonly grown.

The date of the earliest recorded killing frost is October 12, and of the latest is April 26. The average dates of the earliest and latest killing frosts, respectively, are October 31 and April 5. The average length of the frost-free season is 209 days.

## Towns and Communities

There are five incorporated towns wholly within the bounds of Lenoir County and another whose municipal limits lie partially in the County. Of the six towns only Graingers has no post office.

**Deep Run** in the southwestern part of the County was incorporated in 1925 with J. J. Blizzard as mayor. Commissioners appointed at that time were Ben Sutton, James Hill, and Furney Davenport. A post office existed here as early at 1882. Deep Run's 1960 population was 183.

**Graingers,** in northeastern Lenoir County on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, was also incorporated in 1925. G. C. Buck was appointed mayor, and W. P. Strickland, J. D. McArthur, and R. D. Jones were named commissioners. The town takes its name from Jesse Grainger on whose plantation it developed after a railroad station was established there. The 1960 population was 188.

**Grifton,** largely in Pitt County, extends its western limits into Lenoir County only slightly. The site was settled as early as 1756, but the town was not incorporated until 1883. At that time it was named Bell's Ferry, but in 1889 it was changed to Griffton in honor of C. M. A. Griffin, local merchant. Within a few years the town's name came to be spelled Grifton. On the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, the town had a population of 1,816 in 1960.

**Kinston,** the county seat of Lenoir County, was established in 1762. A Church of England chapel was erected at the site about 1748 and a tobacco inspection warehouse was built about 1758. Kinston, on the Neuse River, has an altitude of 44 feet above sea level and a 1960 population of 24,819. The story of this city is related in more detail in the later chapters of this history.

**LaGrange,** in the northwestern part of the County on the Atlantic and East Carolina Railroad, is 113 feet above sea level. It was known as Rantersville and Moseley Hall prior to 1869 when it was incorporated as LaGrange for Lafayette's estate near

Paris. Moseley Hall had been the plantation name given by Thomas Moseley of Virginia who settled here before the Revolution. William Dunn Moseley (1795-1863), first Governor of the State of Florida, was born in LaGrange. The 1960 population of the town was 2,133.

**Pink Hill** in southeastern Lenoir County was settled prior to 1849 when a post office by that name was established here. In 1907 when it was incorporated Jesse J. Smith was made mayor and George Turner, O. A. Garden, and T. A. Turner were appointed commissioners. Pink Hill had a 1960 population of 457.

The townships of Lenoir County are Contentnea Neck, Falling Creek, Institute, Kinston, Moseley Hall, Neuse, Pink Hill, Sand Hill, Southwest, Trent, Vance, and Woodington.

Lenoir County has a number of communities important enough to have their own names but not large enough to be incorporated as towns. Among these are:

**Dawson** in the northern part of the County. It was named for a local family and was formerly a depot on the Hines Lumber Company railroad from Kinston to Snow Hill. Many years ago it was a center for shipping logs and cotton. A local school was operated in this vicinity as early at 1793, and The Industrial Christian College was here from 1906 until about 1921.

**Fountain Hill,** also in the northern part of the County and on Contentnea Creek, was named for a local family the first member of which, Francis Fountain, settled nearby before 1769.

**Institute** in the northwestern section of the County was named for the Lenoir Collegiate Institute which operated here for a number of years after 1855. Some of the school buildings are now used as residences.

**Parrotts** in the northern part of the County on the Atlantic and East Carolina Railroad was named for the Parrott family which settled here in the 1760's.

**Sandy Bottom** in western Lenoir County is mentioned by name in local records beginning in the 1760's. In December, 1862, invading Union forces gave the more sophisticated name Sandy Foundation to the community and a post office here for a short time bore that name. For a brief period during the Civil War it was also known as Sandy Ridge.

**Woodington** in southern Lenoir County was named by Richard Caswell when he acquired a plantation here about 1767.

## Population

Population figures from a single census report may tell very little about a place if they are examined alone. When they are compiled for one census after another, however, then one can tell very clearly when periods of rapid growth took place. The figures for Lenoir County and Kinston show how great the growth has been in the twentieth century.

LENOIR COUNTY POPULATION

| *Year* | *White* | *Negro* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1800 | 2,424 | 1,581 | 4,005 |
| 1810 | 3,019 | 2,553 | 5,572 |
| 1820 | 3,331 | 3,468 | 6,799 |
| 1830 | 3,678 | 4,045 | 7,723 |
| 1840 | 3,687 | 3,918 | 7,605 |
| 1850 | 3,567 | 4,261 | 7,828 |
| 1860 | 4,902 | 5,318 | 10,220 |
| 1870 | 4,902 | 5,532 | 10,434 |
| 1880 | 7,277 | 8,067 | 15,344 |
| 1890 | 8,517 | 6,362 | 14,879 |
| 1900 | 10,592 | 8,046 | 18,639* |
| 1910 | 12,543 | 10,225 | 22,769* |
| 1920 | 16,491 | 13,061 | 29,555* |
| 1930 | 20,276 | 15,438 | 35,716* |
| 1940 | 23,398 | 17,813** | 41,211* |
| 1950 | 26,131 | 19,822** | 45,953 |
| 1960 | 33,404 | 21,872** | 55,276 |

KINSTON POPULATION

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1850 | 455 | 1910 | 6,995 |
| 1860 | 1,333 | 1920 | 9,771 |
| 1870 | 1,103 | 1930 | 11,362 |
| 1880 | 1,726 | 1940 | 15,388 |
| 1890 | 1,762 | 1950 | 18,336 |
| 1900 | 4,106 | 1960 | 24,819 |

*Includes one or more Indians, Chinese, Japanese, or other nonwhite.
**Nonwhite.

# II. Early History

## Discovery and Exploration

European explorers such as Verazzano and Ayllón, who first approached the strange shores of America, were eager to learn the extent of their discovery. They sailed along the coast seeking possible harbors and making maps, but their inland excursions were brief. The English, coming a little later, approached the Carolina coast with eagerness and questioned the native Indian by means of signs and symbols to find out what lay to the west of the narrow strip of beach and tideland which they could see for themselves. In 1584 Captain Arthur Barlowe and Captain Philip Amadas wrote of their findings to Walter Raleigh, their sponsor, and in their report is found the first hint of the territory which was eventually laid off as Lenoir County. The Indians, they said, called the coastal region *Secotan,* and next west of it lay *Pomouik,* and beyond that was "the country *Neusiok,* situated upon a goodly river called *Neuse.*"

And upon the banks of the Neuse River just over 175 years later the town of Kinston was established. The town was laid out at the site of an earlier Indian village, and it is possible that the king of the Neusiok resided here. The Indians' burial grounds may well have been on the south side of the present railroad, west of the modern municipal power plant, for arrowheads and other Indian remains have been gathered here in abundance by generations of Kinston children. Adjoining most Indian towns were fields of corn, pumpkins, and tobacco. The earliest description of a white man's plantation on the spot where Kinston now stands refers to an Indian field in setting forth its location. Thomas Hariot, noted mathematician and scientist and one of the early English explorers, writing in 1587, commented upon the fertility of these fields and discussed at some length what has come to be North Carolina's chief money crop and the source of much Kinston wealth. "There is an herbe which is sowed apart by itself, and is called by the inhabitants *uppowoc,*" Hariot noted. "In the West Indies, it has divers names, according to the several places and countries where it grows and is used. The Spaniards generally called it *tobacco.*"

## Indians and Tobacco

Hariot described in some detail how the Indians prepared and used tobacco. "The leaves thereof being dried and brought into powder, they use to take the fume or smoke thereof, by sucking it through pipes made of clay, into their stomach and head, from where it purges superfluous phlegm and other gross humors, and opens all the pores and passages of the body, by which means the use thereof not only preserves the body from obstructions, but also (if any be, so that they have not been of too long continuance) in short time breaks them, whereby their bodies are notably preserved in health, and know not many grievous diseases, wherewithal we in England are often afflicted." Thus, it will be noted, even from the earliest times some medicinal claims have been made about tobacco and its use.

Tobacco has become so important to the economy of Lenoir County and to North Carolina that note should be taken of its early use by Englishmen. "We ourselves," Hariot wrote, "during the time we were there, as also since our return, used to suck it after their manner, and have found many rare and wonderful experiments of the virtues thereof, of which the relation would require a volume by itself: the use of it by so many of late, men and women of great calling, as else, and some learned physicians also, is sufficient witness."

## Pioneer Settlers

It was nearly three-quarters of a century after Hariot wrote before permanent white settlers took up residence in what was to become North Carolina. Nathaniel Batts appears to have been living at the west end of Albemarle Sound by 1657, and he is described by a contemporary as having been "Governor of Roanoke." By 1663, when the Lords Proprietors received a charter to the vast territory in America which included what is now nearly the whole southern half of the United States, there were about a thousand white settlers in the North Carolina area. Most of them were in the northeastern section, having moved down from Virginia. In 1691 a few French Huguenots moved from Virginia to settle on the Pamlico River in the old Pomouik section mentioned by Amadas and Barlowe, the country described by the Indians as being next to Neusiok.

A report made in 1676, a century before the American Revo-

The capture of Lawson and Von Graffenried by the Indians. From a photograph of an old woodcut in the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library.

lution, showed that there were 1,400 taxable persons in the colony. This represents a total population of about 3,000.

## Lawson and Von Graffenried

The first Europeans actually to explore the Kinston area were John Lawson, Surveyor General of the colony, and Baron Christoph Von Graffenried, head of a Swiss land company. Von Graffenried had secured a tract of land at the junction of the Neuse and Trent rivers for a colony of German Palatines and Swiss, and they founded the present City of New Bern in 1710. In September, 1711, Lawson invited Von Graffenried to join him in a scouting expedition up the Neuse River. Von Graffenried accepted the invitation largely because he hoped to discover a shorter route to Virginia. They set out accompanied by two Negro slaves and two Indians.

John Lawson had arrived in the New World from England late in July, 1700. He tarried a few days in New York, then went to Charles Town, South Carolina, from where he set out on a land journey to the North Carolina settlements. His route carried him through or near the sites of modern Hillsboro, Graham, Greensboro, Wake Forest, Goldsboro, and other cities and towns of central and eastern North Carolina. He crossed Contentnea Creek at what is now the town of Grifton and continued on to the English settlement on the "Pamticough" or Pamlico River. Five years later he became one of the incorporators of the town of Bath, the first town established in the colony. Here he was associated with Christopher Gale who became the first Chief Justice of North Carolina. Here, too, he wrote his famous book, *A New Voyage to Carolina,* now more familiarly known as Lawson's "History of North Carolina."

While in London in 1709, probably attending to the publication of his book, Lawson was asked by the Lords Proprietors to assist Von Graffenried in the settling of the colony of Palatines in North Carolina. Some of these colonists and many of their descendants were later to become settlers in the Kinston area.

Lawson and Von Graffenried set out up the Neuse from New Bern in 1711. They were captured by the Indians and held prisoner. The Indians seem to have blamed Lawson for the loss of their lands and he was executed near the modern town of Snow Hill. His death marked the beginning of the long and bloody Tuscarora War through which the Indians hoped to gain back their land. Von Graffenried was released after a few days and allowed to make his way afoot to New Bern. He wrote that his freedom came after he told his captors that he was under the special protection of the Great White Queen who would have revenge for any harm done him. War lasted until 1714 when the Tuscaroras, under Chief Hancock near Snow Hill, suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of settlers assisted by militia from South Carolina. Most of the Tuscaroras then migrated north to join the Iroquois, their kinsmen, in New York, thus becoming the Sixth Nation. The Indians who did not join in the war against the whites, and there were a great many of them, remained; most of them were united under a friendly chief named Tom Blount. Later, however, these Indians joined their relatives in the North.

## Early Land Grants

On December 16, 1729, Robert Atkins received original grants for lands on which the oldest part of Kinston is now located. The ending of the Tuscarora War saw the beginning of a steady increase in population in North Carolina. By 1730 it had grown to about 30,000. When Atkins took up land along the Neuse River, the population of the whole colony was only slightly more than the 1960 population of the city which has now grown up at the site of his grant. This earliest settler probably came from Surry County, Virginia. He obtained a grant of two square miles of land along the Neuse River upon which he settled.

The original file concerning Atkins' grant was lost in the shifting of official colonial records in the days before there was a permanent capital. But in 1798 Jesse Cobb of Kinston, who was then owner of part of the lands originally granted to Robert Atkins, asked the General Assembly to have a new record made of the first grant from the original papers which had been handed down and were then in his possession. The request was granted, and there is now the record of a 640-acre tract acquired "on the northside of Neuse River . . . in the side of the Indian field near a steep landing." In 1729 this land, now the site of the City of Kinston, lay in the ancient Precinct of Craven. Smaller counties from time to time were created out of the larger ones. Hence it is that the future Lenoir County was within Bath County from its creation in 1696 until 1705; in Archdale from 1705 until 1712; in Craven from 1712 until 1746; in Johnston from 1746 until 1759; and in Dobbs from 1759 until 1791 when Lenoir County was established.

Atkins soon had neighbors. Lazarus Turner in 1738 claimed 290 acres on the north side of the Neuse River joining Atkins' property. John Gatlin joined them on the other side of the land which Atkins held.

Not quite 30 years after it had been granted to Atkins, this land came into the possession of William Heritage, a prominent attorney of New Bern. Adjacent grants made in 1757 refer to Heritage's property, but there is no record of how he acquired it. By that time Johnston County had been established, and the original records of that old county reveal nothing. It has been suggested that Atkins transferred his property to Heritage simply by endorsing his original grant.

Heritage did not move to his new property but continued to live with his family in Craven County a short distance outside the town of New Bern where he had settled about 1709. At his death in 1769 Heritage left property to his son, John. The town of Kinston had been established on the Heritage land at old Atkins Bank in 1762, and the will provided that the site should go to John Heritage if the town did not thrive.

## Johnston County

In 1746 from a part of Craven County a new county was formed and named Johnston in honor of Gabriel Johnston, Governor of the Province. Johnston County included most of the territory now in Lenoir, Greene, Wayne, Wake, and, of course, Johnston counties. The act of the General Assembly establishing Johnston County directed that the new county court meet "at the Dwelling-house of Francis Stringer, at the Ferry, on Neuse River, and then and there nominate and appoint a certain place for building a court house, prison, and stocks at the most Proper Place in said County."

Stringer's home and ferry were about two miles east of modern Kinston. County court was to meet on the last Tuesdays in March, June, September, and December each year. At the first sitting of the court, three persons were to be recommended to the Governor from whom he would select one to commission as sheriff.

The law establishing Johnston County also set up St. Patrick's Parish of the Church of England with the same boundaries as the County. Vestrymen were appointed to serve until the next general election. More than merely a governing body for a church, the vestry attended to the needs of poor widows and orphans and generally served as the local government's welfare agency.

The new County was allowed two representatives in the General Assembly.

At its first meeting the county court selected a site for the courthouse and other public buildings on the eastern bank of Walnut Creek about eight miles southeast of present-day Goldsboro and about 18 miles west of Kinston. The courthouse was completed sufficiently for holding court by June, 1748.

Silhouette of George Pheney Lovick cut about 1757. Lovick's wife Anna was the daughter of William Heritage and her sister Sarah was the second wife of Richard Caswell. The original silhouette, a gift of Mrs. Stella K. Barbee, is now in the State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Ten years after Johnston County was formed the territory was divided into two parishes. Old St. Patrick's Parish remained in the eastern part of the County and new St. Stephen's Parish was in the west. Voters of the new parish were to meet at the courthouse at Walnut Creek to elect vestrymen while those of St. Patrick's met at Samuel Smith's on Neuse River in the vicinity of modern Smithfield. This move was the first of several which resulted in the division of the large county of Johnston into several others, one of which became Lenoir.

The selection of Walnut Creek as the county seat for Johnston County does not appear to have been a wise one. It was too remote and inaccessible. It lacked both inns and good camping grounds which had been available at Stringer's Ferry. People doing business at the county seat often had to remain several days. The courthouse was the only voting place in the County. Because of the distance many voters had to travel to cast their ballots, it became necessary to allow two days for an election. County court sessions in those days, before county fairs and circuses were known, were important social occasions which attracted a great many people. Even with all its drawbacks, Walnut Creek remained the seat of Johnston County until Dobbs County was formed in 1759, and then it became the seat of that county.

## Stringer's Ferry

All the time the people were suffering the inconveniences of the county seat, the area around Stringer's Ferry continued to attract new settlers. Only two miles from the site of modern Kinston, it proved to be a center of religious, political, and economic growth during the eighteenth century. Francis Stringer, who began operating the ferry across the Neuse River here in 1737, was probably the first physician along this remote frontier. He had learned his skills at healing from his father and was the fourth generation of doctors in his family. Stringer was also a justice of the peace, a member of the General Assembly, and leading citizen of the community. It was not at all unusual in those days to find men who were outstanding in a number of activities. With a wilderness to conquer they had to be good at a variety of trades, and they seldom even thought twice about undertaking to build a house, heal the sick, hunt a wild turkey or bear, or clear a patch of new ground for a cornfield.

Among Dr. Stringer's neighbors were Abraham Taylor and John Irons, both of whom also operated ferries across the Neuse, and James McIllwean who owned 400 acres of land next to Stringer's.

## Search for a Provincial Capital

In 1755 Governor Arthur Dobbs set out from New Bern on a trip up the Neuse River to look for a suitable site to establish a new seat of government for the province. North Carolina had never had a permanent capital. The offices of the Governor and other officials and all of the public records had been moved about from place to place as it suited the governor in office to establish his residence at some particular place. Some liked Edenton, some chose New Bern, and others thought Wilmington or Brunswick suitable.

Dobbs traveled about a hundred miles above New Bern and carefully looked over the whole region. He selected a spot of high ground near Stringer's Ferry as the most suitable place for the new colonial capital. It was on the north bank of the Neuse River which was dry and free from the usual swampy shores. It was a healthful site with good springs to supply water. It lay about 50 miles above New Bern on a stream which was navigable for 60 to 80 miles and yet not overflowing the country in "great freshes." The Governor, in reporting to his superiors in Eng-

land, pointed out the importance of this central location, that it lay on a good road to New Bern, and that it could be reached from the Cape Fear area with only one ferry to be crossed. He thought the public officers of the colony should all reside here and that the members of the Council should have houses here and live in the capital at least a part of each year. He expected that "the Assembly will proceed briskly in erecting public buildings and offices which have been so long unsettled that almost all the old records are lost."

To get on with the business of creating a capital, Governor Dobbs in 1758 bought two tracts of land totaling 850 acres, and the site came to be called Tower Hill, no doubt in part for Tower Hill in London where the famous Tower of London has stood for hundreds of years but also for an "old redoubt tower" built here during the Tuscarora War. Perhaps to suggest more civilization than really existed on the frontier, the name of Contentnea Creek (an Indian name) was changed to Canterbury Creek. Needless to say, the new name never became popular. Dobbs' advisers in London suggested that he get the approval of the General Assembly first and then present the whole proposal to the British government for final authority to establish a capital town for North Carolina. In 1758 the Assembly approved Dobbs' recommendation and provided that the town should be called George City for King George II. It was to be built on 400 acres of the land and the remaining 450 acres were to be a town common. A home for the governor and a state house were planned as the first projects. A committee was appointed to arrange for the construction of the buildings and to lay off streets and one-half acre lots for sale to purchasers who were to erect houses of a certain size within five years. The committee was not to begin work until it was known whether Parliament would repay North Carolina for certain expenses in the French and Indian War.

This far-sighted move was doomed, however. In spite of the attempt to honor the King by naming the city in his honor, George III, who had succeeded his father in 1760, took no steps to approve the plans. In the colony the question of a location for the seat of government involved sectional interests and prestige. The oldest settled area, the Albemarle region, had its own interests to promote. New Bern had often been the seat of government, and after 1762 Governor Dobbs established himself at Wilmington. As a result, George Town failed to develop as the

capital of North Carolina. Instead, the Assembly in 1762 petitioned the Crown to designate New Bern as the capital. After much debate, New Bern won in 1766 and Governor Tryon began the construction of his palace. Dobbs' will, probated in 1765, left the Tower Hill land to his son, and after the Revolution it was claimed by the State of North Carolina as having been the property of a Tory.

Capital or not, the area around Tower Hill continued to grow, although the formal establishment of a town was some years away.

Governor Arthur Dobbs for whom Dobbs County was named. From an original mezzotint in the possession of Mangum Weeks, Alexandria, Virginia. Used by permission of Mr. Weeks.

# III. Dobbs County and the Establishment of Kingston

## Dobbs County

In 1758 the General Assembly decided that Johnston County should be divided on April 10, 1759, to form a new county. This county was to be named Dobbs in honor of Governor Arthur Dobbs. Its boundaries were the same as those of St. Patrick's Parish when it had been in Johnston County. St. Patrick's now became the parish in the new county.

The Assembly, in setting up Dobbs County, took note of the fact that "the large extent of the county of Johnston renders it grievous and burthensome to many of the Inhabitants thereof to attend the Courts and General Musters, and other Public Meetings." This was not a problem of Johnston County alone, however. It was true in many parts of the colony, particularly along the frontier. Large counties were created, and as the population increased, they were cut up into smaller and more manageable ones.

Johnston County was given a new county seat at Hinton's Quarter on the south side of the Neuse, but Walnut Creek remained the official center of legal affairs for Dobbs County. The old Johnston County records were left in Dobbs County when the County began functioning in 1759. They were moved from Walnut Creek in 1779 when Kinston became the county seat. Modern Lenoir County, alone of the many counties created from the original Johnston County, can show historical continuity of records and county government functioning from 1746 to the present.

Soon after the new Dobbs County officers began their duties, the General Assembly established three tobacco inspection warehouses in the County. One was at Atkins Bank on the land of William Heritage, another at Contentnea Creek on the land of Abraham Sheppard, and a third at Fellow's Ferry on the land of Robert Fellow. There were laws regulating the methods of packing tobacco for shipment and to prevent the sale of tobacco of inferior quality. Public warehouses, such as these, were established at various places throughout the colony, and unless tobacco received the approval of the inspectors, it could not be shipped out of the colony.

## Establishment of Kingston

In December, 1762, the General Assembly passed an act to establish the town of Kingston on the land of William Heritage at Atkins Bank. The town was named to honor the young King George III who had ascended the throne just two years before. The name remained until 1784, after the Revolutionary War, when the "g" was dropped to show that the citizens of the town no longer desired to honor a king. The site was described as "a pleasant and healthy situation, and commodious for trade and commerce." Heritage consented to have 100 acres of his land laid off for a town and to devote 50 acres to a town common.

Commissioners appointed to design the town were also instructed to take "subscriptions" for numbered lots. When 50 lots were spoken for, they were to hold a drawing and lots were to be assigned according to the number drawn. In order to keep a lot, the owner was required to build a frame or brick house at least 16 feet square with a brick or stone chimney within three years. Lots drawn but not built upon within three years were to become the property of anyone who would build the required house. If an owner died before building his house and without making other provisions for its disposition, the lot was to become the property of William Heritage or his heirs.

Francis McIllwean was appointed treasurer of the new town of Kingston. If he should move from Dobbs County, the remaining commissioners were authorized to appoint another treasurer. Until the town should be incorporated the commissioners were to appoint a replacement for any of their body who died, moved, or failed to serve.

Atkins Bank at which Kingston was established was not a village but merely the name applied to the bluff above the Neuse River because it was first granted to Robert Atkins. The original commissioners do not appear to have lived within the proposed bounds of the town. All but one of them, however, owned large tracts of land nearby. A warehouse for the inspection of tobacco already existed at the site, and since about 1748 there had been a chapel here, a Church of England mission served by a traveling missionary from New Bern or perhaps Edenton.

The town was promptly laid out. The two principal streets were named for King George and Queen Charlotte. The boundary streets were named East, North, and South. On the west was the Neuse River. A street also was named in honor of

King George III for whom the town of Kingston (Kinston) was named in 1762. George had ascended the throne just two years previously at the age of twenty-two. From an original engraving published in 1820 at the death of the king.

Governor Dobbs, but it later became Independent Street. Others were named in honor of the original commissioners of the town.

The sale of lots seems to have gone slowly. By the end of 1763 only 19 had been taken.

Just two years after the establishment of Kingston, Richard Caswell and Abraham Sheppard presented to the General Assembly a petition signed by a number of Dobbs County citizens urging that the new town be made the county seat "for the greater convenience of the people." A bill which was introduced for this purpose also provided that a portion of Craven County in the vicinity of Southwest Creek be added to Dobbs County. The change in boundaries was probably suggested to overcome

the objections of some that Kingston would not otherwise be in the center of the County. Even with the support of the Craven County representative the whole bill was not passed. Only that part pertaining to the addition of a part of Craven to Dobbs was passed. The county seat was to remain at Walnut Creek. Efforts to revive the proposal for making Kingston the county seat failed at first.

The action of the General Assembly was not to the liking of a good many of the leading citizens of Dobbs County. They continued to acknowledge Walnut Creek as the *official* county seat, of course, but they began to hold court at whatever location in the County seemed convenient at the time.

## Division of Dobbs County

Efforts to divide Dobbs County were made on a number of occasions between 1767 and 1779. Finally, in the latter year, the General Assembly appointed five men to run a north-south line through the middle of Dobbs County. The eastern half was to remain Dobbs while the western half was named Wayne County. The Dobbs County courthouse was now to be in Kingston, but until a building could be erected the county court was directed to meet in the house formerly occupied by Colonel James Glasgow. A committee was promptly appointed to contract with workmen for the construction of a courthouse.

# IV. Revolution and Independence

## Richard Caswell

The story of the Revolutionary War and American Independence in North Carolina is closely related to the story of a single man. This man, Richard Caswell, lived near Kinston and was distinguished as a soldier, public servant, and statesman. He was the only person from this area ever to attain the high office of Chief Executive of North Carolina. He was the first Governor of the State after the Declaration of Independence and served six terms of one year each plus a shorter term.

Caswell's father was born in England and moved to Maryland about 1725. The father had been a merchant in England, but his business had failed and he sought a new life in America. He became a member of the legislature in his new home and was commissioned coroner of Baltimore County in 1726. He also commanded a troop of cavalry in the local militia. When his son Richard was seventeen years old the family moved to North Carolina. The father became deputy clerk of the Johnston County court and later was sheriff of the County. The part of Johnston County in which they lived, of course, later became Lenoir County.

Richard Caswell, born in 1729 in what was then Baltimore County, Maryland, was educated in the local St. John's parish school. Soon after reaching North Carolina young Richard found employment as a deputy surveyor under the guidance of Surveyor James McIllwean whose daughter, Mary, became his first wife. In less than five years Richard was a full-fledged surveyor.

It appears that in 1753 when Orange County was formed from old Johnston County's western section, Richard Caswell served briefly as Clerk of Court. Evidently the twenty-four-year-old Richard went there to assist in launching the new county government. He soon returned home, for in 1754 he was elected to the General Assembly from Johnston County. He continued to serve as one of the representatives from that county until Dobbs County was organized in 1759. Since his residence fell within the new County, he began a series of terms as its repre-

sentative. He continued to serve until he became Governor of the new State of North Carolina in December, 1776.

Shortly after returning from Orange County, Richard joined the militia of Johnston County, and in 1754 he was serving as the lieutenant in command of the troop of cavalry in the County. His ability led to several promotions in rank. When Dobbs County was formed he became colonel of the county militia, holding this rank until 1776 when he was made a general by the Provincial Congress which met at Halifax.

To understand the importance of Richard Caswell's contributions to North Carolina, his earliest service in the General Assembly must be considered the starting point. This will, at the same time, cover a most important portion of the history of the area which became Lenoir County.

During the years after 1754 Caswell supported and sponsored legislation intended to serve the interests of all North Carolinians rather than just the special interest of his own county. Among other laws, he supported those for establishing ferries, for improving transportation facilities by road and by water, for improving the system of exporting and trading produce, for controlling the spread of infectious diseases, for promoting the development of agriculture and industry, for improving the military defense of the Province, for the relief of imprisoned debtors, for improvement of the judicial system, and for the handling of estates for orphans and widows.

He and Stephen Cade, his fellow-representative from Johnston County, sponsored the bill in 1758 to erect George City at Tower Hill and to build the governor's house and public offices there. Caswell aided in passing the law, dividing Johnston County and creating Dobbs County, which was adopted by the General Assembly of 1758. In the same year he was active in providing for the erection of a building for the first tobacco inspection warehouse at the site of modern Kinston. This warehouse was built near the site of the present Lenoir County Courthouse principally to promote the export trade in tobacco.

When the General Assembly convened in December, 1762, Caswell had become convinced that nothing would come of the ambitious plans to build George City at Tower Hill. The Governor had moved his residence from New Bern to near Wilmington and seemed satisfied now to do nothing further to promote the project. The growing community around Stringer's Ferry

still seemed to Caswell to be a proper place for the establishment of a town. Furthermore, the father of his second wife, William Heritage, prominent planter, lawyer, and political leader residing in Craven County, owned a large and suitable tract of land about two miles to the west of Tower Hill and adjacent to a small tract belonging to Caswell. It was Caswell who introduced a bill in December, 1762, which established Kingston on the Heritage lands at the place then called Atkins Bank. He became one of the trustees of the new town.

## Regulator Movement

Local officials in a number of counties were guilty of oppressive actions against the people whom they were supposed to serve. Many of these officials owed their appointment to the Royal Governor and excessive fees which they collected for their services were, they considered, their just due. Perhaps typical of the abuses is the case of Stephen Cade who in 1758 was sheriff of Johnston County. Under the law of the time he was permitted to serve as sheriff, as justice of the county court, and as a member of the General Assembly. In short, a man could be a legislator, judge, and executive all at the same time. Opportunities for political corruption were plentiful. When Dobbs County began functioning in April, 1759, Cade became sheriff, his place of residence being in the eastern part of the old county. As sheriff of Johnston, Cade left a shortage of tax money unaccounted for which amounted to around $5,000. He had been directed to repay the amount due, but had failed to do so. Being continued in office by appointment for the new county of Dobbs, Cade ran up an additional debt due the public for something like $3,000. The next four sheriffs of Dobbs County found one excuse after another not to collect Cade's public debt. One person who attempted to make good a part of Cade's debt reported that he had paid about $1,250 to a later sheriff, but that amount was never recorded in the county records. Such obvious mismanagement of public business and the abuse of taxpayers very rightly stirred up resentment and provoked the Regulator movement when many oppressed people took action to rid their counties of corrupt officials ("to regulate" them, they said) and to express their opposition to oppressive laws.

In 1771, when the Regulator movement reached a peak, Colonel Caswell and his companies of Dobbs County militia were among

those units used by Governor William Tryon in his campaign to suppress the Regulators and apprehend their leaders. Many of these militiamen, undoubtedly sympathetic with the Regulators, nevertheless realized that law and order must be preserved. From New Bern Tryon began his expedition to Orange County, one of the centers of the Regulators. He took with him the militia from Craven and nearby eastern counties. As he marched west, he was joined at Kingston by the men of Dobbs County. The Regulators, under the leadership of Herman Husband, assembled in mid-May at a site west of Hillsboro now known as the Alamance Battleground. The fight between the Regulators and the North Carolina militia under Tryon was short and ended in victory for the Governor's forces. The brief experience in actual combat by Caswell, his men of Dobbs, and other North Carolinians was valuable to them some years later as they began the long fight leading to independence.

The quick victory at Alamance which culminated in the public hanging of several Regulators was an empty one for the royal authority in the colony. The short-term gain by force of arms eventually proved a long-term loss of popular good will toward British authority. The military strength to punish objectors was not accompanied by any willingness to correct the abuses to which they objected and which had brought about the Regulator movement. Injustice and abuse of power were widespread in the province. Nearly every county contained Regulators and their sympathizers.

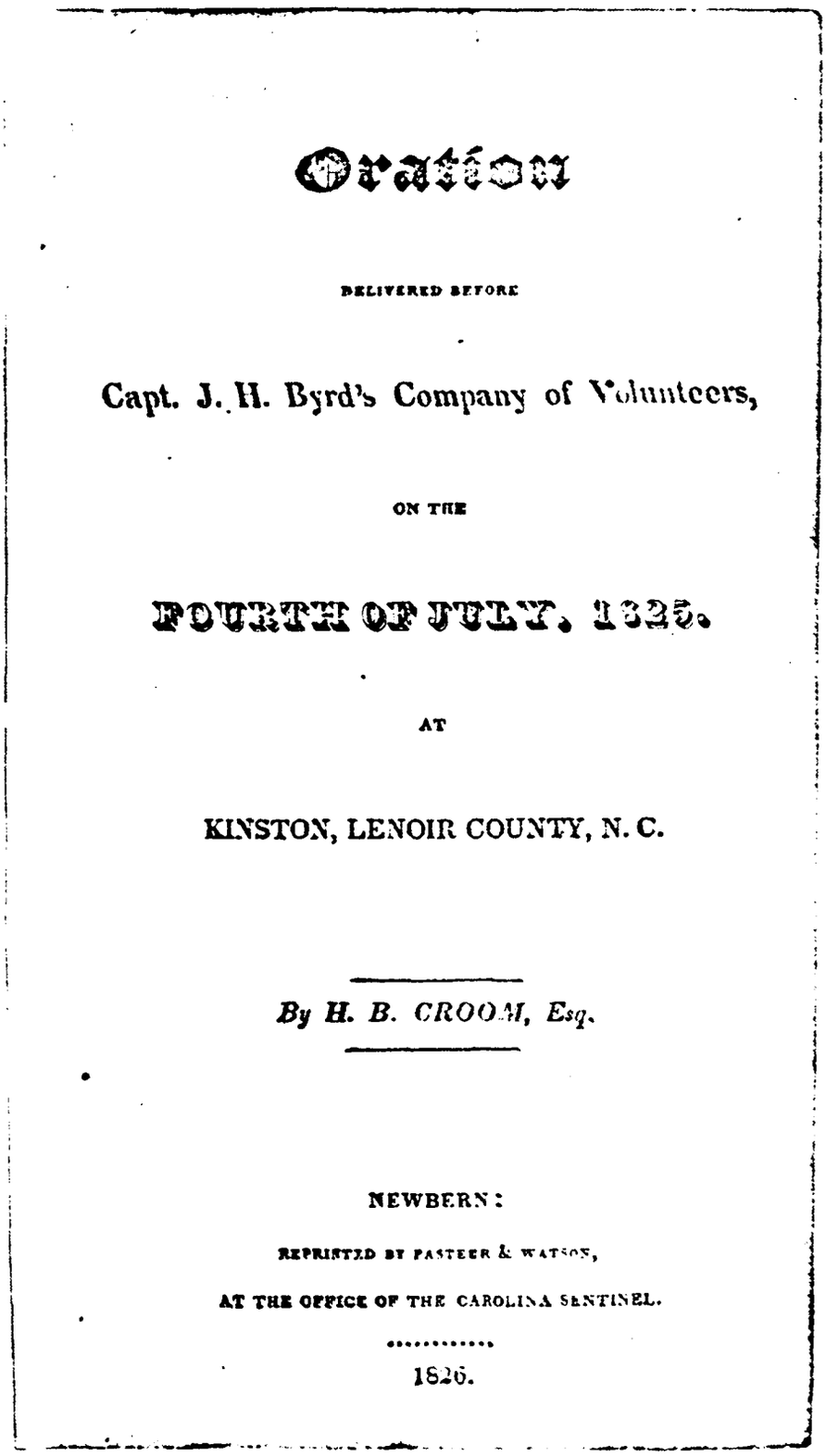
While no list of the Dobbs militiamen who fought at Alamance has been found, the records show that Colonel Richard Caswell, Captain Simon Bright, Captain Abraham Sheppard, and Justice George Miller took part in the expedition.

## Revolution

The Regulator movement was not the beginning of the Revolution. Its causes were only a part of the grievances of the colonists against English rule in America. The actual causes lay deep in history. The charters of many of the colonies gave the people many rights which the Crown was now denying them. Trade between the colonies and England was not carried on to the best advantage of the colonies. Unfair taxes were levied against the colonists. These and other just causes found their solution in the American Revolution.

## First Provincial and Continental Congresses

By August, 1774, the spirit of rebellion reached such a peak in North Carolina that leading men of the Province undertook to organize themselves. The First Provincial Congress met in



Oration

DELIVERED BEFORE

Capt. J. H. Byrd's Company of Volunteers,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1826.

AT

KINSTON, LENOIR COUNTY, N. C.

*By H. B. CROOM, Esq.*

NEWBERN:

REPRINTED BY PASTEUR & WATSON,

AT THE OFFICE OF THE CAROLINA SENTINEL.

1826.

Title page of a 12-page pamphlet containing a stirring Fourth of July address by a native son of Lenoir County. Made just 49 years after the Declaration of Independence, Croom's address reminded his listeners of Revolutionary events which many of them remembered. He pointed out to Captain Byrd's militiamen that they were the guardians of the free Constitution which their kinsmen fought to establish. An original copy of this pamphlet is in the North Carolina Collection of the University of North Carolina Library.

New Bern. The membership of this Congress consisted mainly of members of the General Assembly which had been called to meet under British authority. They seized the occasion to conduct an anti-British convention. This Congress elected William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, and Richard Caswell to represent the Province in the First Continental Congress. This Congress had been proposed by popular Committees of Correspondence and was to meet in Philadelphia on September 5, just 11 days after these men were chosen as delegates. The choice of North Carolina's representatives was a wise one. The three men had served for several months on the Committee of Correspondence by which much confidential information had been exchanged with the other colonies and contacts formed with political leaders to the north and south.

Caswell lost no time in beginning the trip to Philadelphia. On September 3, 1774, accompanied by his son William and a servant, he set out from his Dobbs County home. His brothers, Martin and Samuel, and a delegation of men from the Kingston vicinity, turned out to see them on their way.

Traveling on horseback, Caswell and his party reached Philadelphia on September 15, and he belatedly took his seat two days later in the Continental Congress. He remained until its adjournment on October 26. Since the proceedings of the Congress were carried on in great secrecy, no record of the discussions was kept. Consequently, the part taken by individuals cannot be known. Caswell's leadership of the North Carolina delegation is indicated, however, by John Adams in a statement reportedly made to Judge William Gaston some years later. Adams said, "We always looked to Richard Caswell of North Carolina. He was a model man and true patriot."

## Second Provincial and Continental Congresses

North Carolina's Provincial Congress met again at New Bern the next spring and on April 5, 1775, received the report of the delegates outlining measures proposed by the Continental Congress for resisting the British. These proposals did not suggest the use of armed force or violence. As a means of getting better treatment from the British, however, they did propose that their fellow citizens stop buying goods made in Great Britain.

Again, the Provincial Congress was composed principally of members of the General Assembly which had been called into session on April 4 by the Royal Governor, Josiah Martin. Sensing that the representatives of the people were getting out of hand, Governor Martin dismissed the Assembly on April 8 after strong and disagreeable messages had been exchanged between him and the Assembly. This was the last General Assembly in North Carolina to meet under a royal governor. In their roles as members of the Provincial Congress, the assemblymen went across the street to hear the recommendations of the Continental Congress. They elected Hooper, Hewes and Caswell to serve as delegates to the Second Continental Congress which was to meet in Philadelphia in May.

The confidence and high opinion which Governor Martin had for Caswell is shown in a letter which the Governor wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth on September 1, 1774, telling him that Caswell had been appointed a delegate to the Continental Congress, but he

> disapproves of these measures in his heart, I am persuaded, and undertakes this office purely for the sake of maintaining his popularity, on which he depends for his continuance in the Treasurership and which he has ever shown the best disposition to employ for the service and advantage of the Government.

This was written three days before Caswell left for the First Continental Congress. When Caswell attended the Second Continental Congress, Martin took it far less kindly. In another letter to the Earl on August 28, 1775, he expressed his changed sentiments:

> . . . at his going to the first Congress and after his return from it, [Caswell] appeared to me to have embarked in the cause with a reluctance that much extenuated his guilt, in my estimation, shows himself now the most active tool of sedition although his professions are according to my information still averse to his ostensible conduct and character, which at this crisis of Affairs serve to aggravate his guilt and infamy.

As Caswell journeyed to attend the Second Continental Congress, news met him of the Battle of Lexington which had taken place on April 19, 1775, between the Minute Men of Massachusetts and British forces. Any reluctance which Caswell and his companions might have had before to avoid a resort to arms against the mother country was now swiftly discarded.

When Caswell returned to North Carolina from Philadelphia he found that Royal Governor Josiah Martin had abandoned the noted palace built by Tryon in New Bern and taken up residence aboard a British warship. Governor Martin acknowledged information reaching him that Richard Caswell "had the insolence to reprehend the committee of safety for suffering me to remove from thence." The British at the same time felt compelled to abandon Fort Johnston which guarded the Neuse River approaches.

## Third Provincial Congress

The Third Provincial Congress, meeting in August at Hillsboro, heard with pleasure the report of the proceedings of the Continental Congress and took steps to follow its recommendations. Arrangements were made for supporting the Continental Congress with funds and for raising troops both for the Continental Army and for six battalions of Minute Men to serve the new State of North Carolina. Each battalion of Minute Men was to consist of 500 soldiers. Caswell was appointed commander of these troops for the New Bern District.

Dobbs County promptly raised three companies of Minute Men. These consisted of 68 men and four officers to the company when fully manned. Company A presented itself to the Dobbs County Committee of Public Safety on September 23, 1775, and was inducted into service. The officers, elected by the men of the company, were Captain Jesse Cobb, Lieutenant William Cobb, and Ensign Richard Caswell, the Younger. The officers of Company B, announced a few days later, were Captain George Miller, Lieutenant Benjamin Exum, and Ensign David Jernigan. Early in October Company C was organized with Captain John Garland, Lieutenant William Kilpatrick, and Ensign John Grainger as its officers. These companies saw service on February 26 at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge when the British plan for a quick victory in North Carolina was defeated.

## Fourth Provincial Congress

The Fourth Provincial Congress failed to agree upon a Constitution for the State. It appointed a committee of nine men to handle the affairs of government until the next session of the

Congress which was to meet at Halifax on November 12, 1776. Among these was Richard Caswell.

## Fifth Provincial Congress

In the Fifth Provincial Congress Dobbs County was represented by Richard Caswell, Simon Bright, Abraham Sheppard, Benjamin Exum, and Andrew Bass. Caswell and Bright were from the Kinston area; Sheppard and Exum resided in northern Dobbs; and Bass lived where Goldsboro now stands. In this Congress the respect for Caswell was all the greater because of the victory achieved under his leadership at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge. He was elected President of the Congress and took a leading part in writing the Constitution which was promptly adopted for the State. The delegates then named him temporary governor, pending the election of a chief executive by the independent General Assembly under the provisions of the new Constitution. At the same time justices of the peace were appointed to conduct the local affairs of the various counties.

## Caswell as Governor

On January 16, 1777, following his election as temporary governor by the Provincial Congress in Halifax, Caswell took the oath of office in the palace at New Bern. He was elected to his first regular term by the General Assembly in 1777 and re-elected in 1778 and 1779.

While Caswell was Governor the little town of Kingston, for all practical purposes, was the capital of the young State. During most of the three critical years when he held office, Caswell resided at his estate, "Newington," near the town. The Council met alternately in New Bern and in Kingston. Foreign officials and representatives of the governments of the other States having business with North Carolina's Governor called upon him in Kingston.

Caswell, perhaps in an apologetic tone, once wrote that he could not recommend Kingston for "its accommodations or the politeness of its company" but did stress its nearness to New Bern. With smallpox breaking out in New Bern, with the possibility of that town's capture by the British after Wilmington had been taken, and in the face of active western opposition to a

State capital as far east as New Bern, it is easy to see why the officials of the new government were willing to abandon the old capital.

There is no hint as to where official meetings were held in Kingston during these years. The Dobbs County Courthouse was located at Walnut Creek until Kingston became the county seat in 1779. It is possible that Caswell held meetings in the Episcopal chapel since it was, in a sense, a public building. Tradition handed down locally, however, says that a plantation house which stood until recently at Tower Hill was sometimes used.

At a Council of State meeting held in Kingston on July 3, 1779, Governor Caswell felt that it was necessary to lay before the members a pressing matter relating to his own neighbors. A number of people living in Edgecombe, Nash, Johnston, and Dobbs counties had been expressing opposition to the drafting of men for military service. Through their influence several men had evaded the draft and others, about to enter service, were being threatened. Deserters from the Continental Army were also being harbored by these people.

The Council authorized the Governor to send a detachment from the Dobbs Regiment to capture the leaders of this movement and to search suspected places where members of the group might be found. Shortly afterwards word also reached Caswell that certain people in Hyde, Beaufort, and Martin counties were resisting the draft and plotting to attack Kingston to seize the powder magazine there. A regiment under Colonel John Heritage set out prepared to seek out these people and either to subdue them or engage them in battle. At this show of force most of the guilty persons readily came forward to reaffirm their willingness to support the Revolutionary government, thus ending the threat to its authority.

## Caswell's Later Career and Influence

When Governor Caswell became ineligible for re-election by virtue of the constitutional limitation (a governor was not eligible for that office more than three years in six successive years), he again returned to the General Assembly as a representative from Dobbs County. He also served for some months as a major general of the North Carolina militia in the field. Under General Horatio Gates he led the North Carolina troops at the Battle of

Camden in South Carolina. Most of the men under his command were militiamen with little training and no experience against seasoned troops. At the onslaught of the British regulars confronting them, the militia broke and fled in wild disorder despite the efforts of Caswell and other officers to rally them. The defeat was a disastrous one for the Americans and for Caswell personally. While Caswell exhibited no noticeable military genius, in political statesmanship and public finance no one excelled him in North Carolina and but few in all of America.

Caswell's influence remained strong with the General Assembly, and he seems virtually to have chosen his successors in the office of governor. It is evident that his tactics were sometimes resented by his fellow legislators. In May, 1783, after he had again become eligible for election as governor, he failed in his attempt to return to the office. In commenting upon his defeat in a letter to his son William, Caswell stated that some members of the Assembly complained "saying I had cram'd him [Alexander Martin, the Governor] down their throats last year & they were now determined to keep him there." Caswell had been eligible himself the year before but had declined to be a candidate. In 1784 he again stated his intention to decline but changed his mind and became a candidate. Caswell was then re-elected for two more terms, serving until 1787.

In addition to his diligent attention to his public offices through the years, Caswell was able to operate his "indigo works" near Kinston, engage in general farming, and maintain a tannery.

As he approached the end of his life, Caswell spoke out in favor of provisions in the Federal Constitution which eventually were adopted. When a convention was called to meet in Philadelphia in 1787 for the purpose of proposing improvements to the Articles of Confederation, under which the government of the United States had operated during and since the Revolution, he was elected by the Assembly as one of the delegates from North Carolina. Since his health was poor, he resigned. In his capacity as Governor, however, he appointed William Blount to serve in his stead. Richard Dobbs Spaight, another delegate, seems to have spoken most often for the North Carolina representatives. Although the Convention carried on its business in strict secrecy, certain correspondence which passed between Spaight and Caswell shows that Caswell exercised influence through Spaight.

Caswell favored an independent judiciary such as was established. He also favored giving the Supreme Court power to decide questions arising between the United States and individual States and between different States. This was a power which the Constitution vested in the Supreme Court of the United States.

## Hillsboro Convention

In 1788 an election was held in North Carolina for delegates to attend a convention to be held in Hillsboro for the purpose of accepting or rejecting the proposed Federal Constitution. Sentiment against federalism was particularly strong in Dobbs County. The Federalist ticket in the County was made up of Richard Caswell, James Glasgow, Benjamin Sheppard, Bryan Whitfield, and John Heritage. The Anti-Federalist ticket was less distinguished but more popular. While the ballots were being counted in the courthouse at night following the election, it was noted that the Anti-Federalist ticket was leading by a substantial margin. Suddenly the light was extinguished and the ballot box disappeared so that the sheriff, charged with counting the ballots, declared himself unable to determine which ticket had been elected. The Federalist Governor "recommended" under the circumstances that the voters of Dobbs County meet at the courthouse in Kinston on an appointed day to elect delegates. This meeting was held, but only 85 voters, all Federalists, participated in this "second" election. The Hillsboro Convention unseated this Federalist delegation from Dobbs and refused to seat the Anti-Federalists, as well. Dobbs County, therefore, was not represented in the Hillsboro Convention which rejected the Federal Constitution.

Caswell's popularity with the people of Dobbs County reached its lowest ebb during the debate concerning the proposed Federal Constitution. No little part of the distrust resulted from the position in which he and his family had stood to rig the vote. Richard Caswell and his brother-in-law, John Heritage, were candidates. His brother, Benjamin Caswell, as sheriff, was responsible for counting the ballots, and another brother, Martin, was the Clerk of the Court who would certify the election of can-

didates. The election night disturbance was widely publicized not only in North Carolina but throughout the young nation. Hugh Williamson, whom the Governor had appointed as a delegate to the 1787 Constitutional Convention, expressed his personal embarrassment that Governor Caswell had become involved in such a matter. This period of corrupt politics in Dobbs County gave the reputation for lawlessness and disorder which led finally to the abolition of the county of Dobbs.

## End of Caswell's Career

Richard Caswell did not live to see the first battle won for Federalism by the ratification of the Federal Constitution by North Carolina in November, 1789 He had not been entirely well for several years and the recent loss of two of his sons bore heavily upon his heart. His health would improve briefly only to relapse.

Following the election fiasco in the spring of 1788, Caswell set about to restore the faith which the people of Dobbs County once had in him. The effort was rewarded by his being elected again to serve them in the State Senate in 1789 and as a delegate to the new convention to meet in Fayetteville in November to reconsider ratification of the Federal Constitution.

On November 5, 1789, while serving as President of the State Senate, Caswell was stricken with paralysis. After lingering speechless until the tenth of the month, he died at the age of sixty. His funeral was held in Fayetteville and the General Assembly attended as a group. Afterwards the body was taken to Kinston and interred in the Caswell family cemetery.

Governor Caswell's first wife, Mary McIllwean, must have been considerably older than he and she died about 1757. They were the parents of one child, William, who became Register of Deeds of Dobbs County and was a brigadier general during the Revolution.

Caswell's second wife, Sarah Heritage, was the daughter of William Heritage of Craven County. They lived at "Woodington," Caswell's plantation, about four miles south of Kinston until 1776 when they moved to "Newington," another Caswell plantation also near Kinston. Their children were Richard, Winston, Anna, Dallam, John, and Susannah.

While Richard Caswell was regarded as a wealthy man during his lifetime, it was found soon after his death that he had died penniless. The financial ability which he displayed in public life was lacking in the management of his own private affairs. The claims of creditors promptly exhausted his personal estate, and the remaining claims were large enough to consume his lands as well.

The provisions made for his family in his will were to no avail. In December, 1804, his last surviving son, Dallam, petitioned the General Assembly to cancel a State claim which, if collected, would take from the heirs of Richard Caswell the last remaining tract of the late father's estate.

In vain he pointed out the services of his father to the State while serving at a salary depreciated by inflation more rapidly than it was raised during the Revolutionary period. He pointed out also the personal sacrifices made by his father to attend to the public business. The General Assembly was not impressed. The family was left to shift for itself. Thus came to an end the career of Kinston's First Citizen.

# V. Formation of Lenoir County: Slow Growth and Painful Progress

## Abolition of Dobbs, Establishment of Lenoir

In December, 1791, a bill was introduced in the General Assembly to abolish Dobbs County and to erect in its place two new counties. The chief reason given locally for such action was the lawlessness and general unrest among the people living in the northern half of the County. General William A. Graham, who opposed the bill in the Assembly, declared that this was the first time he had ever heard of destroying a government in order to establish law and order.

When the bill was under consideration, a strong effort was made to name one of the new counties for Stephen Cabarrus, then president of the State House of Commons. The original name Lenoir in the bill was stricken out and Cabarrus substituted. Then Cabarrus was crossed out and Lenoir put back. The other new county was named Glasgow in honor of James Glasgow, North Carolina's first Secretary of State. (When this formerly distinguished citizen was later found guilty of fraudulent dealing in land grants, the name of the county was changed from Glasgow to Greene.)

The act abolishing Dobbs County and establishing Lenoir and Glasgow counties was ratified on December 21, 1791. Kinston was to be the county seat of the new Lenoir County.

## William Lenoir

Lenoir County's name honored a forty-one-year-old Revolutionary hero who, at the time the County was formed, was Speaker of the State Senate. William Lenoir had succeeded Richard Caswell in that office after the latter's death in 1789. Lenoir was born in Virginia but settled near Tarboro with his parents when he was about eight years old. Beginning in 1774 he engaged in patriotic activities which led to vigorous participation in the fight for American Independence. In March, 1775, he moved to western North Carolina and settled on the Yadkin River near

a meetinghouse around which the town of Wilkesboro later developed. He joined other local leaders in suppressing the Tories who were numerous in that area, and in 1776 he took part in General Griffith Rutherford's expedition against the Cherokee Indians. Later he was in the midst of the fight at King's Mountain, where he was wounded in the arm and side. He fought with Col. Henry Lee at a battle near the Haw River in Piedmont North Carolina and raised a company which sought to join General Nathanael Greene at the Battle of Guilford Court House but arrived too late. After the War Lenoir moved into what is now Caldwell County. His home, "Fort Defiance," at Happy Valley, is still standing. He served as a Major General of the militia for 18 years after the War. He also held numerous offices in the local and State government. He served in both houses of the Assembly, on the Council of State, and was a member of the Convention of 1788 which rejected the Federal Constitution and of the Convention of 1789 which adopted it. He was one of the original trustees of the University of North Carolina and was president of the board. General Lenoir died in 1839 at the age of eighty-eight. During his whole life it is said that he enjoyed exceptionally good health, and in the last year of his life rode 50 miles on horseback to attend a county court.

In the General Assembly of 1797 a feeble attempt was made to restore some of Kinston's lost prestige. A bill was introduced to move the meeting place of the Superior Court for the district from New Bern to Kinston and to name commissioners for erecting the necessary buildings to accommodate the Court. The bill was referred to the legislators from the New Bern area and there, of course, the bill died. The same Assembly, however, elected Bryan Whitfield of Lenoir County to be a member of the Council of State, and it also passed an act incorporating St. John's Masonic Lodge at Kinston.

Lenoir County grew slowly during its earlier years. In 1790, at the time of the first census, Dobbs County had 6,893 people. In 1800, the first census to show Lenoir County, there were 4,005 people in the County. Kinston consisted of only ten households with a total of 108 people. Heads of families in the town were Ambrose Jones, Joseph Elliott, William McBean, John Washington, Simon Bright, John Gatlin, Jesse Cobb, John Lovick, Thomas King, and Rachel Lowry. By 1820 the County's population had

grown to 6,799; in 1840 it was 7,605; and at the last federal census before the Civil War the population had increased to 10,220. Lenoir County then was one of 16 counties in North Carolina having a greater number of slaves than whites.

## Early Description of Lenoir County

John Washington, a citizen of Kinston, was a native of Tidewater Virginia and a distant relative of President George Washington. He married Eliza, daughter of Jesse Cobb, and served as a commissioner of Kinston in 1806 and 1809. He later was postmaster. In 1810, at the request of Thomas Henderson, he wrote an account of Lenoir County as it was at that time.

The product of this County is mostly Indian corn and pease [Washington wrote,] with some Cotton, sweet potatoes, wheat and Rye. The former of the two last articles is much increas'd within the last ten years, farmers that then raised but small patches, now sow large or considerable fields.

Pork being the staple article of this County, a part of the Corn crop with a little of the Wheat (in flour) is sent to market, and the residue (perhaps) much the largest part of the Corn crop, as well as wheat and all the Rye and nearly all the pease and potatoes is given to the Hogs for fating.

There are two Roads leading westwardly, one on each side of the River, and three cross Roads or rather from South to North, say, one from Newbern crosses Neuse from Craven at Coxes Ferry in the lower end of this County, thence up Contentney, one that crosses at Jones's Bridge near Kinston, thence through Kinston towards Contentney or up the river on the North side (this is the most generally used road) also one that crosses at Rockford or Whitfields ferry, which leads in the same direction.

These ferries and bridge, with one across Contentney at Brooks's from Pitt County, are all of any note contain'd in the County.

There is some appearance of Iron ore in the County, though too small to be any ways important; near the river, in several places visible considerable quantities of Copperass ore and in the river bank are some masses of limestone which affords good lime, also in one place in the bed of the river as well as the bank, there is an extensive bed of soft, light and fleeky rock, which is said to be fullers earth, but whether it is or not I am too little acquainted to say.

As to the product of this County, pork and Indian Corn seems to be the staple articles, but of the quantity sent to market, the means of knowing is so uncertain as to render it difficult to say, yet I suppose at least 2,000 Barrels of Pork, 5 to 6,000 of corn, 50 or 60 Bales of Cotton, a considerable quantity of Bacon, some flour, naval stores, peas, etc.

A considerable part of the Pork is driven to Virginia and some to Newbern. Newbern is the only market for the cured produce of this County.

Wealth, notwithstanding it cannot be said to be very extensive, yet I conceive it to be equal if not superior to most of the Counties of the lower

part of this State, being as small as this. Though there are some wealthy men in this County, they are not numerous, they being generally of that happy medium which qualifies them to be useful as well to each other as themselves and desirable and valuable citizens in their County.

Manufacturing of clothing, though not carried on extensively (there being no extensive or regular establishment) yet it is conducted with much prudence and saving, being wrought only by the disaffective hands or those not qualified for field labor, which is found to be sufficient to afford a supply for much the greater part of the Clothing for both whites and blacks.

Lenoir has in it about 16 or 17 grist mills, most of which have saws attached to them, and five or six Cotton Ginns that go by Horses and perhaps some few by Water.

The commerce of this County is by no means extensive and confined entirely to retail, and almost exclusive on a credit of 6 to 12 months. There are four stores (3 at Kinston and 1 at Rockford) at which perhaps the amount of sales may run to 25 or $30,000, but I am persuaded that it will not exceed it, or but little if at all. This County is not well adapted to commerce it being for one reason, too near Newbern, to which market the bulk of produce is carried by the farmer themselves, and for another the navigation is so extremely bad as to be a considerable part of the year useless.

As to Shipping, this County has only a river craft, which consist in a description of flat bottomed Boats or Scows which seem to be peculiar to this and Tar River. The flats are generally open and carry from 50 to 200 Barrels. Drawing from 18 to 36 inches [of water] they are wrought with poles by from 3 to 7 hands, who act on ways or walks, constructed on the side of the flat, and is steered with a sweep or large oar attached to the Stern that Swivels on an erect post. These flats mostly have a round House or Cabin a baft with a scuttle door. This description of Boats has not been in use on this river more than 10 or 12 years, there was before in use a description of flat bottomed keel Boats, the present plan is preferred for this shoal river.

The fisheries of this County are by no means extensive for though there are perhaps twenty Seins or upward, the whole Fish taken in the County are but few compared with the Fisheries of some other rivers. I cannot think the whole Fish taken in this County would average in amount per sein more than 1 to $200 and in many instances would fall much short, and of some springs owing to the flowing of the water few or no fish are caught. Shads principally with a few Rocks, Sturgeons and a few Shucking fish (or mullets) are almost the only fish taken in seins. There does a few Herrings come into the river but as high as this, no person has yet thought it an object worth preparing a sein to take them.

Our game consists principally of Deer, foxes, Rabits & Squirrels (of two kinds—fox and cat). Squirrels are numerous but the others are not. We have also raccoons, opossoms, otters & muskrats, &c. Indeed as to the list of wild animals, there is nothing remarkable in it, it being such as is peculiar to other counties similarly situated.

As to men of Talents, I do not know that this County can boast of any extra ordinary portion nor do I know that it is inferior to others in a comparative view. There are but few professional men, none of the Law and only two of Physic who practice, and they not of very long standing.

With respect to societies or libraries, there are none (except of a private nature) which I am constrained also to say of those for humane purposes, yet as to general hospitality, as also humanity from the Master to the slave, it abounds on a compárative view, as much in this County as any in the State.

Sporting clubs we have none of, and as to amusement I believe nearly the same may be said of that, there being none but such as each mind individually points out, indeed the inhabitants of this County seem to be so engaged in entensive pursuits as to have but little relish for what the world calls pleasure.

## Kinston's Incorporation

The little town of Kinston, perhaps beginning to expand, was incorporated by the General Assembly of 1826. The board named for governing the town was composed of six men. Not one of them, however, took the trouble to qualify and the town had to get along without any other governing board than the regular county officials for nearly another quarter of a century. Finally in January, 1849, the Assembly re-incorporated the town and named five men to form a Board of Aldermen. These men qualified and set up the first town government.

The first election for city officials, held in mid-January, 1850, saw the election of Moses Patterson as mayor, Dr. John Woodley as town clerk, Richard W. King as treasurer, and James B. Weeks as "town sergeant" or chief of police.

Perhaps in a burst of pride brought on by the enthusiasm for local development, Kinston citizens prevailed upon the General Assembly to pass an act late in 1833 (when William D. Moseley of Lenoir County was Speaker of the Senate) changing the name of the town of Kinston to Caswell in honor of the late Governor Richard Caswell. It took only a year for the local population to be convinced that the change was not wise. The old name was too well established. The Assembly repealed its act of the year before and Caswell once again became Kinston.

## Internal Improvements in Lenoir County

Lenoir County citizens, like others in the State, were very much concerned with "internal improvements" in the early part of the nineteenth century. They wanted better roads, improved waterways both through rivers and through canals, and extensive

railways. In July, 1833, a North Carolina Internal Improvements Convention was held in Raleigh. Lenoir County's delegates were Allen Wooten, Council Wooten, George Whitfield, John C. Washington, Blount Coleman, Richard Croom, John W. S. West, John P. Dunn, Charles Westbrook, Isaac Croom, Hardy B. Croom,* Nathan B. Whitfield, John Gatlin, Nathan Blount, Alexander Moseley, Reuben Knox, Watson Wilcox, Dallam Caswell, and Walter Davenport.

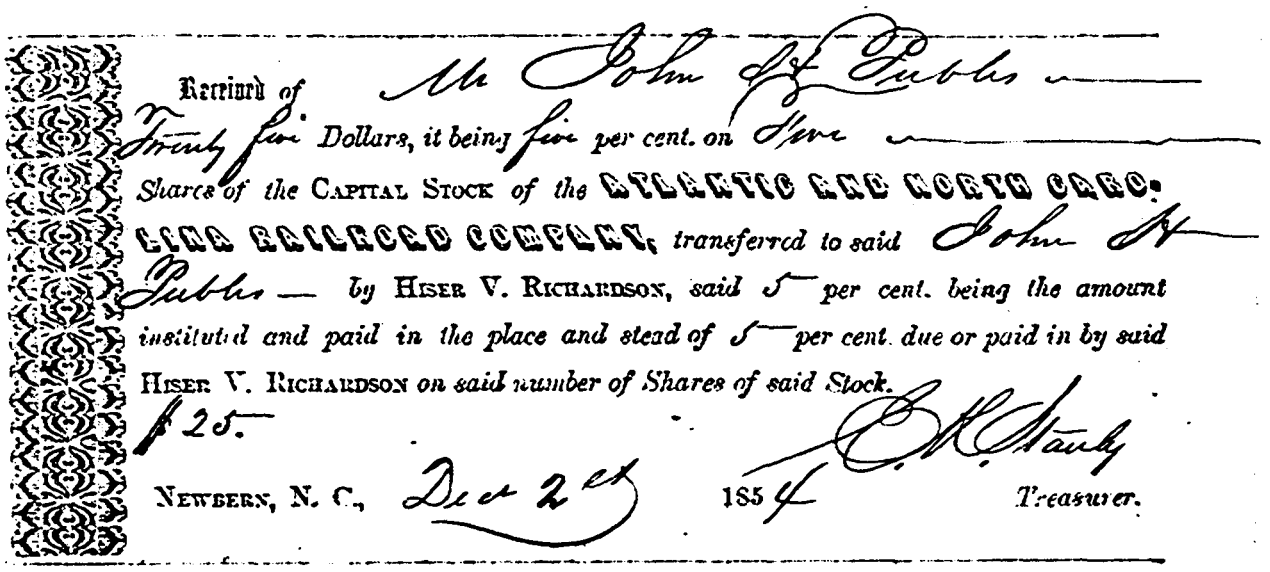
On October 16 and 17 of the same year an important convention met in Kinston to discuss ways of improving transportation in the immediate area, including the surrounding counties. Representatives were present from Carteret, Craven, Jones, Lenoir, and Wayne counties. The Lenoir delegates were Isaac Croom (who was made chairman of the hard-working Resolutions Committee), George Whitfield, William C. Kilpatrick, John Cobb, John Williams, Needham Whitfield, and Nathan G. Blount. Governor David L. Swain, who was very much interested in the subject to be discussed, was present and invited to take charge of the deliberations. "In energetic language," it is reported, he addressed the group "on the great importance of Internal Improvement to the State of North-Carolina, and the means in her power of improving her condition."

William Gaston joined Blount and Croom of Lenoir and representatives from each of the other counties on the Resolutions Committee. Reporting on the second day, this Committee pointed out that it had carefully considered the merits of improving the channels of the Neuse River as a means of connecting the region with a seaport. In view of the clogged and crooked course of the river it seemed impractical to try to use it as a waterway to the sea. The committee instead had "but little difficulty in arriving at conclusions clear and satisfactory" that the construction of a railroad would answer all their needs. It was agreed by the Convention that the next General Assembly should be asked

*Hardy Bryan Croom (1797-1837) deserves more than mere mention in any account of his native county. A graduate of the University of North Carolina in 1817, he studied law with William Gaston and was admitted to the bar. He was a wealthy planter and practiced law only briefly. Croom was an amateur botanist of great promise. In 1833 he published a catalogue of the plants, native and naturalized, in the vicinity of New Bern. This catalogue was expanded and republished in New York in 1837. En route to the Internal Improvements Convention in Raleigh in 1833, Croom kept a botanical journal which was published in a Chapel Hill newspaper on September 10. Croom and hs entire family were lost at sea in the autumn of 1837 when the "Home" sank off Ocracoke Inlet. Croom's brother and his mother-in-law entered separate suits in court attempting to claim his estate, each basing his claim on the prior death of a certain member of the family. This case has now become famous because it was an attempt to determine survivorship in a common calamity.

to assist in the construction of a railroad from the port at Beaufort through Trenton and Kinston to Waynesborough (near modern Goldsboro). On motion of Croom it was also agreed that funds should be sought from individuals in all of the interested counties. Some $30,000 was soon subscribed to support this project, but it was nearly 20 years before it bore fruit. The General Assembly of 1833-1834, however, incorporated the Raleigh and Roanoke Railroad Company, thereby setting the pattern for the formation of other railroad companies.

In a desperate move to open up communications local citizens succeeded in having the 1852 General Assembly incorporate the Kinston and Snow Hill Plank Road Company. This was a period when roads made of wooden planks were believed to be the answer to man's quest for quick transportation from one town to another. An office was opened in Kinston to receive subscriptions for stock in this company for an amount not to exceed $40,000 in shares of $50 each. Officers and directors were authorized to be elected and were given power to construct, repair, and maintain the road. It was to be not less than eight feet nor more than 40 feet wide and a toll gate could be erected as soon as five miles were completed. Fares were not to yield a profit in excess of 20 per cent of the capital of the company. There is no evidence, however, that construction of this road was


Received of Mr John H. Peebles
Twenty five Dollars, it being five per cent. on Five
Shares of the CAPITAL STOCK of the ATLANTIC AND NORTH CARO. RAIL ROAD COMPANY, transferred to said John H. Peebles — by HISER V. RICHARDSON, said 5 per cent. being the amount instituted and paid in the place and stead of 5 per cent. due or paid in by said HISER V. RICHARDSON on said number of Shares of said Stock.
$25.
NEWBERN, N. C., Dec 2d 1854
C. H. Stanly Treasurer.

**Receipt issued to John H. Peebles of Kinston for stock in the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, December 2, 1854. The original is in the Wait and Leone Hines Collection, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.**

ever begun. The coming of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad later in the 1850's perhaps kept the directors of the plank road company from raising enough money for their road to Snow Hill. On February 5, 1855, the General Assembly passed a bill by which the State agreed to help finance the railroad. The first section built and put into operation was between New Bern and Kinston. Bids for the work between Kinston and Goldsboro were opened on May 1, 1855, and the contract awarded to John C. Washington of Kinston. His bid was $340,000. The work was completed and the first trains between Kinston and Goldsboro ran on April 29, 1858. The day passenger train on this line was called "The Shoo Fly," while the night train was known as "The Cannon Ball." In the decade following the construction of the railroad Kinston's population almost trebled. Good transportation was, indeed, the serious community need which local leaders had been seeking to meet for almost half a century.

## Kinston in 1850 and 1860

Kinston's population was 455 in 1850. There were two hotels or boardinghouses operated by Dr. Thomas Woodley and William C. Loftin. Living at Woodley's, in addition to his family, were a stage proprietor; three men, born in Germany, who were merchants; a German-born peddler; two harness-makers; a mason; and two stage drivers. At Loftin's were his family, two tailors, a harness-maker, and an overseer. Other households included several merchants, a watchmaker, farmers, tailors, lawyers, carpenters, a bookkeeper, a barkeeper, and several county officials.

By 1860 Kinston was one of the growing towns of the State. Wilmington and New Bern had more than 5,000 people; Raleigh and Fayetteville had more than 4,000 residents; and Kinston was one of 11 towns in North Carolina with over 1,000 people.

# VI. Civil War and Reconstruction

## Secession

The election of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States in November, 1860, did not cause the immediate distress in North Carolina that it did in some of the other southern States. North Carolinians were more moderate and many of them supported the Union. Tar Heels adopted a "watch and wait" attitude instead of promptly seceding from the Union as South Carolina did. The General Assembly met on November 19 and the issues facing the State were hotly debated. All agreed, however, that military preparedness must be the first goal. John C. Wooten represented Lenoir County in the House of Representatives at that session while the Senator was James P. Speight of Greene County. The feeling of many citizens was expressed by one man who said, "I am a Union man but when they send men South it will change my notions. I can do nothing against my own people."

As more States withdrew from the Union in January, 1861, the General Assembly's conservatives became less vocal. On February 28 the people were asked to vote on the question of calling a convention to consider secession. Quite surprisingly the proposal for a convention was defeated, although Lenoir County citizens voted 447 for to 95 against the convention. The Confederate States of America had been formed on February 4 by six southern States, and it was obvious that North Carolina must soon make a decision which would require a great deal of thought. Outside forces brought the matter to a head very quickly. Fort Sumter in South Carolina surrendered to Confederate forces on April 13 and two days later Lincoln called on Governor John W. Ellis of North Carolina to supply two regiments of militia, as a part of the 75,000 troops he was then seeking, to suppress the uprising in the South.

Governor Ellis declined to furnish troops and ordered the occupation of several forts on the North Carolina coast. On May 1 a special session of the General Assembly called for a convention of the people which would be unrestricted in power and final in action. The election was held on May 13 and the Convention assembled on May 20.

John C. Washington represented Lenoir County at this "Secession Convention." The delegates took North Carolina out of the Union and within an hour ratified the Provisional Constitution of the Confederate States of America. A witness described the Convention as "a sea partly in storm, partly calm, the Secessionists shouting and throwing up their hats and rejoicing, the Conservatives sitting quietly, calm, depressed."

## Preparation for War

North Carolinians now began the task of preparing for war. The militia was called up, a military organization was established, and volunteers in the first flush of excitement rushed to enlist. Lenoir County's company of the North Carolina Guards entered service on May 20, 1861, the very day the State seceded, and soon became Company I of the 27th Regiment. The "Tuckahoe Braves" were organized on May 10 and became Company K of the same regiment, while the "Dixie Rifles," organized on May 18, became Company H. The "Lenoir Braves," a unit of heavy artillery, organized on June 12 and eventually joined the 40th Regiment as its Company A. This group was among the State's first troops sent to garrison some of the forts seized along the coast. It served at Fort Hatteras and at other forts near the mouth of the Cape Fear River for most of the War.

As a part of the feverish preparation, supplies were gathered at Kinston and elsewhere throughout the State. Training camps sprang up in Lenoir County along the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad just as they did in a great many other places where transportation for troops was convenient. Blackjack Camp near LaGrange and Camp Campbell and Camp Johnston near Kinston were among those important enough to have names. Seasoned veterans of the Mexican War, militiamen, and former students at some of the State's military schools were pressed into service to drill troops and train them in the bare essentials of military routine which they soon put into practice.

A bakery on Queen Street in Kinston was operated to produce "hard tack" on a large scale. This was crackers made for use of the marching army and consisted of flour, salt, and water. Confederate soldiers were detailed to work in the bakery, and they were often seen standing in a huge trough, barefooted and with trousers rolled to their knees. They used common garden

hoes to work up the dough. Shoes for Confederate forces were also made in Kinston. The Washington family operated the shoe factory, also on Queen Street, and in connection with it had a large tannery on the river side of Heritage Street at the intersection of Gordon.

While a quick victory was expected, there was still a bit of sadness in the ceremony when flags were presented to newly organized local units. Many letters have survived which tell of hopes and fears for the years ahead. A little poem from Lenoir County, now in the Wait and Leone Hines Collection at the State Archives, may have been pressed into the hand of a departing soldier by his sweetheart. In those Victorian times lovers perhaps expressed themselves in poetry more often than now and everyone certainly was more concerned with death. This poem bears words of assurance from the faithful lass to her sweetheart.

TO MY DARLING

When the grass shall cover me
Head to foot where I am lying;
When not any wind that blows,
Summer blooms nor winter snows,
Shall wake me to your sighing
Close above me as you pass,
You will say "How kind she was,"
You will say "How true she was."
When the grass grows over me.

When the grass shall cover me,
Holden close to earth's warm bosom,
While I laugh or weep or sing
Never more for anything
You will find in blade and blossom
Sweet small voices, odorous,
Tender pleaders in my cause,
That will speak me as I was
When the grass grows over me.

When the grass shall cover me!
Ah, beloved! in my sorrow
Very patient I can wait;
Knowing that soon or late
There will dawn a clearer morrow,
When your heart will moan, "Alas!
Now I know how true she was,
Now I know how dear she was"—
When the grass grows over me.

## Battle of Kinston

In mid-December, 1862, a battle of major proportions took place at Kinston. It came about as a result of a general troop movement among the Union forces extending as far west as Goldsboro, north to Fredericksburg, Virginia, and south to Wilmington. The Confederate commanding officer in the Kinston area was Brigadier General N. George Evans, while the Union commander was Brigadier General John G. Foster. Both men were graduates of West Point. The Confederates numbered between 2,000 and 6,000. The Union forces amounted to between 15,000 and 30,000 and were supported by nine small gunboats on the Neuse River.

This battle can best be described by very vivid extracts from a letter written just four days later by Mrs. Martha Ellen Miller, formerly of Boston but then a resident of Kinston and the wife of Dr. Lewis Miller. The letter was written to her family in Massachusetts but is quite sympathetic to her southern neighbors and loyal to her adopted home.

Kinston, N. C., Dec. 18, 1862.

. . . I must tell you of the fearful struggle I have been through.

I have seen a battle!—that is, as much of one as can be seen in a level country. I will relieve your anxious hearts by stating that I, my husband and servants are all well; have been spared by the "arrow that flieth at noonday."

To begin at the very first, as you will wish to know all: On Friday noon, Dec. 12, Dr. [Miller] said that there was skirmishing at Trenton, and six or seven of our men killed. I thought but little of it, as Trenton seems to be a sort of trap into which first one side and then the other falls.

I was very busy alll day trying to put the finishing touch to my merino dress; Dr. was away, and I determined to have it ready to put on for him to see when he came. It was done about sunset. At 7 o'clock a gentleman came to pay his bill to the Dr., saying he did not know where he might be in the morning. On being asked why, he said that the Yankees were within ten miles of town. I was perfectly surprised, and you may be sure awaited D.'s return without thinking much of showing my new dress. He had gone with several hands to kill some hogs, and as the hours went by—8, 9, 10—you may believe I got frightened. I feared he might have been captured. He got home at 11, and we talked the matter over till past one.

By daylight next morning every ear was strained to hear the first gun. No sound came for several hours, and we had about concluded that the alarm was false, when—boom! boom! fell on the ear and hearts of hundreds of listeners. This was at 10 A.M. The firing was kept up, with occasional rests,

till dark. The battle ground on that day was near "Woodington Meeting House." There was no great manifestation of alarm on that day among the citizens. Many left, but without anything like a panic. I did my week's mending as usual.

Again on Sunday morning did we breathlessly await the roar of artillery. At 10 it came—nearer and still nearer. We sent all of the black children with Philip and Albert into the country. Calvin and Jeanette took two trunks containing our most valuable clothing to a place of safety, so that, if the town was burned, we might not be destitute. About 12 an orderly came riding up and told Doctor to send his women and children to a place of safety as the place would be destroyed. Doctor told him we wished to stay and protect our things. "Well," he said to Doctor, "you stay." I told him I was not afraid and expected to stay by husband and home. "Very well," said he, "if you feel brave enough, go ahead!"

After that the cannonading got perfectly furious; shells flew thick and fast all about; the smell of powder and the shouts of the men were terrible. About two, the same orderly came up and gave us a peremptory order to leave. I told Doctor that I could not leave my home. I wept for the first time when he ordered the ponies. Before they came we knelt down together and I offered up a prayer for protection. My poor husband was so agitated that he could not speak, but wept like a child. After a little persuasion the horses were ordered back again but to be left with their harness on.

The house was shaken to the foundation by the artillery, and the musketry rattled like corn in a "popper." The Yankees stood in the low ground between the bridge and Mrs. Hill's; the rebels occupied the ridge and opposite side of the bridge, where they had a battery.

I do not know of any lady left in the town at this time except myself and Mrs. B., a very old woman. About 3½ the shout went up that our forces were retreating, and soon they came pouring through the town. They set fire to the bridge after crossing, and expected to make another stand on Mr. Washington's hill; but the Federals put out the fire in a few moments, and were too close upon their heels to permit them to offer any more fight, so that the only part I should have been frightened at, a hand-to-hand fight in the streets, was avoided.

The Federals came pouring in on every side, amounting to many thousands. There was a force of about 25,000, but whether all came into town or not, I can't say. . . .

After a while Maj. Morrissey of the 3d Massachusetts with some brother officer called. He said we ought to have a guard right off and he would wait till one came. Some soldiers tried to get a large quantity of meat from me, but he prevented it. I gave them about twenty pounds. At last, about 9 P.M., we got two guards; . . . the soldiers were carrying on the most wholesale robbery I ever heard of. At Delia's, in spite of all we could do, they took every article of bed clothing, knives and forks, sugar, honey, preserves, table cloths, in fact, everything. I heard the spoons rattling in one man's pocket and made him give them up and brought them home with me. . . .

Such a night, my dear parents, I pray God I may never see again.

The town of Kinston as it appeared on December 14, 1862, during an engagement between Confederate and Union forces. From *Harper's Weekly*, January 10, 1863.

The next morning the troops passed over the river bridge again, burned it after them and went somewhere—no one here could imagine where. At night firing was heard in the direction of Whitehall and also on the next day. Not one Federal soldier was left in Kinston. . . .

There was a fire in town the night after the battle. Coleman's drug store and several buildings in that vicinity were destroyed.

Oh, my dear friends, you know not the horrors and ravages of war. I hope you never may. The town is ruined, the people crushed. . . .

We are getting along famously now. Good bye; God bless you all.

## Lenoir County Soldiers

Lenoir County's earliest soldiers did not, of course, always remain with the original units to which they were assigned. Most enlistments were for a year, but the "Dixie Rifles" soon volunteered to serve for the duration of the War and were transferred to another regiment. The 27th Regiment trained at New Bern and saw much action in that area as well as around Kinston. It later engaged in numerous bloody battles in Virginia, particularly around Petersburg. In Maryland it fought at Sharpsburg and in February, 1863, was moved south as far as Charleston. Returning north in the spring, the 27th was in the vicinity of Kinston briefly and was employed to drive the Union forces back

into New Bern following their attack on Confederate troops at Gum Swamp in May. Ordered into Virginia again, the Regiment engaged in many encounters with the enemy, suffered extensive losses, and won much honor for itself. At one time a Mississippi soldier asked one of the Tar Heels what outfit he fought with. Upon being told, the Mississippian replied, "Oh, yes! You are the fellows that have up such a reputation for fighting. You'll get enough of it before you are done. They'll keep you in front until the enemy cuts you to pieces." But the 27th survived and many of its officers and men were present and surrendered with General Lee at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865.

The "Lenoir Braves," which had become Company A of the 40th Regiment, won less glory yet sacrificed much. Having been sent to Fort Hatteras almost immediately, the Company was engaged in battle on August 28 and 29, 1861, and lost a number of men killed and wounded. When the Fort was captured, the survivors were taken prisoner and transported by steamer to Governor's Island, New York. After two months they were moved to Fort Warren in Boston harbor. At least one officer and several men died while in prison. Late in 1861 and early the following year these men were exchanged and soon returned to their former post of garrisoning the forts along the southeastern North Carolina coast. When Fort Lane, below New Bern, fell in March, 1862, the men of the Company fell back to Kinston and were about to be sent into Virginia as infantrymen. An officer intervened, however, and the Company went to Wilmington where it did guard duty until ordered to Fort Fisher down the Cape Fear River. It was after a visit by President Jefferson Davis to the area in the fall of 1863 that this Company and other detached heavy artillery companies in the vicinity were organized into the 40th Regiment.

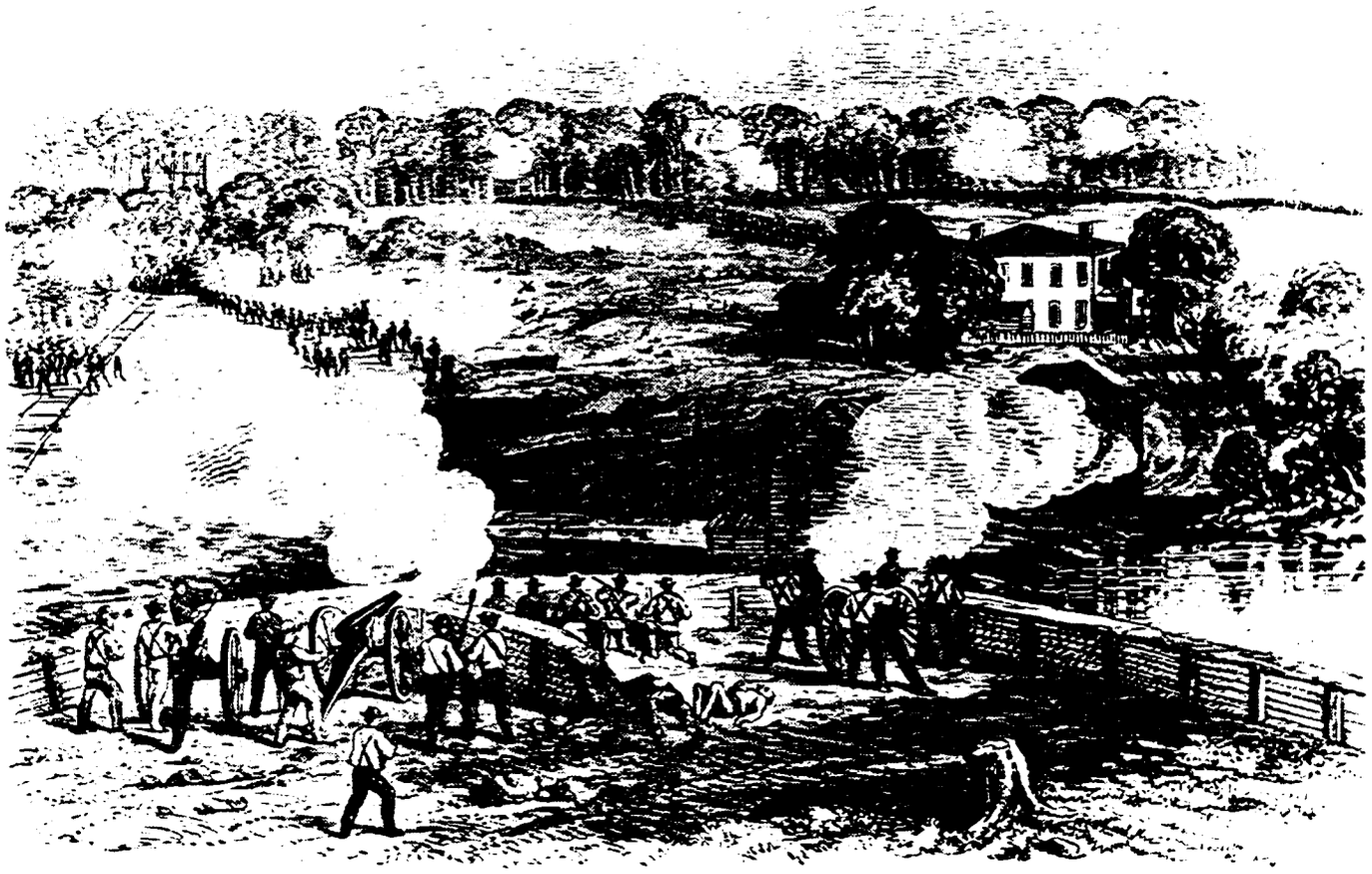
For a time the various units of the Regiment were engaged in constructing fortifications along the Cape Fear. It was while occupied with this assignment in July, 1864, that the Regiment was visited by Governor Vance during his campaign for re-election. The unit voted almost 100 per cent for Vance. In October, Company A was ordered to Fort Anderson at old St. Philip's Church near the ruins of the town of Brunswick, and it remained there until the Fort was evacuated in February, 1865, following a devastating attack from river gunboats. Its companies re-

united following the withdrawal from Fort Anderson, the 40th Regiment began the march through Wilmington and Duplin Cross Roads, toward Kinston. At Jackson's Mills, between New Bern and Kinston, the enemy was encountered. In spite of heavy losses, the 40th Regiment drove the enemy back several miles, and killed, wounded, and captured about 2,000 prisoners. A few days later they attacked the enemy again at Wise's Fork where the Union forces occupied a fortified position. This time the Confederates were repulsed with a heavy loss.

The 40th fell back from Kinston, took part in the Battle of Bentonville near Smithfield in March, and continued through Raleigh. It was present with General Joseph E. Johnston in April when he surrendered at the Bennett House near Durham.

The encounter between members of this Regiment and Union forces at Wise's Fork had been part of a larger engagement in the vicinity which has come to be known as the Battle of Southwest Creek. It occurred on March 8, 1865, across the Neuse River south of Kinston, and engaged units of Sherman's army which was marching from Fayetteville to Goldsboro and Confederate forces which happened to be in the vicinity. The Confederates were under the command of Generals Braxton Bragg, R. F. Hoke, and D. H. Hill, while the Union soldiers were commanded by General Jacob D. Cox.

To a large extent local Junior Reserves carried the day at the Battle of Southwest Creek. They were entrenched in some old breastworks along the west side of the sluggish, unfordable stream. The enemy, fresh from New Bern, established a line of skirmishers and sharpshooters on the east side. The Reserves exchanged shots with the Union troops off and on during the day. In the meantime the more seasoned Confederate forces slipped across Southwest Creek out of sight and the next morning approached the enemy from the flank. During the night the Reserves had laid an improvised bridge across the creek. The enemy, attacked from the flank and from the front, was driven out of the position. A number of Union prisoners were taken and the advance to Goldsboro temporarily checked. In extremely bad weather, the Confederates made an attempt to follow the enemy and did actually come upon Union troops in the night working on fortifications. The Confederates returned through Kinston, however, after burning the bridge over Southwest Creek,

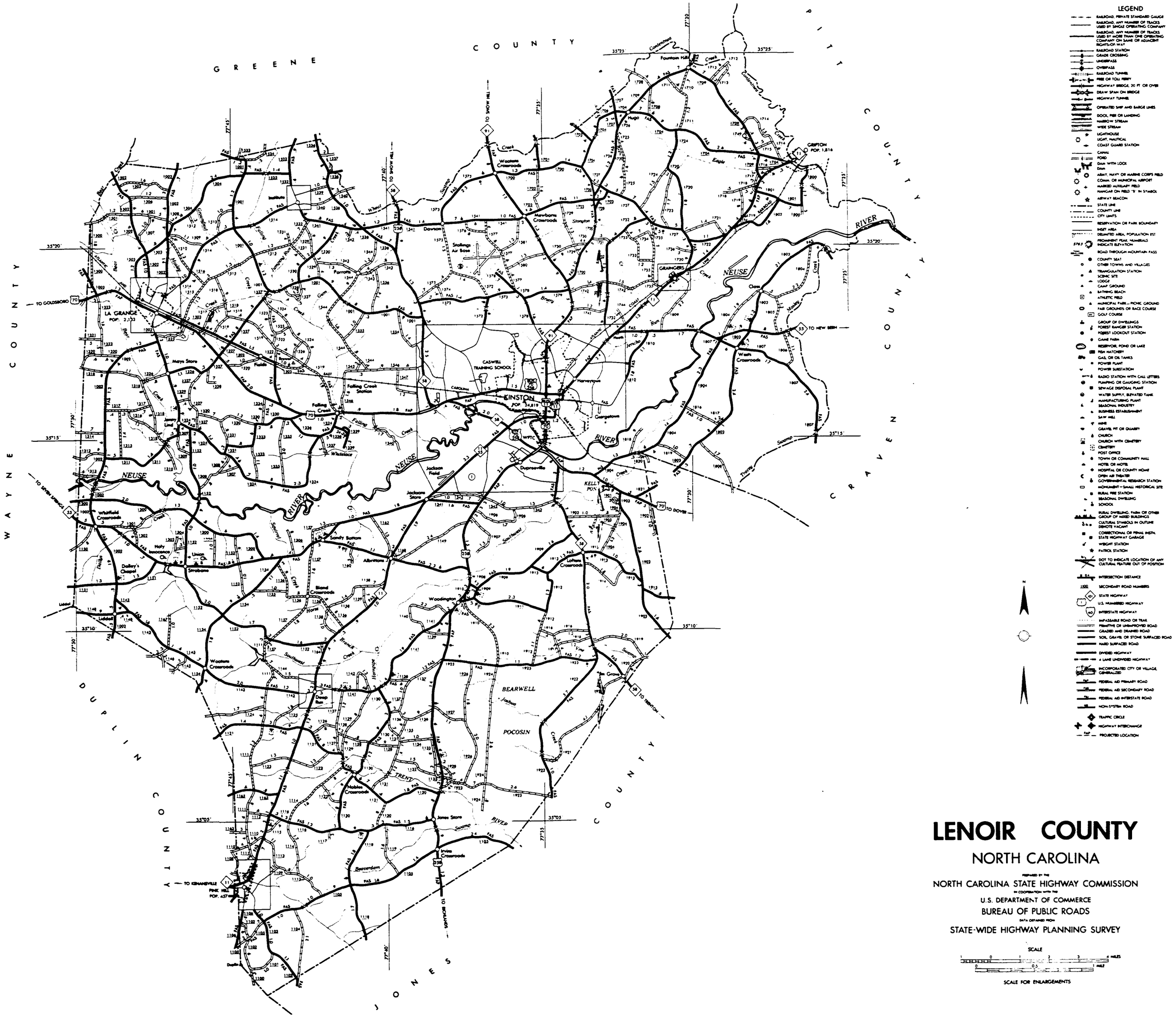


The Battle of Southwest Creek near Kinston, March 8, 1865. From *Frank Leslie's The Soldier in Our Civil War.*

and the Union forces eventually continued their march toward Goldsboro.

## Ram "Neuse"

It was during this battle that the Confederate Ram "Neuse" was destroyed at Kinston in the river for which it was named. Construction of this ironclad vessel had been started in 1862 at Whitehall (now Seven Springs) about 18 miles up the Neuse from Kinston. In 1863 she was floated downstream to Kinston where it was expected that the iron plate would be added. Her engines were from locomotives of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad. Guns were mounted and plating was added as it became available in the industry-starved South. When Union forces occupied Kinston in March, 1865, the "Neuse" still was not completed. A desperate attempt was made to get her underway and down the River to Pamlico Sound. The level of the water in the River was low and in spite of straining engines she stuck fast on a sandbar. Rather than have her captured, her officers set fire to the hold. A heated gun exploded, blowing a




## LEGEND

- RAILROAD, PRIVATE STANDARD GAUGE
- RAILROAD, ANY NUMBER OF TRACKS USED BY SINGLE OPERATING COMPANY
- RAILROAD, ANY NUMBER OF TRACKS USED BY MORE THAN ONE OPERATING COMPANY ON SAME OR ADJACENT RIGHTS-OF-WAY
- RAILROAD STATION
- GRADE CROSSING
- UNDERPASS
- OVERPASS
- RAILROAD TUNNEL
- FREE OR TOLL FERRY
- HIGHWAY BRIDGE, 20 FT OR OVER
- DRAW SPAN ON BRIDGE
- HIGHWAY TUNNEL
- OPERATED SHIP AND BARGE LINES
- DOCK, PIER OR LANDING
- NARROW STREAM
- WIDE STREAM
- LIGHTHOUSE
- LIGHT, NAUTICAL
- COAST GUARD STATION
- CANAL
- POND
- DAM WITH LOCK
- DAM
- ARMY, NAVY OR MARINE CORPS FIELD
- COMM. OR MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
- MARKED AUXILIARY FIELD
- HANGAR ON FIELD "B" IN SYMBOL
- AIRWAY BEACON
- STATE LINE
- COUNTY LINE
- CITY LIMITS
- RESERVATION OR FAIR BOUNDARY
- INSET AREA
- DELIMITED AREA, POPULATION 851
- PROMINENT PEAK, NUMERALS INDICATE ELEVATION
- ROAD THROUGH MOUNTAIN PASS
- COUNTY SEAT
- OTHER TOWNS AND VILLAGES
- TRIANGULATION STATION
- SCENIC SITE
- LODGE
- CAMP GROUND
- BATHING BEACH
- ATHLETIC FIELD
- MUNICIPAL PARK — PICNIC GROUND
- FAIR GROUNDS OR RACE COURSE
- GOLF COURSE
- GROUP OF DWELLINGS
- FOREST RANGER STATION
- FOREST LOOKOUT STATION
- GAME FARM
- RESERVOIR, POND OR LAKE
- FISH HATCHERY
- GAS OR OIL TANKS
- POWER PLANT
- POWER SUBSTATION
- RADIO STATION WITH CALL LETTERS
- PUMPING OR GAUGING STATION
- SEWAGE DISPOSAL PLANT
- WATER SUPPLY, ELEVATED TANK
- MANUFACTURING PLANT
- SEASONAL INDUSTRY
- BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT
- SAW MILL
- MINE
- GRAVEL PIT OR QUARRY
- CHURCH
- CHURCH WITH CEMETERY
- CEMETERY
- POST OFFICE
- TOWN OR COMMUNITY HALL
- HOTEL OR MOTEL
- HOSPITAL OR COUNTY HOME
- OPEN AIR THEATER
- GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH STATION
- MONUMENT — SMALL HISTORICAL SITE
- RURAL FIRE STATION
- SEASONAL DWELLING
- SCHOOL
- RURAL DWELLING, FARM OR OTHER GROUP OF MIXED BUILDINGS
- CULTURAL SYMBOLS IN OUTLINE DENOTE VACANT
- CORRECTIONAL OR PENAL INSTN.
- STATE HIGHWAY GARAGE
- WEIGHT STATION
- PATROL STATION
- DOT TO INDICATE LOCATION OF ANY CULTURAL FEATURE OUT OF POSITION
- INTERSECTION DISTANCE
- 1502 SECONDARY ROAD NUMBERS
- STATE HIGHWAY
- U.S. NUMBERED HIGHWAY
- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- IMPASSABLE ROAD OR TRAIL
- PRIMITIVE OR UNIMPROVED ROAD
- GRADED AND DRAINED ROAD
- SOIL, GRAVEL OR STONE SURFACED ROAD
- HARD SURFACED ROAD
- DIVIDED HIGHWAY
- 4 LANE UNDIVIDED HIGHWAY
- INCORPORATED CITY OR VILLAGE, GENERALIZED
- FEDERAL AID PRIMARY ROAD
- FEDERAL AID SECONDARY ROAD
- FEDERAL AID INTERSTATE ROAD
- NON-SYSTEM ROAD
- TRAFFIC CIRCLE
- HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE
- PROJECTED LOCATION

# LENOIR COUNTY

## NORTH CAROLINA

PREPARED BY THE
NORTH CAROLINA STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION
IN COOPERATION WITH THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS
DATA OBTAINED FROM
STATE-WIDE HIGHWAY PLANNING SURVEY

SCALE
1 0 1 2 3 4 MILES
0 0.5 1 MILE

SCALE FOR ENLARGEMENTS

hole in the side. The Ram "Neuse" sank into the mud of the River, and there she remained until 1961 when salvagers began the task of raising her from the bottom of the River and moving the ruins over to the bank.

After their encounter with the enemy, Confederate forces in Kinston withdrew to escape being caught by the advancing Union army. They left the town to be occupied. United States troops remained in Kinston after the War ended to enforce military discipline in the early days of Reconstruction.

## Reconstruction Years

At a convention called for October 2, 1865, Lenoir County was represented by R. W. King, former Kinston town official and county sheriff. This convention repealed the Ordinance of Secession, declared slavery abolished, provided that elections be held in the following month, and declined to pay the State's War debts. Congress soon put into operation its own scheme for reconstructing the South, a program much harsher than the earlier ones proposed by Presidents Lincoln and Andrew Johnson.

In January, 1868, a second convention met to draw up a new Constitution for North Carolina. R. W. King again represented Lenoir County. In spite of an assorted membership composed of carpetbaggers, Negroes, and native whites, the convention produced the Constitution still in effect in the State. On July 20, 1868, Senators and Representatives from North Carolina were permitted to take their seats in Congress and the State was again in the Union.

Foolish spending and corruption in government, inflamed racial struggles, and a general absence of law and order were responsible for the formation of the Ku Klux Klan by the Conservatives —native whites who were neither organized nor united but who acted together to oppose the Republicans. The secret Ku Klux Klan flourished for several years and by the use of warnings, threats, whippings, and an occasional murder played a large role in the restoration of a more normal government. There were about 100 members of the Klan in Lenoir County. Late in 1869 Governor Holden threatened to declare Lenoir County and three others in insurrection if Ku Klux activities there continued.

Gradually political affairs adjusted themselves, business returned to normal, and local communities showed fewer scars of war. In 1877 Federal troops were withdrawn from the South. The horrors of Reconstruction, however, made lasting impressions on the people, and many racial and sectional prejudices had their origins in this unpleasant time.

A remarkable occurrence during this period was the movement among the freed Negroes known as "the exodus." This movement particularly affected Lenoir County which, in 1870, had a population more largely Negro than white. Returning to his native County the remarkable Negro leader, Sam J. Perry, roved through the County urging Negroes to emigrate to the North, particularly to Indiana. Hundreds of former slaves followed his advice. Among the measures taken by northern interests to discourage the movement was a substantial increase in railroad fares for persons going north and a vigorous congressional investigation. On the other hand, the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad gave half-fare rates to the "exodusters," as the press styled these emigrants. On December 5, 1879, the *Goldsboro Messenger* described a train load of "exodusters" from Lenoir County who passed through Wayne County on the way to Greencastle, Indiana. "They appeared to be panic stricken and without any recognized leaders or discipline," the paper reported, "and a more ignorant or confused mass of living beings it would be difficult to find in any civilized country."

## Late Nineteenth Century

The population of Lenoir County between 1870 and 1880 increased from 10,434 to 15,344. Kinston grew from a town of 1,103 to 1,726. Business directories for the time list a number of merchants who operated in Kinston. Lawyers and doctors maintained offices there. The town boasted three carriage factories, a harness factory, and two boot and shoeshops. There were nearby water-powered grist mills and steam-powered saw mills. Two turpentine distilleries, a bakery, an insurance agency, and a brokerage business soon rounded out the business activities of the growing County.

A serious loss to the County came on October 21, 1878, however, when the courthouse was burned and many valuable

records were destroyed. Some of the burned documents dated from the days of Johnston and Dobbs counties. Another fire in February, 1880, destroyed all of the remaining county records except one index of deeds.

Cotton awaiting shipment from Kinston in the early twentieth century. The Imperial Tobacco Company buildings are in the background. From an original photograph negative in the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library.

# VII. The Door to the Present

## Changes in Kinston

In a very real sense it can be said that the city of Kinston as it exists today had its true beginning and was actually established in the quarter century between 1880 and 1905. During that period a swift transition was made from the old and historic village that lingered on the banks of the Neuse River to a thoroughly up-to-date city. The change was not merely a matter of growth and normal progress, though the local newspapers always proudly pointed to such obvious evidence. It was a revolutionary thing with new leaders, new ideas, and new ambitions affecting every aspect of community life.

Perhaps in no other city in North Carolina was the change so profound and the sudden break with the sleepy past so obvious. Slowly at the end of the Civil War and more rapidly with the end of Reconstruction, there was a great influx of new people. Some of these were from other parts of the State and a few were truly outsiders. Most, though, came from surrounding rural areas. Kinston became a trading center and market. Tobacco processing began. Lumber mills were started.

The 1860 census listed merchants, butchers, tailors, shoemakers, barbers, seamstresses, and even an artist and a cabinetmaker, but by the end of the century this list had increased greatly. A fire in February, 1895, destroyed every building in two blocks of the heart of town. Many of them were soon replaced by handsome brick stores, and new businesses had already extended the shopping area while others were soon to be opened.

Shipment of cotton from Kinston by 1878 doubled the amount shipped each year before the Civil War. During the period 1872-1878 an average of more than 5,500 bales per year was shipped out of Kinston. "As a cotton market," a contemporary wrote, "Kinston claims an equal rank with any in the State." There was even one buyer from Massachusetts who spent about six months out of each year in Kinston buying cotton for northern spinners.

The value of real estate rose sharply. A lot which was sold for $500 in 1861 sold for $2,700 in 1879.

A street scene in Kinston about 1889. From an original photograph in the State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

## Kinston as a Tobacco Market

The growth of the tobacco market gave Kinston much of its modern flavor. Before the Civil War, the main tobacco-growing region of North Carolina was confined to six Piedmont counties lying just south of the Virginia line. It was believed then that the soil of eastern North Carolina was not suited for its growth. In 1877, however, *The Kinston Journal* reported that Council S. Wooten of LaGrange had become dissatisfied with the poor tobacco produced on his farm. From 15 acres he realized an income of only $125. In an attempt to better this poor record he succeeded in getting J. T. Burch from the bright leaf tobacco-producing county of Person to come and take over the management of his farm for a year. No expense was spared in conducting the experiment. The soil was carefully prepared and well fertilized. This special effort paid off when the crop was sold. Wooten realized $705 for his efforts when he took a part of his tobacco to Durham to be sold.

Apparently Burch was among the first of a number of tobacco men to leave the Old Bright Belt along the Virginia line and take part in the establishment of the New Bright Belt in the Coastal Plain section of North Carolina. Luther P. Tapp, for example, native of Orange County and tobacco warehouseman in Roxboro, moved to Kinston in 1895 and organized the first warehouse to be established there. R. L. Crisp, Caswell County native with tobacco experience in Hillsboro and Durham, settled in Kinston in 1896. Local talent and initiative were not entirely lacking in this new development. A. Harvey & Co. Tobacco Factory was established in Kinston early in 1878 to make smoking tobacco. A little later plug tobacco was also manufactured. Bags for holding the smoking tobacco were made in Kinston at first, but since not enough workers could be found to make them, they soon had to be ordered from outside the State.

Capt. Jesse W. Grainger, one of the most dynamic and influential leaders Kinston ever had, appeared during this period. A native of Greene County, he settled in Kinston about 1879 and very quickly made a place for himself. He represented Lenoir County in the General Assembly, was the first President of the Kinston Board of Trade, President of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, President of the State Mutual Life Insurance Company, and a political leader in various capacities. To encourage the growth of tobacco, he purchased $500 worth of seed and distributed them to local farmers who would agree to plant and cultivate a crop. He personally pledged to them that he would have a tobacco sales warehouse ready to assure them of a market for their crop in the coming fall. They took Grainger at his word, accepted his tobacco seed, and produced a good crop. He fulfilled his promise by constructing the Kinston-Carolina Warehouse which opened for sales in the fall of 1895. It was he who brought in Luther P. Tapp from Roxboro to manage his warehouse.

Kinston's second tobacco warehouse was built by B. W. Canady and named the Atlantic from the fact that it was believed then to be the tobacco warehouse closest to the Atlantic Ocean.

Kinston's tobacco market, so important to the community, got off to a remarkable start in its first years. In 1895 with one warehouse, just over 800,000 pounds of tobacco were sold. Next year, with two warehouses, almost 3,000,000 pounds were sold. There was little if any increase the third year; and in 1898, with

the opening of the Eagle Warehouse, 5,000,000 pounds were sold. By 1899 the Central Warehouse was open, and Kinston was well on its way to leadership in the field of tobacco marketing in eastern North Carolina.

About 1891 the American Tobacco Company established a tobacco stemmery in Kinston and provided extensive facilities for storage there. In 1902 the Imperial Tobacco Company followed with a similar plant. Several other stemmeries soon were set up.

## Newspapers

Lenoir County's first newspaper, *The American Advocate,* was established probably in July, 1855, and published weekly. The earliest known issue is that for April 24, 1856. The Kinston Public Library has a file of this newspaper beginning with the first number in the second volume, July 3, 1856, and running through the third volume ending June 23, 1858. The editor and proprietor was Walter Dunn who was a farmer before 1850 and became a merchant after the Civil War. It is not known how long this paper continued, but it may have lasted until after 1860. The census of that year lists W. H. Collins, Elias H. Huzzleton, John Croom, and Robert Hill as printers living in Kinston. Dunn's newspaper shop may also have done job printing on the side.

The next newspaper, *The Kinston Journal,* was begun in 1878, the year after the occupying Federal troops departed from North Carolina. Editor and proprietor was J. W. Harper, a lawyer and later superintendent of county schools. The first issue of this weekly newspaper, dated December 20, 1878, informed readers that it would be "independent *within* the Democratic party, and will steadfastly insist that the usefulness of any party must be measured by its devotion to the honor and welfare of the whole country.

"In the sphere of literary, scientific and social discussion, it will be the aim of the paper to be lively without being sensational; aggressive without being coarse, and will admit nothing in its columns which tends to subvert the principles, on which the sacredness of family ties, and the existence of society alike depend. In short," wrote Editor Harper, "we expect to make the JOURNAL a Family Newspaper for our citizens of Eastern North

Carolina; giving them every week a summary of the political, social and foreign news, and more particularly keeping them posted on the events and incidents happening in our immediate vicinity."

*The Kinston Journal* evidently made a brave effort to fill a real need in the community. Detailed reports of the meetings of the County Commissioners were given regularly. Practical suggestions for farmers which grew out of the meetings of the Lousin Swamp* Agricultural Club were reported at intervals. It advocated a "green" or park in Kinston where the citizens could gather, have band concerts, and otherwise enjoy themselves outdoors. There were frequent articles reprinted from northern papers and scientific journals on the exciting new topic of "Edison's Electric Light." Space was given to a report of a walking match to New Bern in which five local contestants participated. Confederate Memorial Day was a big occasion. A cornet band, speeches, military parades and drills, and large "floral tributes" were mentioned often in this connection. A "Base Ball match between the New Berne boys and the Fleet Foot Club of Kinston" was colorfully reported and only by reading the account carefully is it clear that "the Newbernians . . . made thirty runs to the other club's seventeen." Another popular form of entertainment was the Sunday School "Pic-nic," and the editor was generous with his publicity. Local contributions were encouraged, in fact, and Harper even published a poem to help budding correspondents in preparing copy for the press:

FOR WRITERS TO THE PRESS

Write upon pages of a single size
Cross all your t's and neatly dot your i's,
On one side only let your lines be seen—
Correct—yes, correct all that you write,—
And let your ink be black, your paper white;
For spongy foolscap of a muddy blue,
Betrays a mind of the same dismal hue,
Punctuate carefully; for on this score
Nothing proclaims the practiced writer more.

Harper took Henry S. Nunn into partnership on *The Journal* in December, 1879, and in April, 1881, Harper retired as editor and was succeeded by Nunn. On March 23, 1882, Editor Nunn

* Now generally spelled Loosing, the swamp lies a short distance south of Mewborns Crossroads and flows east into Stonyton Creek. The name appears in local records as early as 1744. It is believed to be derived from Lucerne, the Swiss city, and was given to the swamp by Swiss settlers who moved into the area from New Bern in the early eighteenth century.

announced that he was moving the office of the newspaper to New Bern where he would join his former partner Harper who had purchased the *Commercial News* there. This paper then became the *New Bern Journal.* A complete file of *The Kinston Journal* from December 20, 1879, to its final number on March 23, 1882, is in the North Carolina Collection in Chapel Hill.

Lenoir County's next newspaper, one which still thrives, was *The Kinston Free Press,* established in April, 1882, by Josephus and C. C. Daniels from Wilson. Eventually Josephus Daniels moved to Raleigh and published *The News and Observer.* He became Secretary of the Navy in World War I and Ambassador to Mexico under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. C. C. Daniels returned to Wilson where he practiced law.

After the departure of the Danielses in 1892, the *Free Press* was edited by W. S. Herbert and published by the Kinston Free Press Publishing Company. Dr. D. T. Edwards followed Herbert as editor and on May 1, 1914, H. Galt Braxton, the present editor, took over management of the paper. Begun as a weekly, the *Free Press* appeared twice each week for the period 1896-1910 and as a daily during the brief period when the Sixtieth Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, met in Kinston in 1896. A regular daily edition was begun in 1898 at the same time the semi-weekly edition was appearing. Members of the staff of the *Free Press* exercised increasing influence on local development. Their faith in the future of the town of Kinston and Lenoir County in 1898, which prompted them to begin daily publication, was rewarded with a growing list of readers. Managing Editor Charles W. McDevitt for many years did much to make both the newspaper and the town famous by publishing entertaining human interest stories. He was a keen student of animals and of human nature. His "tall tales" and his unusual anecdotes were copied by papers throughout the world under a Kinston date line.

Lenoir County has also had a number of other newspapers. *The LaGrange Vidette,* a weekly, was established in 1875, but apparently died before 1879. Preston F. Woodley and Starkey F. Gardner were editors and proprietors. Another LaGrange paper, the weekly *Messenger-Sentinel,* was begun in 1910 with E. R. Brown as editor and publisher. Brown was followed by Foy A. Vause about 1916. A Negro paper, *East Carolina News,* was established in Kinston in 1913 with J. E. Garrett as editor. *The Kinston Herald,* a daily, was established in 1935 with Carey

B. Taylor as editor. Established in 1948, the weekly *Lenoir County News* was also published in Kinston, and Wilbur J. Rider was editor. In LaGrange the weekly *Gazette* was established in 1953 with Paul A. Barwick as editor and Mrs. Ruth Grady as publisher.

From time to time as elected editors have been residents of Kinston, religious periodicals have been published locally. *The Mission Herald,* voice of the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina, was a Kinston periodical while the Rev. J. E. Rountree was editor. *The Free Will Baptist Advocate,* a Negro journal established in 1906, was published weekly in Kinston under the editorship of B. R. Coward. *Carolina and the Southern Cross,* a monthly historical magazine for the United Daughters of the Confederacy, was edited by Mrs. Lillie V. Archbell and published in Kinston from November, 1912, until August, 1914, when it ceased publication.

## Industrial Growth

A prime mover in shaping the growing city of Kinston during its 25-year period of transition was Dr. Henry Tull, a native son, trained in local schools, Harvard Medical School, and the University of Pennsylvania. He followed in the footsteps of other Kinston physicians in taking an active part in the growth and advancement of his home town. In 1886 he built the town's first brick hotel. It was on the northeast corner of Queen and Caswell Streets just across Queen Street from where another distinguished physician, Dr. W. A. J. Pollock, earlier had operated the famous Pollock Hotel.

Dr. Tull also held various positions of public trust and responsibility, serving the town as alderman and the County as commissioner. About 1889 there occurred in Kinston some reaction to the rapid growth and expansion. It appeared that the town had been building too fast. There were many vacant houses and real estate prices were falling. Some new movement or development was called for to prevent a swing backward and to assure further progress. Dr. Tull was one of the men who saw this need most clearly. He and other community leaders began to hold meetings to determine what might be done. The idea occurred to them to establish a manufacturing plant to process one of the principal agricultural products of the area, cotton. The local

market for raw cotton would aid the farmer, and the use of local people in the manufacturing process would benefit the city dweller.

Out of this decision grew the Orion Knitting Mills and later the Kinston Cotton Mills. The people of Kinston did not wait for outside capital to come and establish a needed industry. They did it themselves by investing their own funds. They had faith in their community and in themselves.

A company was formed and stock issued at $50 per share, payable $2.50 in cash and 50 cents per week until paid in full. Within three months, $9,850 had been subscribed, and the company was organized in the expectation that eventually the stock would be increased to $25,000.

The company erected a two-story brick building with a one-story brick annex. When it was completed, there was very little money left for machinery, but it was bought somehow. The knitting mill began operation in January, 1891, with 40 employees. Two years later over $11,000 worth of additional stock was sold, the indebtedness paid off, and additional machinery bought. Soon the number of employees increased to 120. In 1893 the company began paying dividends, and in 1897 the plant was enlarged. By 1906 the mill was employing 225 workers and producing between 10,000 and 12,000 dozen pairs of women's and children's hose per day. It was selling them in 30 different States.

Organization of the Kinston Cotton Mill, to manufacture cotton yarns, was a natural outgrowth of the Orion Knitting Mills. It was to be the essential link between the raw product and the knitting process. A meeting of interested persons was held in December, 1897, and a goal set for $40,000 in capital stock. Under the leadership of Dr. Henry Tull, W. C. Fields, D. Oettinger, J. F. Taylor, J. C. Dunn, W. S. Herbert, and others, $50,000 was subscribed.

The directors purchased 12 acres of land from J. A. McDaniel in east Kinston and traded four acres to the Orion Corporation for a site adjacent to the knitting mill. Here a large brick building was erected with necessary annexes, sheds, and the like. With their own boilers and engines the directors produced the electric power required for the mill and for 30 houses which had been built for the mill's employees.

The Kinston Cotton Mill began operation in February, 1898,

and very quickly reached a peak of production. Sufficient yarn was produced to fill all of Orion's needs and to sell substantial quantities to mills in other North Carolina towns, in Philadelphia, in New York, in Boston, and even in Amsterdam.

Another important addition to the expanding business life of Kinston was the Hines Brothers Lumber Company established about 1897 by Lovit and Wait T. Hines with the assistance of Henry C. Riley of Philadelphia. Each invested $6,000 in the business. In less than ten years their holdings increased in value to more than $450,000. Working in the center of a large area of longleaf pines, the Lumber Company produced railroad crossties, heavy bridge timber, house sills, fence posts, and general lumber. Within two years after its formation the company was advertising oak, ash, maple, elm, gum, poplar, and cypress as well as pine lumber. It manufactured moldings of all kinds, laths, tobacco sticks, and bed slats and provided lumber for tobacco hogsheads and boxes. Wood for stoves, heaters, and fireplaces could also be purchased from Hines Brother Lumber Company. The company owned 24 miles of narrow-gauge railway from the forests into Kinston and also operated other heavy equipment in connection with their logging operations.

## Merchants

By the end of the nineteenth century Kinston was a popular trading center not only for Lenoir County but for several of the neighboring counties. In 1884 J. W. Collins dropped his former line of general merchandise and engaged exclusively in hardware. He advertised tinware, cutlery, pumps, guns, crockery, lamps, thermometers, stoves, twine, leather, and other goods. In 1896 Mrs. Cora E. McRae opened her Cash Novelty Store featuring the "most beautiful and select lines of crockery, lamps and glassware, and china, besides a large and well assorted stock of novelties, tinware, and household and kitchen furniture, toys, etc." *The Kinston Free Press* commented in 1899 that Mrs. McRae "has hammered down prices on crockery and glassware until there is no money in it for her competitors. She is an excellent buyer and always keeps abreast of the market."

L. J. Hill was a popular and reliable boot and shoemaker with many years experience behind him. In 1861 he began work in the shoe factory built by John C. and George Washington in 1858 in Kinston. During the War the Washingtons moved their opera-


Queen Street in Kinston in the early twentieth century. From original photograph negatives in the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library.

tions to Haw River and later to Raleigh because of the threat of Union occupation of Kinston. Hill accompanied them and continued to work. He returned to Kinston in 1864 and at the end of the War opened his own shop. A turn-of-the-century contemporary noted that he "takes pride in pleasing his patrons . . . and does durable and neat repairing, half-soling and patching; and, keeping comprehensive catalogues of all kinds of fashions for the extremities of the posterior limbs, he is preparing to make boots and shoes to order in any style desired, furnishing the best quality of leather from French calf to domestic tanned."

About 1887 John McRae established the Kinston Bakery and Candy Factory. At the owner's death in 1896 the business was purchased by his nephew, J. L. Morton, who had worked with McRae for a number of years. "Very few ladies, even experienced housewives, can bake good bread," it was noted soon after Morton purchased his uncle's bakery and candy kitchen. "And those ladies who know the art prefer to buy it from the baker, because it is cheap and besides their duties overtax their strength." In addition to bread and cake, Morton made stick candy, peanut brittle, and coconut candy.

Lenoir County was long a center for the manufacture of carriages and, in the days before the automobile, this was an important business. As long ago as 1860 it was one of the largest industries in Kinston. The James H. Dibble Carriage Works flourished in that year and the census showed more people connected with that operation than with almost any other means of livelihood in Kinston. Approximately 20 men listed their occupation as "coach maker." Others were wheelwrights, coach trimmers, coach painters, and harness makers. It is not surprising that this type work was taken up after the War and that it flourished into the twentieth century. In 1886, for example, the Ellis Carriage Works began operation in Kinston. By doing careful work and pleasing their customers, J. H. Ellis and his brother, Oliver, soon became known for the quality of their buggies. They were neat, stylish, and strong, and the Ellis brothers operated a repair department which offered quality work done promptly. Although they had no salesmen, their reputation soon spread and orders were received from all over Eastern North Carolina and South Carolina. Within a short time large orders were also being received from Virginia, Georgia, and Florida.

In 1890 C. T. Randolph began making carriages, buggies, surreys, and ladies' phaetons in Kinston. In less than ten years he was producing over 700 vehicles each year. Through correspondence and some travel he sold them in both Carolinas and in Virginia and Georgia. In his display room he offered his factory's products as well as handmade harnesses, fine buggy robes, horse blankets, and whips.

In LaGrange handmade buggies, phaetons, and surreys were manufactured by John H. Rouse. He advertised "The Best $50 Buggy Made in the State" in 1899. As a sideline, Rouse also offered "metallic, copper-lined, cloth covered and natural wood caskets."

Clothing stores and dry goods merchants did a thriving business in Kinston. Among them was Oettinger Brothers store operated by Dave, Abe, and Sol Oettinger who had settled in Kinston in 1872. By the end of the century, after having moved several times and suffered several fires, they owned and occupied a two-story brick store with a 75-foot front. Their property extended completely through the block from Queen to Heritage Street. From their main store, a two-story warehouse as well as a smaller warehouse, they sold all manner of dry goods, clothing, shoes, hats, furniture, and farm supplies. They sold on credit as well as for cash. They operated a coal yard in the rear of their store and were pioneers in operating a delivery service not only for coal but for all purchases. A large "yard" near their warehouse provided ample hitching space for the teams of horses belonging to the people who drove in from the country. The Oettinger Brothers store was lighted by two arc lights and "a number of incandescent lights in the rear." This was unusual and was described as presenting "a very beautiful picture at night."

One of Kinston's showplaces for a number of years was Marston's Drug Company. Its white onyx soda fountain was described as "one of the most beautiful, as well as costliest . . . in the State." In December, 1888, Dr. R. H. Temple and E. B. Marston bought the stock of an early drugstore and moved into a new building on the northwest corner of Queen and Gordon Streets. It appears to have taken on the appearance of a later twentieth-century drugstore very quickly. Shortly before 1900 it was described as carrying the expected drugstore stock as well as "many

splendid side lines, such as paints and oils, fine confectionery, wall paper, optical goods and trusses." There were many comments on "the elegance of taste evidenced by the proprietors in the display and arrangement of the stock." And the famous white onyx fountain was even shown on a picture post card which visitors to Kinston might mail home to their envious friends.

There were, to be sure, numerous other business houses in Kinston and elsewhere in Lenoir County. Wholesale and retail grocery stores, butcher shops, furniture stores, millinery shops, cabinet shops, banks, jewelry stores, boardinghouses and hotels, a bicycle shop, machine shops, barber shops, real estate agents, and suppliers to tobacco growers all combined to make Kinston and the County attractive to people from the surrounding area who formerly had gone to New Bern or perhaps Goldsboro or even Raleigh, Wilmington, and Fayetteville for supplies.

## Kinston Public Library

The Kinston Public Library had its infancy during the late years of the nineteenth century. In January, 1896, Mrs. W. C. Fields began discussing the requirements of the community in

The soda fountain at Marston's Drug Company, Kinston, in the early-twentieth century. From an original photograph negative in the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library.

this field. The idea of a literary club occurred to her, and she and three others, Mrs. H. E. A. Peebles, Mrs. W. M. Payne, and Mrs. H. O. Hyatt formed the Up-to-Date Club. Soon there were 80 members in the club which was composed of both men and women. The collection of a library was begun almost immediately, and it was kept in the office of Dr. T. H. Faulkner who had been elected librarian. Interest lagged for a time and the board of managers of the Up-to-Date Club changed its name to "The Kinston Library." The library was then opened to the public and membership tickets were issued for the fee of $1.00 per year. Largely through the efforts of Mrs. A. Oettinger the movement was successful and all former members of the Club as well as present subscribers to the library were invited to become incorporators of the Kinston Library. This was accomplished on February 29, 1899, when 40 persons joined for this purpose. Rooms above the Bank of Kinston (the town's first bank, which had been organized in 1897) were rented for the library, and with a collection of over 1,000 volumes and a regular librarian the Kinston Library was ready to serve the public.

## Town Ordinances

The Town of Kinston was large and prosperous enough by 1893 to publish its ordinances in a little booklet for public distribution. Printed by the job printing department of the *Free Press*, these ordinances contain a number of provisions which convey to the later reader an interesting impression of the life of the town. The ordinances, however, were a serious matter of concern to the town fathers at that time.

It shall not be lawful to bathe in the river in the day time, within one-half mile of the Court House.

Bees in hives or gums within one mile of the Court House are forbidden.

When persons meet on the sidewalk or footway each shall pass to the right, and any person who shall fail or refuse to give way for the purpose, or who shall maliciously or carelessly push, or jostle against another while so passing, shall pay a fine of $5.

The Board of Commissioners shall have power to remove from the corporate limits of the town to a hospital or other place without the town, any person who may be afflicted with small-pox, yellow fever, cholera, or other mortal disease of infectious or contagious character. Any person attempting by threats or force to prevent a removal to the hospital of any person ordered to be removed thither shall pay a fine of $25 upon conviction.

No dead body shall be exhumed from the cemetery except in the months of November, December, January, and February, and then only by permission of the Mayor.

It is hereby declared unlawful for anyone to disturb a meeting by whispering, talking, laughing, whistling, popping matches, making ludicrous gestures, for the purpose of provoking mirth, either in or outside a church or other building where religious services are being conducted, under a penalty of $50 for each offense.

That any boy under fifteen years of age found on the streets after 10 o'clock at night, without consent of parent or guardian, shall be subject to a fine of $2.

BARBECUE DEALERS—Shall pay an annual tax of $5 for each stand or table. No barbecue shall be sold on Queen street.

By the fall of 1916 Kinston was taking on even more of the appearance which it has today. The water system was well organized and drew its supply from several overflowing artesian wells, averaging 400 feet in depth. In that year 12 miles of streets were given asphalt paving and a complete sewerage system had been installed. The town owned its own public utilities and boasted the cheapest light and power rate in the eastern part of the State.

# VIII. Churches and Religion

## Religion in Early Lenoir County

Interest in churches and religion was slight among the first settlers as they pushed into the new territory to the west of the older established communities. Even by 1810 when John Washington wrote on this subject in Lenoir County, he was able to cover it in very few words. "Religion, though by no means as flourishing in this as in some other Counties," he wrote, "yet it has certainly experienced a considerable growth for the last few years. There are two sects of Baptists in this County (the United Baptist and free will or Anabaptist and Methodist which are the only sects that associate in worship, yet no doubt there are those of other societies, but they have no church established in this County. The United Baptist have two churches and also use the Court House as a place of worship. The Anabaptist have also two churches and also use the Court House as a place of worship."

If the journal of Elder F. M. Jordan, a Baptist preacher who held a revival in Kinston in 1877, can be accepted, there was little improvement in the intervening years. "Kinston is a hard place," Jordan recorded. "There is so much ignorance of the Bible, and so much heresy, that it is a hard matter for the truth to take effect. The churches are so loose in discipline that the world has no confidence in them. The Pedobaptist churches here are cold and lifeless. Their object is to get people to join the church regardless of conversion, and they have more world than church."

## Quakers

The earliest suggestion of an organized body of Christians in Lenoir County occurs in 1748 when the Falling Creek Monthly Meeting was organized by the Quakers in that part of Johnston County which later became Lenoir County.

## St. Patrick's Parish

When Johnston County was formed in 1746 St. Patrick's Parish was created at the same time, and it fell in the Dobbs and later Lenoir County section when the parent county was divided. A Church of England (Episcopal) Chapel and a warehouse stood

on the bank of Neuse River in 1762 when the town of Kingston was authorized to be laid out. It was not until 1767, however, that there was a clergyman in charge of St. Patrick's Parish. The Rev. William Miller, who served for about three years, was probably a native of the northern part of Ireland. He was licensed by the Bishop of London on March 31, 1755, for service in North Carolina and was assigned to St. Luke's Parish in Salisbury.

By April, 1756, Miller was established as rector there but remained only a short time. In October, 1756, he passed through the Moravian settlement on his way to Granville County. In 1763 he was in charge of St. Gabriel's Parish, Duplin County, and in 1767-1770 served St. Patrick's Parish, Dobbs County. The 1790 census shows that one William Miller was living in Dobbs County at that time, though it is not known whether he was the colonial clergyman.

At one time Miller was charged with "notorious . . . behavior." After carefully examining those who lodged the complaints, the Governor and his Council found that there was insufficient evidence to convict Miller. The charges were described as being "of a trifling nature" and may simply have been evidence of local opposition to having an "established" clergy sent to the community from the Church of England.

## Baptists

The Baptists established their first congregation in North Carolina on the Meherrin River in 1727. This was an active, evangelical body and for many years offered the most formidable opposition to the position of the Church of England. Early Baptist congregations met in private homes, barns, and brush arbors. By 1740 they were strong enough to demand and obtain permission to build a meetinghouse in New Bern. These were the Anabaptists (Free Will Baptists).

The first Baptist Church in the Dobbs County area, when it was still a part of Johnston County, was built in 1756 at Stoney Creek, about four miles north of modern Goldsboro. Baptists also organized a church at Little Contentnea, near Scuffleton, in 1762 and erected a building there in 1768. A few years later they built churches at Southwest Creek (1770), at Nahunta (1774), and at Wheat Swamp. The land upon which the Stoney Creek church was built was given to the Baptist Society by

David Clark. Stoney Creek Freewill Baptist Church still exists and is about 400 yards from its original site. A part of the present building appears to be the original structure. The Southwest Church site was a gift of George West, and the building there appears to have part of the original timbers. Both Southwest and Wheat Swamp churches are now affiliated with the Disciples of Christ Church, having left the Baptist denomination.

Kinston's First Baptist Church dates its origin with old Southwest Church about five miles southeast of the city. In 1844 members of Southwest organized a new church some two miles from Kinston and named it Harriet's Chapel in honor of Harriet Jones who gave the land and paid for the building. Those forming the new church apparently left the old building to those who desired to join the new Christian denomination. In 1857 the Baptist congregation moved into Kinston and erected a frame structure on the northeast corner of Bright and McLewean Streets.

By 1891 the Baptist congregation had outgrown the old building and a new one was erected at the corner of Gordon and McLewean Streets. It was used only until 1900 when a new brick church was erected at the same site. The second building was used for this short time because of faulty construction.

The question of temperance was one which caused much concern among the people of various faiths in North Carolina in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. For example, at the First Annual Session of the Neuse Baptist Association, which met at the LaGrange Baptist Church in the fall of 1899, a "Report on Temperance," drawn up by three members of the Association, was adopted.

> Temperance is a moderate use of all things needful, and a total abstanance [*sic*] from all things harmful. We are taught in the scriptures that we should be temperate in all things. We are told that no drunkard can ever enter the Kingdom of Heaven and we are also taught that strong drink "biteth like a serpent and stingeth as an adder." Feeling as we do that the advocation of the temperance cause is indispensible, not only in the bounds of the Neuse Association, but in the State and national as well. Therefore your committee is glad to announce that the final victory is coming. Maine, Georgia, Mississippi and Canada have taken a stand for prohibition. We are rejoiced to know that our State is feeling the effect of this grand temperance movement. They are giving up the saloon, town by town, and county by county. Fight on, God is for us. By and by we will rear our banner upon the ruins of the liquor traffic. Yes, give to the world cold water, pure crystal, limpid and bright, which should be the universal beverage of the world.

## Episcopalians

In Kinston after the Revolutionary War the old Episcopal Church, as the former Church of England was now called, remained open and was used for services by its own members, frequently under the leadership of a lay reader when ordained ministers were not in residence. It was also made available for use by Baptists, Methodists, and others who had need of a place of worship.

By 1832 the Episcopalians in Kinston felt able to undertake the construction of a new church. The vestrymen accepted subscriptions and saw to the building of St. Mary's Church on two lots adjoining the courthouse. From time to time as funds were needed for the work, numerous citizens of the town came forward with money and supplies. St. Mary's became, then, not strictly an Episcopal Church but a church belonging to the community. When it was completed, it was used for services by Episcopalians, Baptists, and Methodists. In 1846, after the church was no longer needed by the Baptists and Methodists, St. Mary's was admitted as a parish in the Diocese of North Carolina.

St. Mary's Church burned in 1873 and the congregation soon bought a church begun but abandoned by a small group of Kinston Presbyterians. After occupying several other buildings and suffering another fire, St. Mary's congregation became established in a handsome stone church completed in 1959 at Rountree and Rhem Streets.

## Methodists

The first record of a Methodist sermon delivered in Kinston goes back to 1785 when Bishop Asbury was the guest of Governor Caswell and preached in the old courthouse. Not until the 1830's, however, was any attempt made to establish this denomination in the town. Kinston was served by the Rev. Benjamin R. Newcomb as "circuit rider" from Snow Hill in 1836. One of the few meetinghouses on his circuit was at Rainbow, five miles south of Snow Hill. In Kinston he preached in an old academy building. A few years later the Rev. N. A. Hooker succeeded the Rev. Mr. Newcomb and he preached in the courthouse from time to time as well as in the academy. When St. Mary's Episcopal Church was completed, it was also used for Methodist services on occasion.

Mrs. Betsy Bulger gave the Methodists a lot on the corner of Caswell and Independent Streets, and there the first church was erected in 1851-1852. It came to be known as the Caswell Street Methodist Church. This building burned in 1858 after being struck by lightning. Friends came to the rescue and a new building was started but it was not completed when the Civil War stopped all work on it. The unfinished building was used during the War at times for a hospital for the wounded who fell in the raids on Kinston and the engagements near town. After the War the church was completed and in 1896 the sixtieth session of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Church was held here.

In 1911 the congregation moved into a new building on the corner of Queen Street and Peyton Avenue. The church's name was changed to Queen Street Methodist Church.

### Presbyterians

Presbyterianism in Kinston dates from the 1860's. The Rev. Lachlan C. Vass of the New Bern Presbyterian Church established a preaching mission there shortly after the War, when Alexander Nicol, a Scotch Presbyterian, with a few other local citizens attempted to organize a church. They bought the old academy lot on the southwest corner of King and Independent Streets and started construction of a handsome wooden church. Outside gifts from as many as a dozen states between 1871 and 1874 made this possible. Even so, when the building was nearly completed the small congregation was deep in debt. The congregation was not growing and the Orange Presbytery, of which it was a member, could no longer maintain it. The property was, therefore, sold in 1875 to the Episcopalians whose building had been destroyed by fire in 1873.

Presbyterianism remained dormant in Kinston for the next fifteen years. About 1890 the Rev. John C. McMullen, an evangelist of the Albemarle Presbytery, preached at the Methodist Church. He learned that there were eight or ten Presbyterians then living in Kinston. A church was organized with eight members on October 18, 1891, and Major W. M. Payne was elected its first elder. A year later, the Rev. J. E. L. Winecoff, who had recently moved to LaGrange, became the Kinston congregation's pastor, preaching there once a month. A Sunday School was soon organized and a building fund started. The Rev. Charles

G. Vardell, who later became President of Flora Macdonald College, was sent once a month to the Kinston church by the New Bern church of which he was pastor from 1891 to 1896. The congregation was invited to use the Christian Church which had no pastor at that time. In 1895 the congregation erected Atkinson Memorial Presbyterian Church, named in honor of the Rev. J. M. Atkinson, of the Second Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, a man much beloved throughout the State. Membership had grown to 50 by that time and thereafter grew rapidly. During the pastorate of the Rev. Harold J. Dudley, 1932 to 1939, a handsome colonial church was built at the corner of West Washington and College Streets. In 1957 the Presbyterians moved into a large new church on North Heritage Street.

### Disciples of Christ

The present Kinston Christian Church was founded January 21, 1843, at the Little Sister Baptist Church, six miles west of Kinston. Alexander Campbell, founder of the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church), had visited North Carolina a short time before and his followers were eventually dropped from the Baptist church. They formed this new and separate denomination. Since most of the members of the Little Sister Baptist Church, who became Christians, were residents of Kinston, the new congregation established itself in town. Their new building was a substantial wooden structure at the corner of Gordon and Heritage Streets. Early preachers were John P. Dunn, William Rhem, and Robert Bond. The congregation moved in 1870 to Caswell Street and erected a new church which was replaced in 1894 by a brick structure. A final move was made in 1912 when construction of the present church on Gordon Street was begun.

The Church School of the Kinston Church of Christ was organized in April, 1849, just six years after the establishment of the church. It was the first Sunday School organized within the State by a Disciples group.

### Catholics

A Roman Catholic mission was established in Kinston in 1916 by the Rev. Michael Irwin of St. Paul's Church, New Bern. Holy Trinity Church was established as a parish in Kinston in 1925. In 1942 a parish school was organized and in 1953 a new school, Christ the King, was constructed.

## Jews

Between 1900 and 1910 some 15 Jewish families lived in Kinston and in 1904 Rabbi I. Goodkowitz held the first organized religious services for these people. By 1913 the congregation had purchased the Jewish cemetery lot and in 1924 it acquired the Second Methodist Church building which was converted into a synagogue. A new building was completed in 1954 for the congregation which became known as Temple Israel.

# IX. Education

## Education as a Church Function

In the American colonies in which a particular religious group prevailed, education was one of the main functions of the church. But in such colonies as North Carolina, where the people resisted the official establishment of any church, education existed at first on a private basis. Individual families or neighborhoods made their own provisions. There is no record of any schools being founded in the Province before 1700, but there must have been people in each community who taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, at the least.

After about 1702, as the Church of England began organizing the Province into parishes, chapels and schools were built. The Church undertook to supply ministers or approved lay readers who directed the worship service and sometimes also served as teachers. Governor Arthur Dobbs, in a letter to the British Board of Trade early in 1755, called attention to the shortage of clergymen and schoolmasters in North Carolina. He said that the General Assembly was determined to correct this state of affairs. In September Dobbs urged the members of the Assembly to encourage the building of county or parish schools for both white children and Indians.

## Dobbs Academy

The first educational institution organized in the immediate vicinity of Kinston was Dobbs Academy, chartered by law in 1785. An act passed by the General Assembly on December 29 of that year named 13 trustees among whom were Governor Richard Caswell and future governors Alexander Martin and Richard Dobbs Spaight. Trustee William Blount was the brother of Thomas Blount, one of three men who signed the Constitution of the United States for North Carolina. An academy such as these men were empowered to establish was a secondary school which could grant certificates but not diplomas or degrees.

The act establishing Dobbs Academy directed that the trustees meet the following July to elect a president for the Academy. While he held office he was also to serve as one of the trustees. Other officers were to be a secretary, a treasurer, a steward, and one or more professors. The trustees were also authorized

to name the public hall or library for the person or persons who made the most liberal donations to the school within the first two years.

In spite of the good intentions of its trustees, Dobbs Academy either was never actually established or it did not flourish. No records exist of it and it apparently never was deeded any property.

### Spring-Hill Seminary of Learning

Perhaps the first school to start actual operation in Lenoir County was Spring-Hill Seminary of Learning which was chartered in 1802. The Board of Trustees was composed of nine leading citizens of the county. In 1810 John Washington wrote that this academy and "some small schools" provided education for the young people of Lenoir County. For the first three or four years of its existence the Spring-Hill academy was conducted by its trustees, but after about 1806 a regular teacher was employed. In 1810 the 40 or more pupils at the academy were taught by Joseph Eliot, native of Lebanon, Connecticut, and graduate of Yale University in the class of 1784. Among the subjects taught were English, Latin, Greek, writing, and arithmetic. Also in 1810 two graduates of Spring-Hill were enrolled at the University of North Carolina. William D. Moseley, later a member of Congress and Governor of Florida, was a graduate of the academy.

### Military School

In 1813 a Society was formed in Lenoir County with Colonel Simon Bruton as president, for the purpose of "promoting military knowledge." The Raleigh *Star* on September 3 reported that a school would be established at Kinston "to embrace at the same time, literature and military tactics." It is not known whether this school was actually established.

### Fairfield Academy

The Fairfield Academy was established in 1817 on Loosing Swamp. Its location was about a quarter of a mile west of present Mewborns Crossroads in the northern part of the County. Simon Bruton was one of eight men appointed to the first board of trustees, so this may have been a product of the 1813 society

of which he was president. Another trustee was Joseph Eliot who had taught earlier at the Spring-Hill academy. Fairfield Academy survived through the years and was later incorporated into the public school system. It operated as late as 1928 as a one-room, one-teacher school. About 1920 the teacher at this school had 46 pupils in seven grades.

## Other Academies

Various academies in Lenoir County were chartered by the General Assembly during the period before the Civil War. A Kinston Academy existed in 1822, and its trustees were empowered to "sell that part of Shine Street which lies west of Heritage Street and the parts of Queen and Macklewean streets which lie south of Shine Street and all the land reserved in the establishment of said town as a town common—proceeds of the sale of these lands to be applied to building and supporting the Kinston Academy." Cambridge Academy was chartered in 1826, Moseley Hall Academy in 1828, and Union Academy in 1842. Lenoir Collegiate Institute operated in the northern part of the County for a number of years following its opening in 1855. It was an excellent college preparatory school.

## Public School System

A state-wide public school law was enacted by the General Assembly in 1839 under which schools were to be established in those counties which approved the bill by a vote to be cast in August. This made possible the contribution of $40 from the State's Literary Fund to each school district which would raise as much as $20 through its own initiative. Lenoir County approved the new school law by a vote of 285 to 188. Since no reports were made before 1853, it is impossible to determine how many local public schools were established, but in 1847 the Literary Board apportioned $953 to Lenoir County. The Assembly in 1844 and 1845 had provided that funds be distributed among the counties according to their population. Children four years of age could enter public school under the provisions of these new acts.

In 1852 the office of General Superintendent of Common Schools was created and Calvin H. Wiley was elected to fill that post. His first report, issued in 1854, shows that Lenoir County

was divided into 22 school districts and had 19 schools in operation. The total number of children reported in 15 of the districts was 961, with an attendance of 719. The average length of the school year was just a few days over three months, and the teachers' salaries averaged about $24 a month.

## Lenoir County Educational Association

The teachers of the County must have taken pride in their work. They formed a Lenoir County Educational Association and at the meeting in May, 1858, discussed the question "Are colleges beneficial?" Apparently a lengthy debate followed with many arguments for and against colleges. A vote of those present was taken to decide the question and there was a tie, broken by the vote of the chairman in the affirmative.

At its next annual meeting the Association debated the question "Is corporal punishment necessary in our common schools?" With obvious pleasure, the secretary recorded that those present showed a lively interest in the problem and that a brighter day was dawning for Lenoir County. His final note, "Adjourned in much harmony," does not tell just how the educators felt about punishment in the schools.

## Schools after the Civil War

At the beginning of the Civil War in 1861 North Carolina properly claimed educational leadership in the South. The War brought a gradual decline in the educational organization in the State, and in 1866 the General Assembly abolished the office which Wiley had filled so well. North Carolinians had to set about rebuilding their public schools under the most trying circumstances. Lenoir County seems to have done a creditable job here. The *North Carolina Directory* published in Raleigh from 1867 to 1872 listed the following schools in the County: Lenoir Collegiate Institute, near Moseley Hall (now LaGrange) with Levi Branson as principal; Lenoir School, ten miles west of Kinston, operated by Josephus Latham; Classical School at Kinston, operated by the Rev. William B. Gordon; Select School at Kinston, operated by Laura Gilbert; LaGrange Academy, operated by Dr. P. W. Woodley; Classical School at Falling Creek, operated by R. B. Kinsey; Female Academy at Pink Hill, but no teacher listed; and Primary School in Kinston, operated by Carrie Humphrey.

## Dr. Lewis' Schools

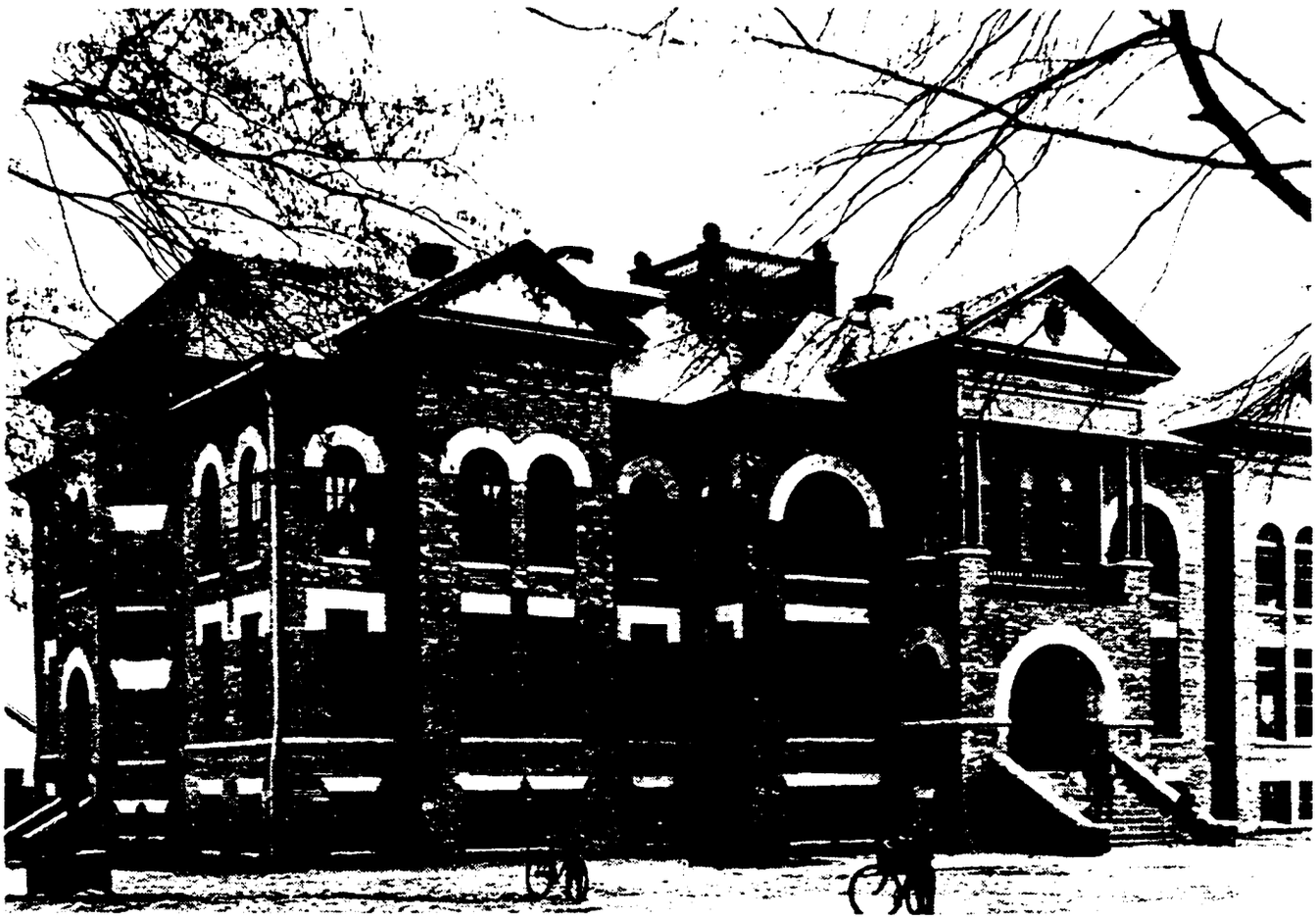
The most famous of several private schools in Kinston is remembered now as "Dr. Lewis' School," but actually three different schools were headed by Dr. Richard Henry Lewis. In September, 1877, with C. W. Howard as co-principal, he began operating the Kinston Collegiate Institute with 48 boys and girls in attendance. By the end of the session, enrollment had grown to more than 100. Within five years there were 175 pupils attending the Institute.

Charles B. Aycock, later to be remembered for his activities on behalf of public education when he was Governor of North Carolina, attended the Kinston Collegiate Institute in 1876-1877. Two years later, when he was a senior at the University of North Carolina, he returned on June 11, 1879, to make an address before the Calhoun Debating Society. *The Kinston Journal* reported him to be "a young man of fine intellectual capacity, [and] his argumentative and oratorical powers are not surpassed, if equalled, by any young man of his age we ever knew. The senior class [at the University] should be proud of such a classmate. He will beyond a doubt be an honor to them, a jewel to his *alma mater* and an ornament to his many friends."

Aycock's address, according to a later issue of *The Journal,* was "a plea for the cultivation of State pride on behalf of her sons. North Carolina is so forgetful of her sons," Aycock said, "that noblest of our Revolutionary heroes—Richard Caswell of Lenoir County, the first Governor after the banishment of royalty, the eminent statesman and illustrious warrior, should be allowed to repose near Kinston with not even a slab to mark his last resting place." Aycock concluded by complimenting the Kinston Collegiate Institute for introducing a North Carolina book, John Wheeler Moore's *School History of North Carolina,* as a textbook.

In 1882 Dr. Lewis resigned as head of the Institute and was succeeded by Professor Joseph Kinsey as principal.

A new school opened in the fall under the name Kinston College with Dr. Lewis at its head. Located at the eastern end of King Street, the school attracted 153 pupils for the first session. Dr. Lewis taught ancient languages, English literature, and science. Mrs. Lewis taught "intermediate studies" and was superintendent of the primary department. A graduate of the University of North Carolina, George G. Wilson, taught mathematics and English. French was taught by Mrs. Israel Harding, music



An example of the splendid school buildings available to the youth of Kinston in the early years of the twentieth century. From an original photograph negative in the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library.

by Mrs. Anna L. Davis, and "primary studies" by Florence Rountree.

Dr. Lewis and his family left Kinston briefly when he headed Judson College in Hendersonville between 1889 and 1893. Returning to Kinston, Dr. and Mrs. Lewis opened a school officially known as "Dr. Lewis' School." When they retired and closed their school permanently in 1902, Dr. and Mrs. Lewis were honored at a reunion of their former students. At that time Governor Aycock wrote of Dr. Lewis: "His service has been long, abundant, inspiring, and most valuable. I know of no man who has a greater right to rejoice at the end of his work for what he has wrought than Dr. Lewis. His pupils are scattered throughout the world. They have gone into the battle of life equipped mentally for the strife and with the moral training which has made them strong in the hour of temptation."

## Progress in the School System

In 1869 the office of county examiner was created for the several counties. His duties were to exercise general supervision over and control of the public schools and the teachers. He served

a similar function to that of the modern county superintendent of schools. Lenoir County's first County Examiner was Pinckney Hardee who reported in 1870 that only 11 schools were in operation in his territory. Of these there were five for white children and six for Negroes. After examinations, 13 teachers were licensed.

A new law in 1871 provided more financial support for schools, and they soon began to reflect this interest on the part of the General Assembly. In 1873 it was reported that the Lenoir County schools were "working better this year than at any previous time." The private schools in the area had generally been merged into the public system. By 1878 there were 31 school districts for white children and 28 for Negroes. There were 1,221 white children attending 13 schools and 1,293 Negroes attending 12 schools. Thirty boys and 35 girls were attending the Kinston High School while 55 boys and 34 girls attended Kinsey's School at LaGrange. Until 1900 the schools of Lenoir County made only limited progress, keeping pace with the few demands made upon them by their patrons. One point to be commended, however, was in the length of the school term. Almost without exception the length of the term in Lenoir County exceeded the State average by about three weeks. The importance of this brief period can best be appreciated when it is realized that the average school term in North Carolina between 1885 and 1900 was only about 14 weeks.

With the arrival of the twentieth century North Carolina's attitude toward public education began to change. Under the leadership of Governor Aycock and others, financial support became more generous, the length of the school term was extended, teachers were better trained, and the people as a whole began to appreciate the value of their public school system. In Lenoir County enrollment in the schools increased and attendance improved. Financial support continued to grow. In 1905 the County as a whole spent $30,366 for education and in 1920 spent $217,-125. By 1920 the length of the term in the Kinston and LaGrange schools, thanks to extra tax revenues, had reached 180 and 170 days, respectively, figures which reflect credit upon those towns even when compared to the figures for many years later. Pupils in the rural districts attended 116 days per year.

About 1917 Mary G. Shotwell, Supervisor of Rural Schools for Lenoir County, undertook to promote the progress and interests of the schools and rural communities of the County through the

formation of country life clubs and literary societies. The aims of the School Betterment, the Home Demonstration, the Farmers' Union, and the School Health clubs were all adopted and enlarged upon by the new and broader club. Through the co-operation of home and farm demonstration agents, health officers, and the supervisor of schools an attempt was made to have local schools serve as the community center. Educational conditions were improved, health problems discussed, and home and farm matters studied as means of promoting community welfare. In addition, social and recreational events were planned and carried out for the citizens of the community. Debates and programs were held on such topics as fire prevention, home improvement, sanitation, local history, fruit culture, child care, Indians, various literary figures, and conservation. Spelling bees were held and "lantern slide" lectures given. This attempt to direct attention to the importance and value of the local school as a means of adult as well as child education bore fruit. It created local interest and appreciation of the schools which resulted in better local support.

### James Y. Joyner

Just as old Dobbs County produced Richard Caswell at a time when the State most needed a man of his talents, so Lenoir County produced James Yadkin Joyner when there was a special job to be done. A native of Yadkin College in Davidson County, where his parents had gone temporarily from Lenoir County in 1862 to escape the threat of capture by Union troops, Joyner was a graduate of the University of North Carolina. He and his fellow students, Charles B. Aycock, Charles Duncan McIver, and Edwin A. Alderman, made profound changes in the educational institutions of their native State. Together they have been described as "practical philosophers" of the new educational movement. Aycock, of course, was the Governor who did so much for public education. McIver was President of what is now the Woman's College in Greensboro, while Alderman headed the University in Chapel Hill. Joyner's most important and lasting contributions were made between 1902 and 1919 when he was Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In 1881, following his graduation in Chapel Hill, Joyner returned to his old school, the LaGrange Academy, to teach, and the next year he became its principal. He also served as superintendent of schools in Lenoir County during the years 1882 to

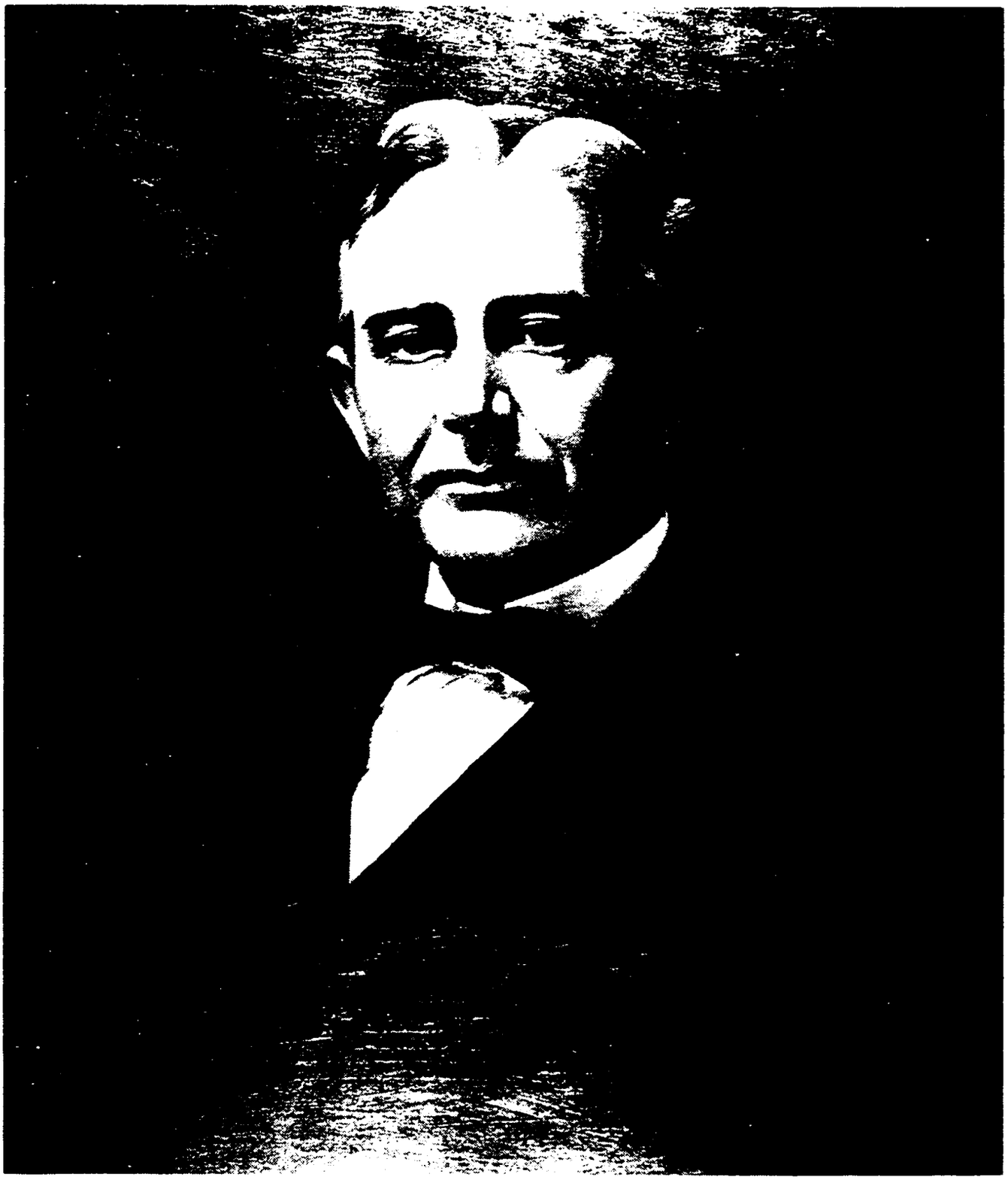
1884, taking office before he was twenty-one years old. In the latter year he moved to Winston to become superintendent of the schools in that growing town. Calvin H. Wiley, another noted educator, was then chairman of the school board there, and it was he who sought out Joyner as a progressive young educator who would set up a system of graded public schools that would serve as a model for public schools throughout the State.

Joyner next undertook the study of law and, abandoning education for a time, practiced in Goldsboro. But he was not completely separated from educational duties, for he was elected chairman of the Board of Education of Wayne County soon after settling in Goldsboro. His old classmate, Alderman, was superintendent of schools there but left in 1889 when he became a member of the faculty of what is now Woman's College in Greensboro. Joyner followed Alderman as head of the Goldsboro schools and in a few years, when Alderman became President of the University in Chapel Hill, Joyner again followed him by joining the faculty in Greensboro.

Joyner remained in Greensboro for nine years, teaching classes in literature and "methods of teaching." He trained hundreds of young women who went out into the schools of the State to teach. Joyner read widely and was aware of the newest methods of teaching and learning. He also conducted county teachers' institutes throughout the State and became acquainted with the needs of the educational system of North Carolina.

In 1901 Joyner was made chairman of the North Carolina Textbook Commission. At the death of President McIver of the Greensboro institution in 1906, Joyner declined appointment in his stead saying, "My heart is with the Normal [Woman's College], but my duty is along other lines." Joyner saw his duty clearly with the public school system throughout North Carolina. In 1902 Governor Aycock had appointed him State Superintendent of Public Instruction following the death of Thomas F. Toon. Joyner was re-elected in succeeding campaigns and continued to serve until 1919 when he retired. During his period of service as State Superintendent, Joyner began many services not previously known or at least not widely known in the State: school libraries, farm life schools, teacher training institutes, increased State aid for schools, and the education of adults.

Joyner's "moonlight schools" taught thousands of men and women to read and write. Through his efforts the very high illiteracy rate in North Carolina was reduced from 28.71 per



JAMES YADKIN JOYNER
(1862-1954)

From a portrait by Jacques Busbee, who was commissioned by the North Carolina Teacher's Assembly, and which was presented by that body in 1912 to the State of North Carolina. The portrait is in the Division of Museums of the State Department of Archives and History.

cent in 1900 to 18.5 per cent in 1910. His efforts in behalf of improved teacher training bore fruit with the establishment (or of the State's assuming control) of Western Carolina College at Cullowhee, Appalachian State Teachers College at Boone, and East Carolina College at Greenville, as well as with the enlargement of facilities at those institutions which already offered the training which he stressed.

It was in 1907 that Joyner viewed the passage of the State Public High School Act which appropriated $45,000 to aid in the establishment of high schools. During the next year 156 new high schools were opened.

The first ten years of Joyner's supervision of the State's schools saw numerous improvements. The total public school expenditures in the State almost tripled. The length of the school term was increased from four months to nearly five in the rural schools and to almost eight months per year in the city schools. Over 3,000 new schools were built in North Carolina during the ten-year period, making an average of more than one a day after Joyner took office. Better desks and equipment were added. Teachers' salaries increased 30 per cent and over 2,500 additional teachers were recruited.

In 1908 the University of North Carolina awarded Superintendent Joyner an LL.D. degree. The following year he was elected President of the National Education Association at its annual meeting in Denver, Colorado. Previously southern educators had held only minor positions in this national organization. The election of Joyner, therefore, shows the regard with which he was held by his fellow educators. In 1912 the North Carolina Teachers Assembly presented to the State of North Carolina a portrait of Dr. Joyner, painted by Jacques Busbee.

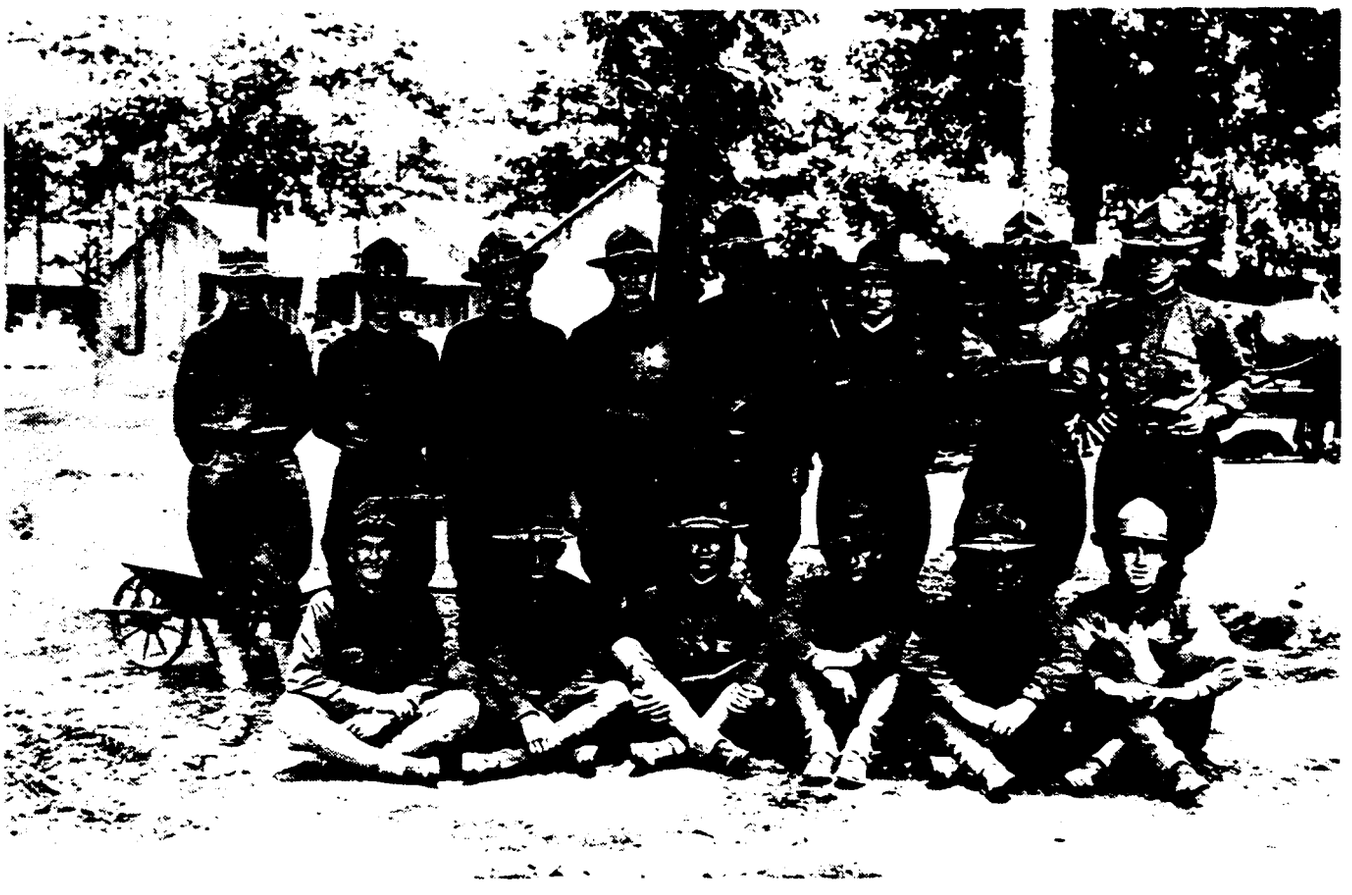
Dr. Joyner's work laid the foundations for numerous aspects of North Carolina's educational system which are now taken for granted. Compulsory attendance laws were strengthened and enforced. Teacher certification was established. The publication and frequent revision of courses of study, book lists, directories of school officials, and numerous other publications for teachers, pupils, and parents was begun.

In 1918, after 17 years in office and as he approached the age of sixty, Dr. Joyner decided to retire. He wrote Governor Bickett of his decision saying, "I have been in public service and have felt the weight of public responsibility continuously for thirty-seven years. I have had joy in the service. I am more grateful and appreciative than I can ever express in word or act for the measure of confidence, support, cooperation, and appreciation—far beyond my deserts—that I have received from the people of North Carolina during all these years. I need a rest now. I hope I have earned it."

Dr. Joyner retired to his farm at LaGrange but for 35 more years he continued to serve his native State in various capacities.

He played a leading role in the organization of the Tobacco Growers Co-operatives Association. In 1937 he served on the Public Forum Council for Lenoir County in one of the most interesting and successful adult education programs of the depression years. Governor Morrison appointed him to the State Ship and Water Transportation Commission; Governor McLean appointed him to the Commission on Adult Education; Governor Gardner appointed him to the Adult Illiteracy Commission; and during World War II Governor Broughton appointed him to an Appeal Board for the State Selective Service System.

Following Dr. Joyner's death on January 24, 1954, at the age of ninety-one, the *Greensboro Daily News* wrote: "Dr. Joyner returns to the soil from which he came, his creed, his philosophy, and his faith are reincarnated in every school child in North Carolina. The State which he and his fellow crusaders inspired looks forward, its faith, its hope and its investment centered in its children. . . . Dr. Joyner was a dreamer spared long enough to see his dream come true."



Officer Candidates from Kinston in training at the first Officers Training Camp, Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, May 15, 1917, to August 15, 1917, during World War I. *Front row*: McDaniel Lewis, Roger Sutton, William B. Umstead, John C. Duffy, Carl Harper, Meriwether Lewis. *Back row*: James A. McDaniel, R. H. Lewis, W. C. Knox, Robert H. Rouse, Henry Tull, Reynold T. Allen, Lundy Abbott, Matt Allen. From an original photograph in the possession of McDaniel Lewis, Greensboro.

# X. The Current Scene

## Present-Day Lenoir County

The present state of affairs in Lenoir County and the City of Kinston is the result of more than two centuries of interest and devoted labor on the part of thousands of people who have now passed from the scene. Many of their names are remembered by a grateful State, others have their special mention in the annals of the County, but the majority of them are forgotten or recalled only by their descendants.

A close look at some of the events of the recent past will suggest that not all people who have made history are dead and gone. Some of them are still active and will have their place in the histories still to be written. The account of them will be just as important as that of the Atkinses, the Heritages, the Caswells, the Joyners, and others who made important contributions in the past.

## Two World Wars

World War I between 1917 and 1918 was responsible for slowing down local development which had been underway for several years in Lenoir County. Citizens of both Kinston and the County subscribed generously to War relief programs. "Victory Gardens" were the rule of the day when city dweller and farmer alike tried to raise as much of his own food as possible. Bond rallies were frequent and successful. There were 1,369 men and four nurses from Lenoir County who saw service, and 18 of them lost their lives.

The United States entered World War II following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. As in the earlier conflict, local citizens responded loyally to calls for service. They participated in numerous War activities. Food was rationed. Travel was restricted. There were approximately 4,072 local young people, women as well as men this time, who saw service in every branch of the armed forces and all around the world. Approximately 125 of them lost their lives. The establishment of military training camps in nearby counties brought

many servicemen and their families to Kinston and Lenoir County. Men in training at Camp Lejeune, Camp Davis, Cherry Point Air Base, and later at a small auxiliary air base on the outskirts of Kinston found a cordial reception and friendly hospitality in Kinston. Their coming in large numbers made a tremendous impact upon the commercial, social, and cultural life of the community.

Although Lenoir County sent militiamen or national guardsmen to every war from the Revolution through the Korean conflict, there was no local National Guard unit until 1925. A naval battalion had existed in Kinston as early as 1895, however, but Battery B, 117th Field Artillery, was the first National Guard unit. It was organized as a Service Battery under the supervision of R. J. Hicks, World War I veteran who became the first commanding officer. The Battery was later redesignated and saw service during World War II. Other National Guard units have been organized in Kinston, and a new armory on East Highland Avenue was occupied by the 196th Field Artillery Group in December, 1954.

Shortly before World War II an airport was begun as a public works project a few miles northwest of Kinston. During the War it served as an auxiliary air field for the Marines. Stallings Air Base, as it came to be called, was named for Lieutenants Bruce and Harry Stallings, Jr., brothers from Kinston who lost their lives in the spring of 1945 while serving in the United States Army Air Corps. Between 1951 and 1957 Stallings Air Base was the site of a training school, operated under contract with the United States Air Force. Some 4,000 students, including 400 from 23 allied countries, were given their primary flight training here. The first quota of students arrived from pre-flight school at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in November, 1951.

## Good Roads

Shortly before the turn of the twentieth century North Carolinians began to demand better roads. The coming of the rural free delivery of mail in 1896, the improvement of schools, the need for better routes to market, and other important reasons made the need for good roads pressing by the 1900's. A Good Roads Association was formed and caravans toured the State

spreading the gospel of their cause. Mecklenburg County led the way in road construction, and by 1910 a few macadam roads were in use elsewhere.

Sand-clay roads were generally constructed and they served adequately for a time. In 1912 there were only 5,000 automobiles in North Carolina and they seldom ventured far from home. In 1914 North Carolina was second among the States in mileage of sand-clay roads, a type of construction actually popular only here and in South Carolina, Georgia, and Texas. It was reported in 1915 that Lenoir County had spent $20,000 for new steel and concrete bridges and that it had completed 85 miles of sand-clay roads at a cost of between $800 and $1,000 per mile. The immediate goal for the County was 600 miles. Prison labor was used and a 30-horsepower road machine was then being operated. Other equipment included portable cells for confining the convicts at night, wheeled cook shacks, and wagons. The Lenoir County road force was described as one of the best equipped in Eastern North Carolina.

The first important highway through North Carolina was the Central Highway established by legislative action in 1911. It was to begin at Morehead City and generally follow the route of the old railroad through Kinston to Raleigh, Greensboro, Salisbury, and finally to Asheville. This route became N. C. Highway No. 10 and is now for the most part U. S. Highway No. 70. It was and is still a much-used link between the east and west in North Carolina.

Following the suggestion of the Good Roads Association, North Carolina next undertook a system of roads to connect all county seats and important towns. This became the chief object of the new State Highway Commission in the 1920's. "Hard-surface and other dependable highways" were soon to connect all of the counties.

John E. Cameron of Kinston was an important member of the State Highway Commission from its creation in 1919. He and Frank Page, the Chairman, were the only old members reappointed in 1921 when the Commission was enlarged to direct the expanded road-building program.

It is interesting to study the desires of North Carolinians for highways. They at first wanted an important through road from one end of the State to the other. They next wanted local

roads to connect all county seats. Then in the 1930's more direct east-west and north-south highways were constructed. Following World War II, and particularly during the administration of Governor W. Kerr Scott, farm-to-market roads were in great demand. And now in the 1960's there is much progress to be reported in the construction of superhighways with limited access and by-passing all cities and towns.

## Agriculture

Lenoir County farmers have long been noted for their willingness to experiment as a means of improving the produce of the land, increasing their own income, and easing the burden of long and hard days in the fields. John Washington noted in 1810 that mules were just begining to be used on the farms of the County. It was in 1877 that a Lenoir County tobacco grower first introduced bright leaf tobacco into Eastern North Carolina from Person County. In 1880, within half a mile of Kinston, 30 acres of rice were being cultivated—10 acres each by R. D. Jackson, Joseph Stricklin, and J. S. Jackson. *The Kinston Journal* published several articles on rice and claimed credit for helping enlarge the rice-producing area of the County. A rice mill in New Bern processed the crop. One farmer described the cultivation of rice as being "a medium between corn and cotton—more trouble than corn and not as much as cotton."

In 1909 J. C. Parker became the county's first farm agent. Following his lead, successive agents have continued teaching and demonstrating improved farming methods throughout the County. On September 1, 1935, a home demonstration agent began working to assist the rural women of Lenoir County. Within three years May Swann, the first home demonstration agent, had organized eight clubs with a total membership of 210 women.

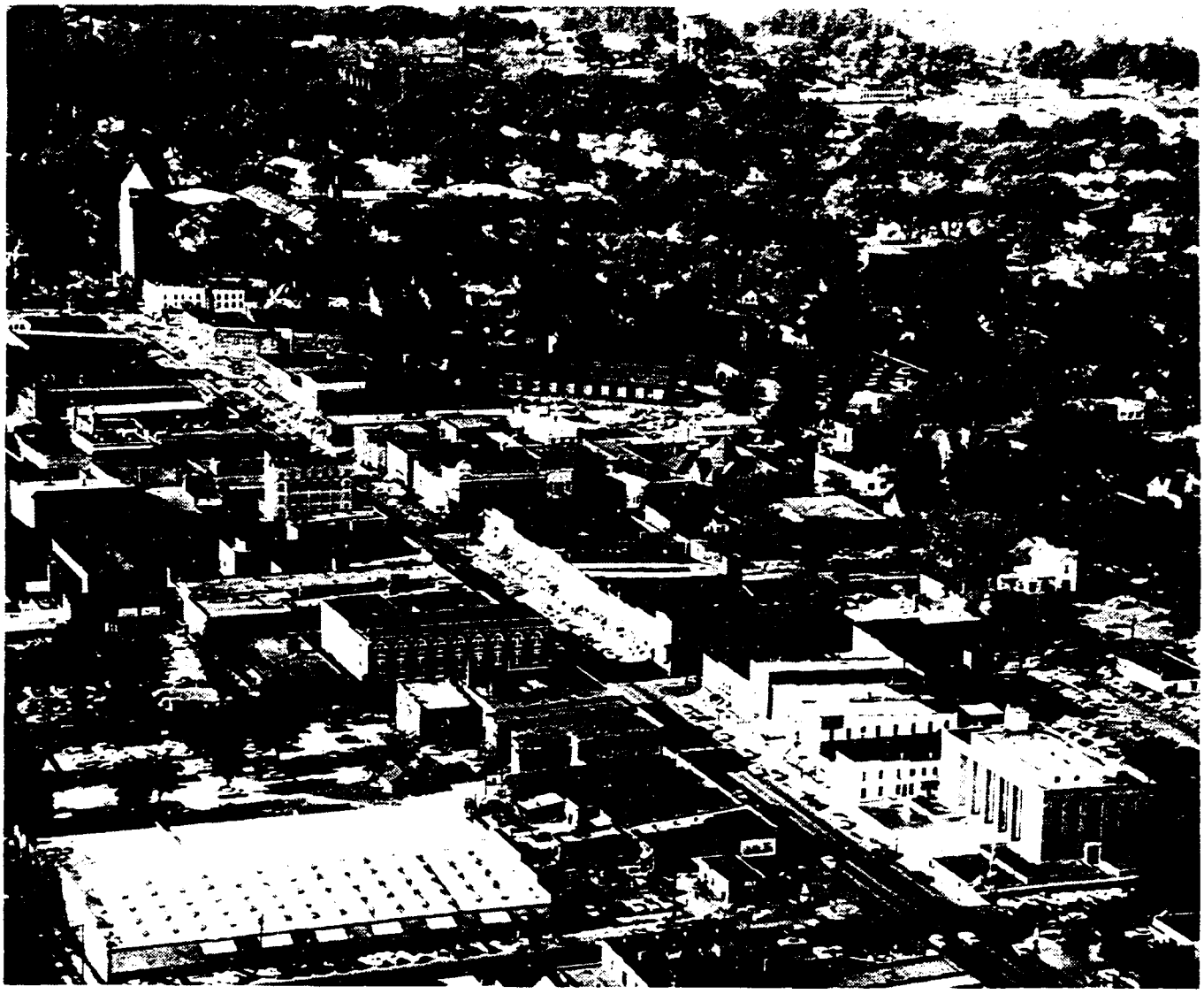
By using modern methods of farming, mechanized equipment, and commercial fertilizers, the farmers of the County have increased the yield of the land many fold. Lands which would yield 10 to 20 bushels of corn in 1810 will now produce 100 or more.

Improvements have also been made in processing and marketing. The early county farm agents recognized the importance of good markets and promptly took steps to provide them. P. A. Hooker began operating a livestock-buying station in the early

1920's and maintained it for over 30 years. In the fall of 1945, shortly after the end of World War II, a group of Kinston businessmen banded together to form a meat packing company. Following the example set for them in 1889 when a cotton mill had been formed by local citizens, these men created a local business to process a local product. At a site a short distance west of Kinston they erected a building and installed modern packing equipment. When it was in operation, it became the first federally-inspected packing plant in the State. In 1950 the plant was leased to Frosty Morn Meats, Inc., which has enlarged and improved the original building and equipment, and now purchases around $3,000,000 worth of pork and beef for processing each year at the Kinston plant.

A boon to growers of flue-cured tobacco was the result of an idea which occurred to Forrest H. Smith of Kinston in the early 1920's. Smith, as a youth, had had to cut cord after cord of wood to be burned in curing tobacco. Long night hours spent in tending the fire at a tobacco barn made him wish for an easier way to provide the steady heat so essential for proper curing. Finally in 1929 after several failures, Smith produced the first successful oil burning tobacco curer. J. F. Edwards of near Kinston, on the Greenville highway, was the first to use one of the successful burners. In spite of the fact that Smith's patents were not adequately protected and several other manufacturers were able to use them, he established a business to produce the burners which have been sold all over the world.

The 1959 Census of Agriculture reported 2,429 farms in Lenoir County. Slightly more than 90 per cent of all the land in the County was devoted to farming. While the total number of farms had declined during the previous five years, the average size of each farm had increased from 61.5 to 83.2 acres. Owners operated 708 farms while tenants operated 1,385 farms. There were 2,004 farms primarily growing tobacco while only five specialized in cotton. Ten poultry and 57 livestock farms were reported. A dozen farms reported sales of $40,000 or more. There were 801 with sales ranging from $5,000 to $9,999 and 731 ranging from $2,500 to $4,999. Among the equipment reported in use on Lenoir County farms in 1959 were corn pickers, field forage harvesters, crop driers, grain combines, and, of course, trucks and tractors.



Aerial view of the business section of Kinston, 1962.

## Kinston Utilities

The repeated news items in *The Kinston Journal* in the late 1870's and early 1880's about Edison's wonderful new electric light may have planted the germ of an idea of benefit to Kinston in the minds of local aldermen. On February 19, 1897, the Board of Aldermen created a Utilities Department and accepted the offer of J. A. Harvey, local sawmill operator, to operate and manage the town's recently purchased power plant. He agreed to provide 30 street lights and 500 lamps to illuminate the town. It was by a vote of the people that Kinston took this progressive step. Out of 577 qualified voters only 43 voted against the plan. These arrangements remained in force until 1903 when the electrical system was enlarged and modernized. At that time street, waterworks, sewer, and fire alarm improvements were also made.

The need for a public supply of good water was evident to

many of the town's citizens for a number of years. Following a disastrous fire in 1895 the need was even more evident. Shortly thereafter a pump was purchased and wells were sunk. Water was piped for several blocks along Queen Street and 11 fire hydrants were installed. Between 12 and 15 customers were supplied by this early water system. When the necessity for enlarging the system was faced by the town fathers in a few years, there was widespread debate as to whether more wells should be opened or whether the advice of an engineer should be followed and a reservoir created to impound surface water. Mayor N. J. Rouse, contrary to the engineer's suggestions, argued for deep wells and his idea was accepted. The wisdom of that decision has been proven by time. Wells sunk at that time are still producing water for the city of Kinston.

## Radio Broadcasting Service

North Carolina's first commercial radio broadcasting station was established in 1922 in Charlotte. In 1936 Jonas Weiland applied for a license to construct a radio station in Kinston. His request was approved and the call letters WBJW were assigned. Before going on the air as a 100-watt commercial broadcasting station on February 28, 1937, the call letters were changed to WFTC. At that time only stations in Raleigh, Wilmington, and Rocky Mount were serving this area. It is believed that Kinston's first radio receiver was purchased in 1921 by Oscar Greene, Sr., but only after the services of WFTC were begun was local programming possible. The new station's first antenna was made of copper wire and copper stripping nailed to a tree trunk, while its studio for a brief period was on the mezzanine of Hotel Kinston. Later the studio was moved to the Temple Building.

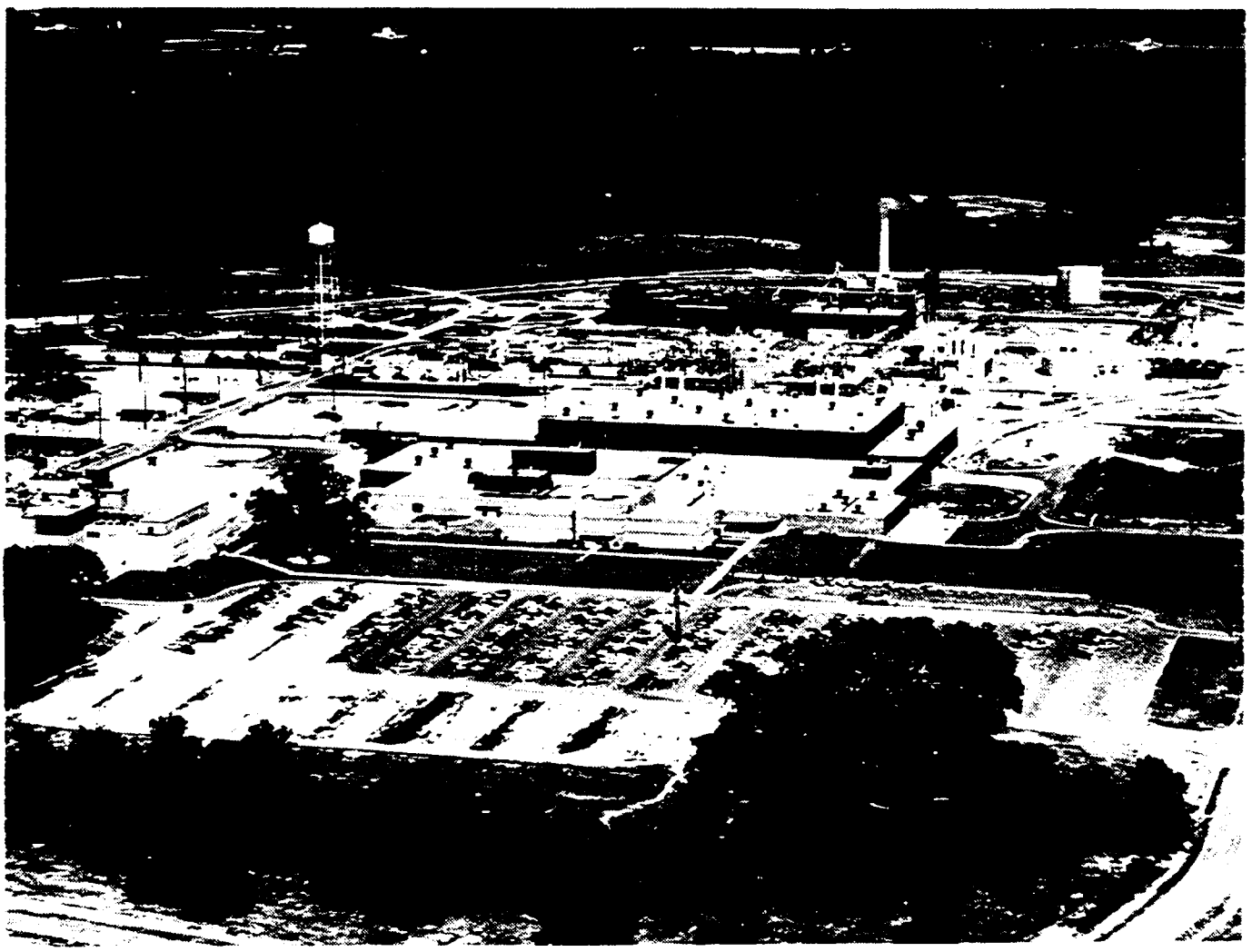
Only after World War II did Kinston have more than one radio station. In 1946 the Kinston Broadcasting Company was formed and application made for a 1,000-watt daytime station. WKNS began operation on September 20, 1947, but went off the air on June 1, 1949, when it was purchased by the owners of WFTC.

From June, 1949, to September, 1950, Kinston again had a single radio broadcasting station. A group of local citizens headed by E. L. Scott then established station WELS which first went on the air on September 24. A third station, WISP, was established in 1953.

## Du Pont Dacron Plant

With the selection of Kinston as the site of the world's first plant for the manufacture of Dacron, a new era opened for Lenoir County and the City of Kinston as well as for much of Eastern North Carolina. The E. I. Du Pont de Nemours and Company, Inc., about 1949 began to search for a site for its first Dacron polyester fiber plant. For more than a year the company's engineers traveled over 20,000 miles and examined approximately 90 possible sites. Kinston scored 93 out of a possible 100 points with the engineers who worked out a scoring system for the requirements of the plant.

The first inquiry about the plant to reach Kinston arrived in January, 1950, and a number of local citizens, Du Pont personnel, and representatives of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad worked quickly and carefully to develop the plans. Within a few months an option had been obtained on a 635-acre tract about seven miles east of Kinston on the Greenville highway. In September public



Du Pont Plant, 1962.

announcement was made that the Du Pont plant would be erected in Lenoir County.

In Raleigh *The News and Observer* hailed this move as the beginning of a new trend which would lead many new industries to move into the heretofore largely rural and agricultural Eastern North Carolina. "It was inevitable that Eastern North Carolina should attract industry," an editorial concluded. "It is fortunate that so large a plant should have been secured for the region, because it will serve as an example to both large and small plants in other industries."

Construction was begun on April 12, 1951. Completed at a cost of approximately $43,000,000, the plant was ready to begin operation on March 23, 1953. The next day the *Kinston Daily Free Press* pointed out that "This day will go down in the annals of Kinston, Eastern North Carolina, and in fact the State and this section of the country as the beginning of a new industrial era. It is a dream come true for Kinstonians who have long hoped and planned for an industrial renaissance which could march hand in hand with the agricultural progress of this section and make it truly a place flowing with milk and honey."

By 1962 the Du Pont plant was pouring over $14,000,000 annually into the region's economy. About 2,000 people were then employed by Du Pont.

## Caswell Training School

In 1911 Governor Kitchin appointed a board of directors to study the need for a State school for feeble-minded children and to select a location for such an institution. Kinston, Washington, and Lillington offered possible sites. The board wanted the town to offer between 300 and 1,000 acres of good land, an adequate water supply, sewage disposal, and a railroad siding. Kinston met the requirements and in addition agreed to provide free electric current for a five-year period. It was, therefore, selected.

Dr. Ira W. Hardy of Kinston, a member of the General Assembly, sponsored the establishment of the school and became its first superintendent. He was succeeded in 1914 by Dr. B. C. McNairy who was in charge when the first children were admitted. In 1915, at Dr. McNairy's recommendation, the name was changed from the North Carolina Institution for the Feeble Minded to the Caswell Training School.

Among the Caswell Training School's purposes are the care,

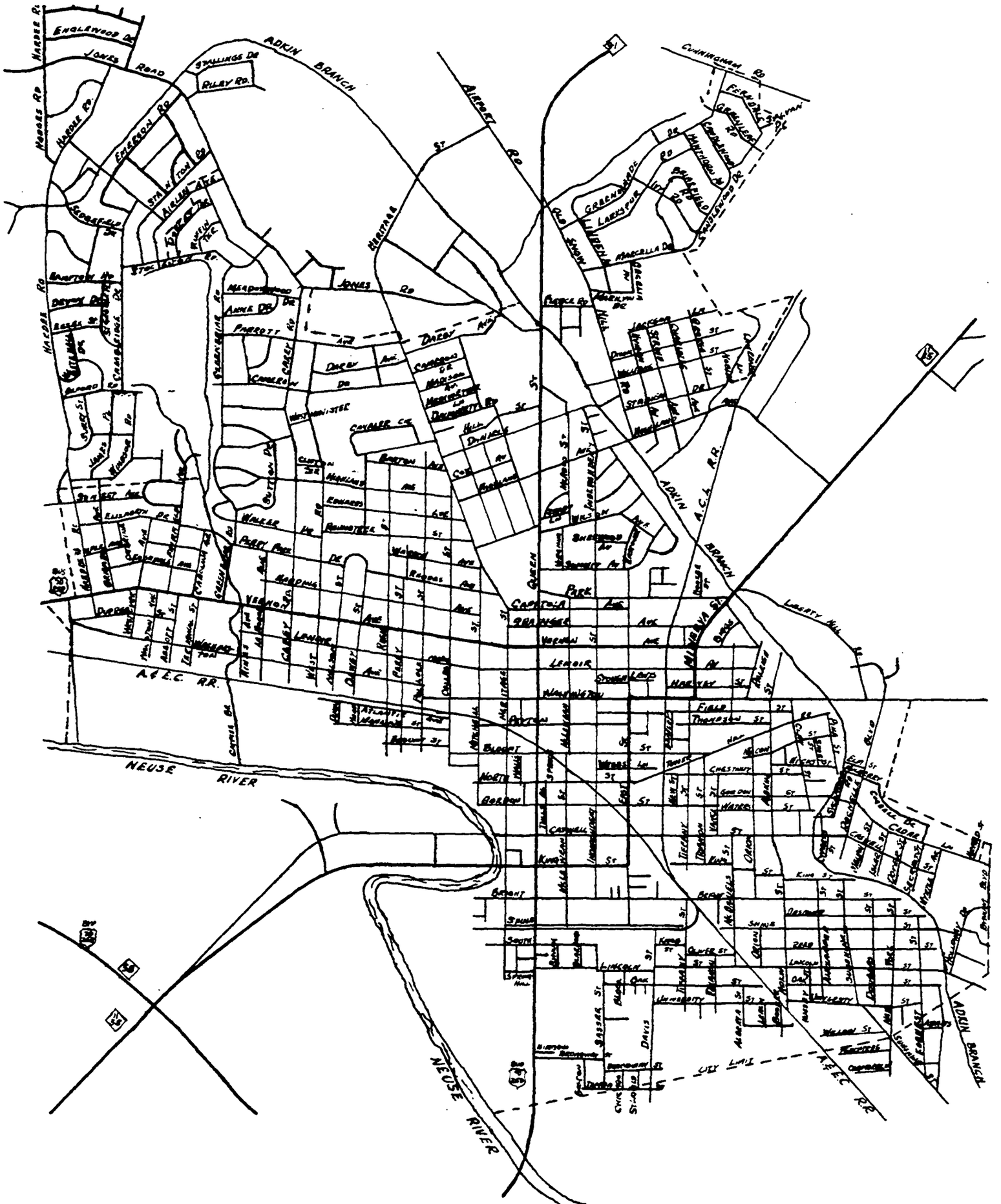
training, and education of mental defectives, the maintenance of a bureau for instructing the public about the care of mental defectives who remain in their homes, and the operation of a psychological clinic for the study and observation of mental defectives charged with crime. Feeble-minded and idiotic boys and girls between the ages of six and twenty-one and feeble-minded women between the age of twenty-one and thirty, with certain reservations, are admitted.

### State Training School

Known first as State Farm Colony, later as Dobbs Farm, and more recently as the State Training School for Negro Girls, this State-owned institution was established in 1927 a few miles northwest of Kinston. It was here that the value of study and classification of offenders, for the purpose of providing a sound basis for care and treatment, was first demonstrated in North Carolina. The State Training School operates as a correctional school rather than a reformatory or prison. There are approximately 90 girls at the school, most of whom were assigned by county welfare departments and by the courts of the State.

### Kennedy Memorial Home

The Kennedy Memorial Home, a branch of the North Carolina Baptist Orphanage, was established at Falling Creek about seven miles from Kinston in 1912. Eight children were admitted on June 5, 1914. The land on which the orphanage was built was a gift of Mr. and Mrs. William L. Kennedy who reserved a lifetime interest in their home which was a part of the farm. The trustees, however, took over the remainder of the farm and began operation of the orphanage. The site was originally granted to John Kennedy about 1750. J. Herman Canady, a young Kinston businessman who took an early interest in the Kennedy Memorial Home as a member of the board of trustees, made a large contribution towards the construction of the first dormitory for boys and encouraged others to follow his example. In 1917 Mrs. W. L. Kennedy, through the sale of some jewelry, provided funds for another boys' dormitory to be named the Hardee building in honor of her father, Pinckney Hardee. Offerings from over the State made possible the building of a chapel on the grounds in 1919.




# KINSTON

Map prepared by James E. Blue, 1963.

## And Yet To Come . . .

Citizens of Lenoir County have gained a reputation for managing their own affairs well and for meeting local problems with sensible solutions. Indeed, the County was said to have been created to stop the lawlessness and general unrest in old Dobbs County. Many times since then public-spirited citizens have answered the call to solve local problems. The establishment of the Orion Knitting Mills in 1890 and 1891 and of the meat packing plant in 1945 are examples of self-sponsored action undertaken to provide employment and further the well-being of the community.

Along with this awareness of community responsibilities there has developed among the residents of Lenoir County, and especially among those who live in the City of Kinston, a feeling of personal pride in the good will which exists among all citizens of whatever class or race. Natives and long-time residents readily accept the newcomer. A feeling of "belonging" is quickly apparent to any observer willing to spend a few hours chatting with the "friendly natives."

Lenoir County and Kinston are proud of their historic past, but they are equally proud of their modern present and their promising future.

## DATES

| | |
|---|---|
| 1584 | Captains Amadas and Barlowe had reports from Indians of the country along the Neuse River. |
| 1663 | Carolina Charter granted to eight Lords Proprietors by Charles II. |
| 1711 | John Lawson and Baron Christoph Von Graffenried went up the Neuse River to explore the area. |
| 1711-1713 | Tuscarora War. |
| 1729 | Robert Atkins received a grant for land on which part of Kinston now stands. |
| 1746 | Johnston County formed from Craven County. |
| 1748 | Church of England chapel erected about this year at the future site of Kinston.<br>Falling Creek Monthly Meeting of Friends (Quakers) organized. |
| 1756 | Baptist chapel built at Stoney Creek (site now in Wayne County). |
| 1757-1758 | Attempts made to establish George City at Tower Hill as capital of North Carolina. |
| 1758 | Tobacco inspection warehouse built about this year at the future site of Kinston. |
| 1759 | Dobbs County formed from Johnston County. |
| 1762 | Town of Kingston established by legislative action. |
| 1767 | Church of England minister assigned to serve St. Patrick's Parish, Dobbs County. |
| 1770 | Baptist chapel built at Southwest Creek. |
| 1771 | Regulators defeated at Battle of Alamance. |
| 1775-1783 | Revolutionary War. |
| 1776-1780 | Richard Caswell, of Lenoir County, Governor of North Carolina. |
| 1779 | Kingston made county seat of Dobbs County when its western half was cut off to form Wayne County. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1784 | Spelling of Kingston changed to Kinston. |
| 1784-1787 | Richard Caswell, of Lenoir County, Governor of North Carolina. |
| 1785 | Bishop Asbury preached at the first known Methodist service in Kinston.<br>Dobbs Academy chartered. |
| 1791 | Lenoir County formed from Dobbs County. |
| 1802 | Spring-Hill Seminary of Learning chartered. |
| 1817 | Fairfield Academy established. |
| 1826 | Town of Kinston incorporated. |
| 1833 | Internal improvements convention met in Kinston and urged the construction of a railroad from Beaufort to Waynesboro (Goldsboro). |
| 1846 | Town of Kinston re-incorporated since no town government had been established following the incorporation in 1826. |
| 1855 | First newspaper, *The American Advocate,* established in Kinston. |
| 1861-1865 | Civil War. |
| 1862 | December 14. Battle at Kinston. |
| 1865 | March 8. Battle at Southwest Creek. Ram "Neuse" was sunk in the river at Kinston at this time. |
| 1877 | Federal troops withdrawn from the South bringing an end to political reconstruction.<br>J. T. Burch began growing bright leaf tobacco on the farm of Council S. Wooten.<br>Dr. R. H. Lewis began operating the Kinston Collegiate Institute. |
| 1882 | Dr. R. H. Lewis opened Kinston College. |
| 1891 | Orion Knitting Mills began operation. |
| 1893-1902 | "Dr. Lewis' School" operated by Dr. R. H. Lewis. |
| 1895 | First tobacco sales warehouse opened in Kinston. |
| 1896 | Kinston library established. |

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| 1897 | Utilities Department created by Town of Kinston to operate electrical and water facilities. |
| 1909 | First farm agent appointed for Lenoir County. |
| 1911 | Central Highway from Morehead City through Kinston and finally to Asheville established by legislative action. |
| | Caswell Training School established. |
| 1912 | Kennedy Memorial Home, an orphanage, opened. |
| 1917-1918 | World War I. |
| 1929 | First successful oil burning tobacco curer made by Forrest H. Smith near Kinston. |
| 1935 | First home demonstration agent appointed for Lenoir County. |
| 1937 | First radio station established in Kinston. |
| 1941-1945 | World War II. |
| 1945 | Meat packing plant established by Kinston businessmen. |
| 1950 | Meat packing plant leased to Frosty Morn Meats, Inc. |
| 1953 | Du Pont Dacron plant began operation. |
| 1962 | Kinston celebrated 200th anniversary and was given a coat of arms by the College of Arms, London. |

# INDEX

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