

UNION COUNTY
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MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1912.

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UNION COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA.

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Brief History of Its Formation and Development. Climatic and Agricultural Resources. Fine Showing in Educational Progress, Social Conditions, and General Welfare. Biographical Sketches of Men Who Have Been Prominent in Its Development. Monroe, the County Seat, Center of Its Activities.

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By D. P. WATERS.

The act to lay off and establish a county by the name of Union was ratified on the 18th day of December 1842: Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That a new county by the name of Union, be and the same is hereby laid off and established of parts of the counties of Mecklenberg and Anson. Beginning at the corner of Mecklenberg and Anson, on the South Carolina line, and runs east on the South Carolina line, eleven miles; thence east of a parallel of the county line, so that it shall be thirteen miles east of the Cabarrus corner, on Rocky River; thence up the various courses of Rocky River to the corner of Anson and Mecklenburg; thence with the Cabarrus line, three miles; thence a direct line to where the Providence road crosses Six Mile creek; thence with the meanders of the creek, to the South Carolina line; thence with the South Carolina line to the beginning; which shall have all the powers, authorities and immunities of other counties in this State.

SUPPLEMENTAL ACT. (Portions.)

The following Act, supplemental to the above, was passed by the same General Assembly, and ratified on the 26th day of January, 1843: Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That the county of Union shall be, and is hereby invested with all the rights, privileges and immunities of the other counties in this State, except as is hereafter provided.

Sec. 2. Be it further enacted, That William Wilson, James A. Dunn, Silas Stewart, Moses Cuthbertson, and James Marsh, are hereby appointed commissioners to select and determine upon a site for a permanent seat of justice for said county, who shall locate the same as near the centre as a suitable location can be obtained, provided it shall be within two miles of the centre of said county, which centre shall be taken to that point in a diagonal line, running from the northeast to the southeast extremity of said county, which is equidistant from said extremities.

Sec. 3. Be it further enacted, That a majority of said commissioners shall have power to purchase, or receive by donation for the county of Union, a tract of land consisting of not less than fifty acres, nor more than one hundred, to be conveyed to the Chairman of the County Court of said county and its successors in office, upon which a town shall be laid off and called Monroe, where the courthouse and jail shall be erected, and where, after the completion of said courthouse, the courts of said county shall be held and the clerks and registers shall keep their offices. And the said commissioners shall lay off the lots of said town, and after designating such as shall be retained for public uses, shall, whenever required by the County Court of said county, expose, after due notice, the residue to sale at public auction, upon a credit of one and two years, and

shall take from the purchasers bonds and security for the purchase money, made payable to the Chairman of the County Court and his successors; and upon the payment of the purchase money, the Chairman or his successors shall execute title therefor; which money shall be appropriated to the building of a courthouse and jail.

Sec. 4. Be it further enacted, That the justices of the peace and the officers of the militia who reside within the limits of said county, shall continue to hold and exercise all the official powers and authorities in and for said county, that they have hitherto held and exercised in the counties of Mecklenberg and Anson.

Sec. 5. Be it further enacted, That the Constables now residing within the limits of the county of Union, shall continue to hold their offices and perform all duties appertaining thereto, until the first County Court to be held for said county, under the same rules, regulations and penalties as constables are subject to in this State.

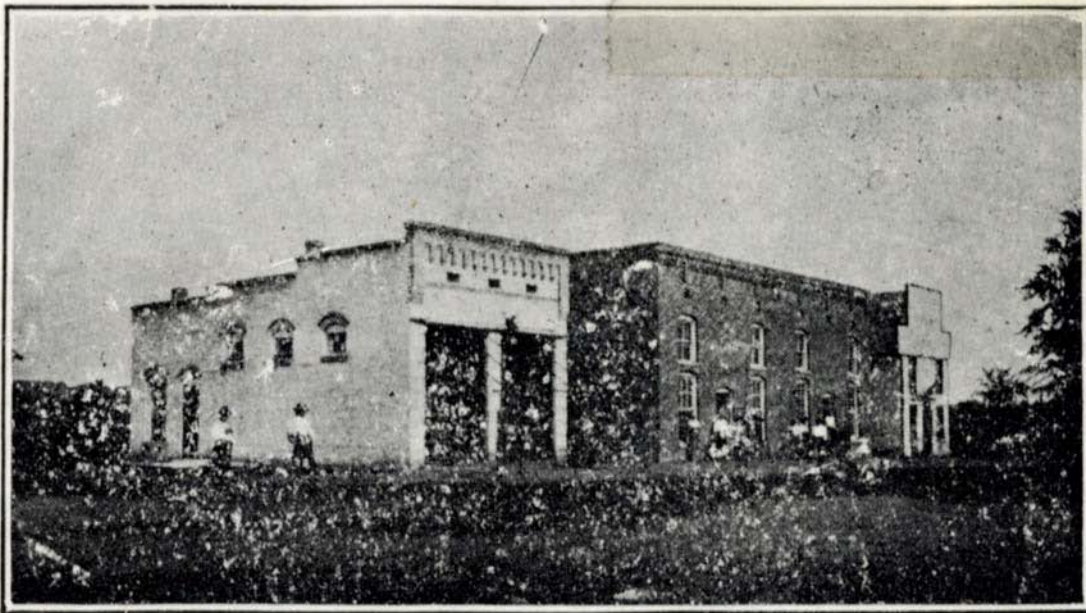
Sec. 6. Be it further enacted, That there shall be a Superior Court of Law and Equity opened and held at Labatt's Cross-Roads, in the said county of Union on the second Monday of February, in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty-four, and the second Monday in August following, and at the same place from time to time, unless a courthouse shall be built in the meantime, as provided for in this act, at the town therein to be established; then at said town and courthouse on the second Monday in February and August in each and every year thereafter; which Courts shall have the same jurisdiction that the present Superior Courts of Law and Equity in the several counties in this State now have and exercise.

Sec. 7. Be it further enacted, That a Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions shall be, and the same is hereby established in and for the county of Union, to be held by the justices of said county on the first Monday in April, July and October, in each and every year; and the first session of said Court shall be held at Labatt's Cross-Roads on the first Monday in April next, and at the same place from time to time, until a seat of justice shall be established for said county, as is hereby provided; and at the first session of said Court, a majority of the Justices of the Peace being present, they shall elect a Clerk of the Superior Court, a Clerk of the County Court, County Attorney, Sheriff, Coroner, Register, Entry-Taker, Surveyor, Constables and all other officers for said county, who shall enter into the bonds required by law, and shall hold and continue in said office, until successors to them are duly chosen and qualified, according to the acts of the General Assembly, in such cases made and provided.



Ashcraft's Spring at Rock Rest, Four Miles East of Monroe.

This famous spring and landmark is on the side of the Monroe and Wadesboro road, and for many years has furnished cooling draughts for man and beast. It is on the property of heirs of the late Dr. J. B. Ashcraft, and still renders generous service to all who thirst.

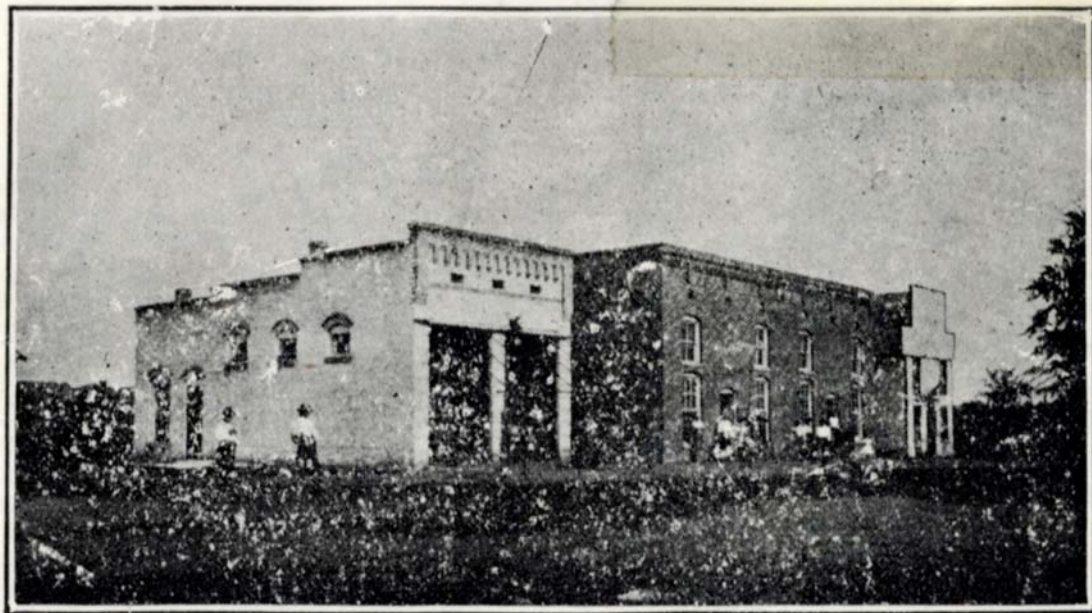


Bank of Wingate and J. L. Austin & Co.

J. L. AUSTIN & CO.

The largest store in Wingate is owned and conducted by this firm. A handsome brick building 60x70 feet floor dimensions, is wholly devoted to the business of the concern, besides a big storage warehouse for the heavier lines of goods. In the departments of this store will be found a very complete stock of dry goods, groceries, clothing, furniture and undertakers supplies, and also agricultural implements.

The present business is the outgrowth of the first store started in this locality, and was known as Stewart, Austin & Co., changing two years later to Perry & Stewart. From an original stock valued at about \$800 it has grown to its present large proportions. Seven years ago it was incorporated under the above title with a capital of \$6,000, increased three years later to \$12,000, and since then to \$15,000. The present officers of the firm are: W. H. Perry, president; G. M. Stewart, vice-president; J. L. Austin, general manager.



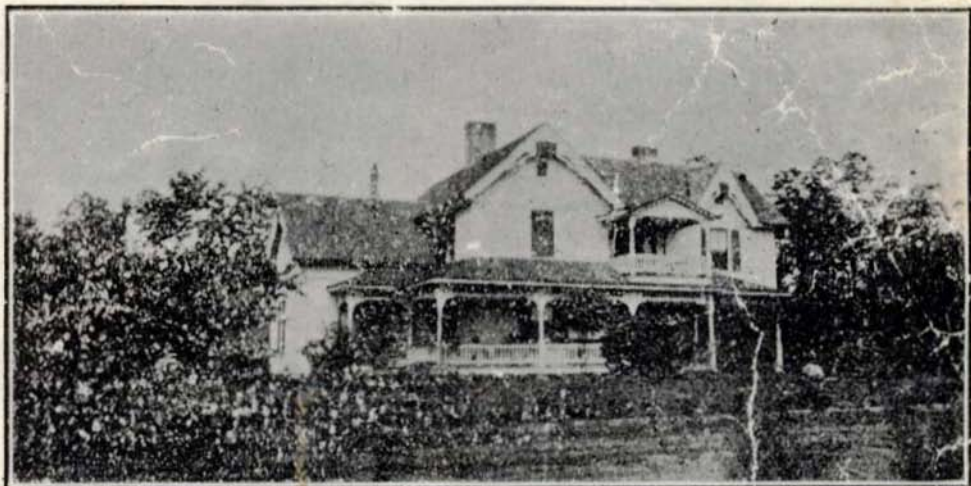
Bank of Wingate and J. L. Austin & Co.

STATE BANK OF WINGATE.

A charter was granted this bank in 1909, and its doors opened for business on October 15th of the same year. The capital is \$10,000, which is fully paid in. Its stockholders are composed mostly of local merchants and farmers, and the business of the bank has been highly

satisfactory to all concerned in its welfare. Besides paying a semi-annual dividend of 5% in July, 1911, a surplus of \$2,200 has also been accumulated. From January, 1910, to January, 1911, deposits had increased from \$24,000 to \$30,500. The handsome building occupied by the bank is owned by the stockholders.

The officers are as follows: R. A. Morrow, president; W. M. Perry, vice-president; J. W. Bivens, cashier; Miss Janie Bivens, assistant cashier.



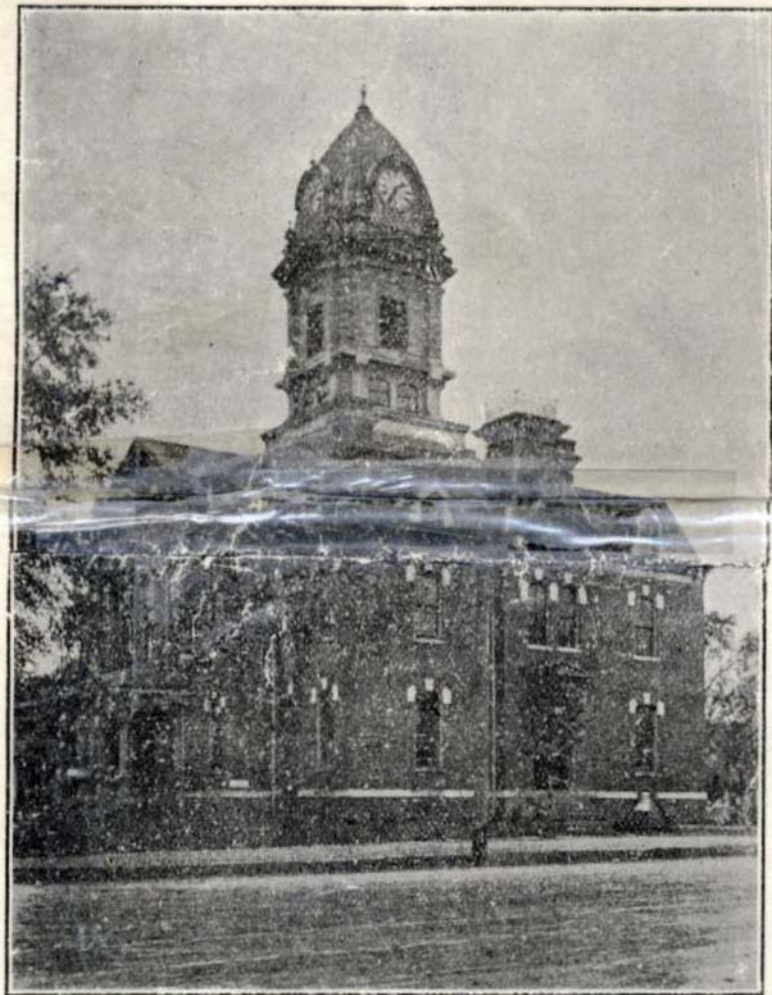
Residence of J. W. Bivens.



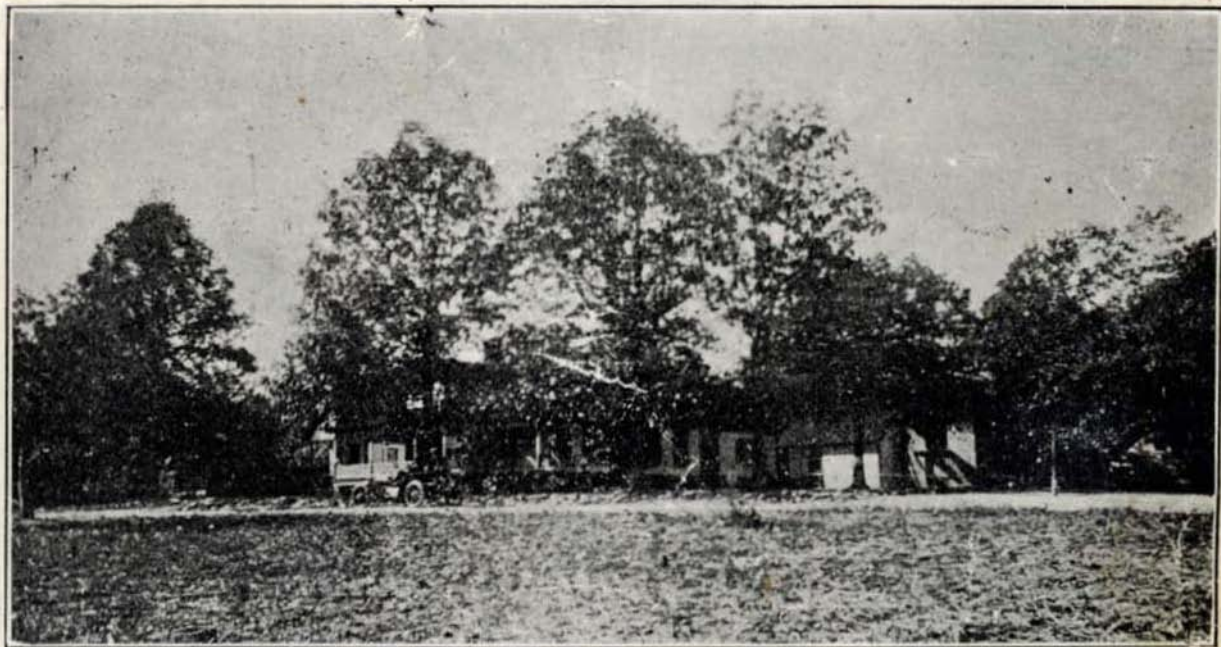
J. W. BIVENS.

John Wilson Bivens was born in Union county near what is now the town of Marshville, October 29, 1859. He is a son of Henry Bivens and Martha J. (Ashcraft) Bivens, both natives of Union county. He was reared on a farm, following that vocation until 1890 when he was elected to the office of Register of Deeds for Union county and served six years. He resumed farming, but in 1901 he was again honored by his fellow-citizens, being elected to serve in the lower house of the General Assembly during the session of 1901-1902. Mr. Bivens has been cashier of the Bank of Wingate since May, 1910, is a member of the firm of J. L. Ausin & Co., and principal owner of the Wingate telephone system. During his eight years service as town commissioner, and in his zealous efforts toward the support and maintenance of the Wingate School, he displayed a high order of public spirit and liberality.

In 1884 he married Anna Williams, daughter of S. A. Williams of Union county. Of this union six children are living, as follows: Mary Lee (Mrs. B. Y. Tyner), Janie, John A., Sarah, Willie and Dorothy.



Union County Court House, Monroe.



Residence of Dr. J. B. Eubanks, Lanes Creek.



The Late T. C. Eubanks.

FIRST COURT HELD.

The first session of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions was held at Labatt's Cross Roads in April, 1843, and continued to be held there until October, 1844, the new court house at Monroe not being ready for occupancy until the January term of 1845. The members of the first court assembled upstairs in the old gin house of Wm. C. Steele about four miles west from Monroe, with the following Justices of the Peace present, forming a majority: Eli Stewart, Silas P. Stewart, David Hargett, Amos Stevens, John

(David Hargett)



The Late J. P. Horn.

McCorkle, James C. Massey, John Stewart, John Blount, Archibald Laney, William Ross, Stephen Haste, William Hamilton, Nathaniel Bivens, Moses W. Cuthbertson, Aaron Little, Thomas C. Wilson, Lemuel Parker, Hugh Stewart, Joseph T. Draf-fin, William Bibbs, James Belk, Marcus Austin.

After the court was organized, the following justices were commissioned: Joshua M. Harris, Silas Preslar, William P. Muse, James G. Blair, Silas N. Stilwell, William H. Simpson, James Marsh, David A. Covington, James Doster and George Little.

All the foregoing magistrates being present the Court proceeded with the election of the following officers: William Wilson, Sheriff; Hugh Stewart, Clerk of Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions; David A. Covington, Clerk of the Superior Court; Joseph H. Wilson, County Attorney; Thomas P. Dillon, Register; James Blount, Coroner.

In April, 1868, the first Board of County Commissioners was established, the members being as follows: E. Dutton, Francis, E. J. Walker, Calvin Trull, Elisha W. Griffin and Ezekiel Gurley. This Board was empowered by the new constitution of the State to assume and perform certain duties which had previously been under the jurisdiction of the County Court, such as settling claims against the county, appropriations for necessary improvements, etc.



The Late J. P. Horn.



The Late James M. McLarty.

HUGH McWHIRTER.

Hugh McWhirter was born in Mecklenburg county, September 18, 1857. His father, F. B. McWhirter, was a native of Union county, but moved to Mecklenburg county in 1842. His mother, Alba B. (Wilson) McWhirter, was born in Mecklenburg county, a daughter of Hugh Wilson of the same county. Mr. McWhirter was engaged in farming in his native county until 1900 when he moved to Union, settling near Wingate. He owns a fine farm there which is extensively cultivated, besides owning a handsome residence in the town of Wingate. He is well known in the county as a progressive and public spirited citizen.

In 1882 Mr. McWhirter married Dora V. Jerome, daughter of E. A. Jerome, both natives of Union county. Of this union there are three children living: William E., Robert Lawson, and Alfred B.

MILITARY RECORD.

During the war between the States Union county furnished 2,500 men for the Confederate army, this number being much in excess of the voting strength of the entire county. Up to April, 1862, ten companies of infantry and one battalion of artillery had been enrolled as volunteers for active service, as follows:

Co. B. 15th Infantry, May, 1861.

Co. B. 26th Infantry, June, 1861.

Co. F. 37th Infantry, October, 1861.

Co. D. 37th Infantry, September, 1861.

Co. B. 48th Infantry, February, 1862.

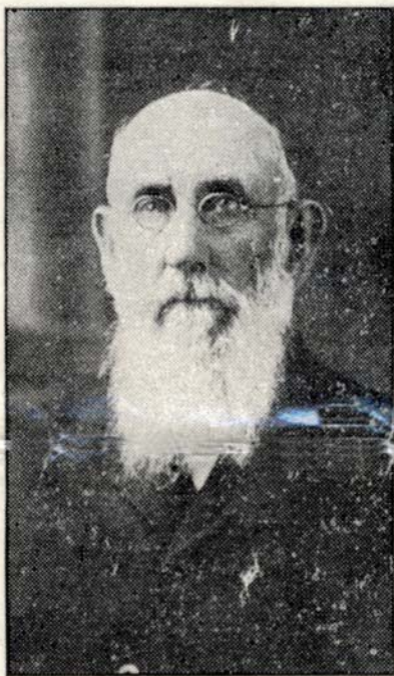
Co. A. 48th Infantry, March, 1862

Co. E. 48th Infantry, March, 1862

Co. F. 48th Infantry, March, 1862

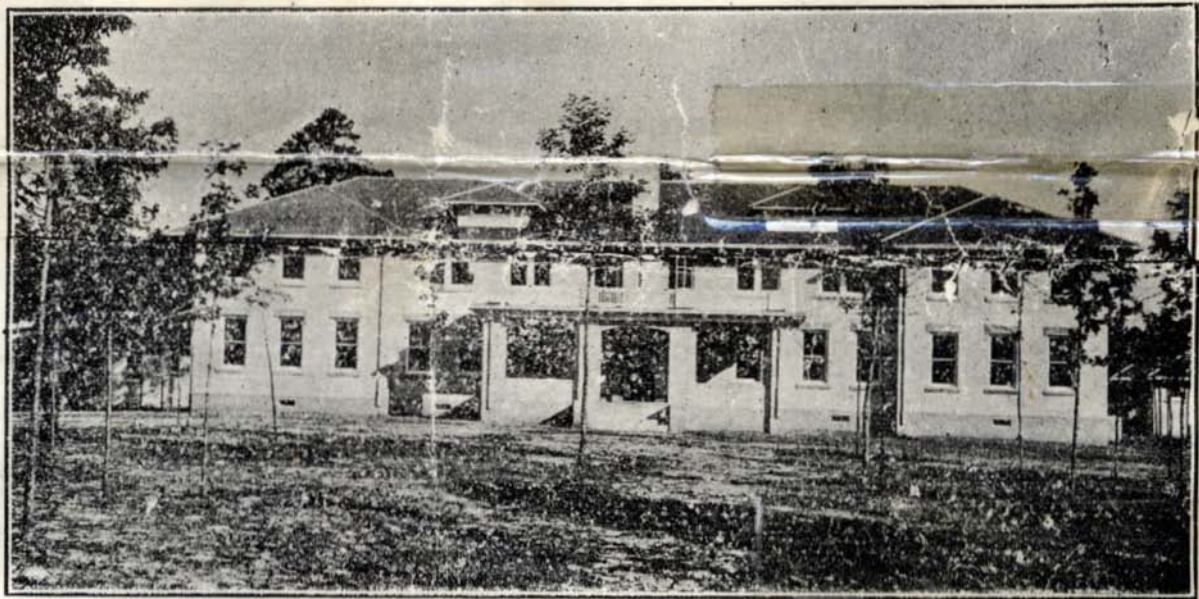
Co. I. 48th Infantry, March, 1862.

Co. I. 53rd Infantry, March, 1862.



The Late A. J. Price.

Co. C. 10th Battalion of Artillery, March, 1862.



New County Home, Near Monroe.

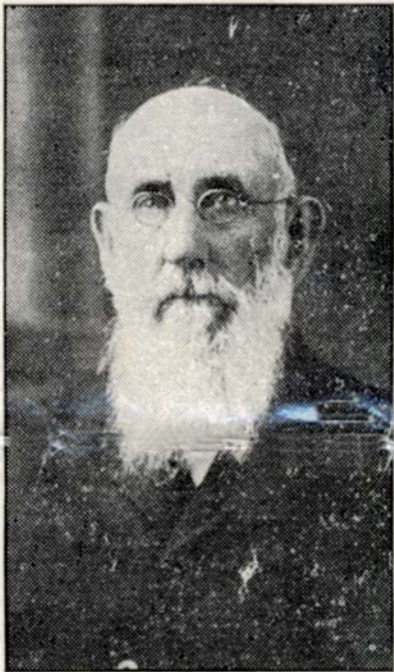
W. M. PERRY.

William Marion Perry was born where the town of Wingate now stands on May 25, 1847. His father was Jeremiah Perry, a native of Anson county. His mother, Elizabeth (Griffin) Perry, was a daughter of John Griffin of Union county, a member of one of the old families of the section near Wingate. In August, 1864, when only 17 years of age, he enlisted in the 2nd Battalion of N. C. Troops and was soon after transferred to a regular regiment, where he remained in active service until the close of the war. After being mustered out he engaged in farming and saw mill business, and also was for many years one of Wingate's leading merchants. Mr. Perry is still actively interested in ginning, saw mill and lumber business, is a prominent stockholder in the Bank of Wingate and its vice president, stockholder in the bank at Mt. Croghan, S. C., cotton mills in this county, etc. Mr. Perry has been one of the most ardent supporters of Wingate Baptist

School, generously contributing both time and money toward its development, and for 20 years has served on the school committee. His ancestors on his father's side were among the old settlers of this section, one of them, Jeremiah Perry, serving in the war of the Revolution and was killed near Raleigh while bearing dispatches for his commanding officer. The sword found on his body is yet in the possession of Thomas J. Perry of Wingate, a brother of William M.

In 1866 M. Perry married Martha E. Moore, daughter of Samuel R. Moore of Union county. She died in 1888, leaving nine children: Clarence, James S., Dr. William J., Cora (Mrs. J. B. Gaddy) Julia (Mrs. J. B. Griffin), Mary E. (Mrs. Chas. Beddingfield), Wilma (Mrs. M. B. Dry), Mattie (Mrs. S. Funderburk).

In 1890 Mr. Perry married Miss Kate M. Rushing, daughter of Benjamin Rushing of Union county.



The Late A. J. Price.



The Late J. McC. Price.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Progress along educational lines in Union county compares favorably with any of the counties in the State. Indeed, when relative population is considered, it is doubtful that any other county surpasses it in the number and excellence of its public schools.

The following facts and figures taken from the recent and admirable report of Mr. R. N. Nisbet, County Superintendent of Public Instruction, will best serve to show the present number and condition of the schools. For the fiscal year 1910-11 the total receipts of money for school purposes, derived from county funds, local taxes, funds from the State and private donations, amounted to \$41,826.73.

Spent for teaching and supervision, \$27,968.71

For buildings and supplies, \$5,948.71.

Total spent for all purposes, \$40,917.42.

Balance in hand, \$1,401.86.



The Late James M. McLarty.

SOIL AND CLIMATE.

The topography of Union county may be described as a rolling surface, without any abrupt elevations or depressions, and well, though not densely timbered. Its elevation above sea level, and general contour, combine to furnish natural drainage over its whole area, leaving it free from swamps or other drainage basins. Pure water in abundance is readily obtained at an average depth of 2 feet. The court house at Monroe, which stands on the general level of the business section, is 659 feet above sea level, and at no point of the land surface will these figures vary more than 50 feet, either above or below them.

As an agricultural section, Union county is not surpassed in resources by any other in the state. The soil is mostly of the red clay variety with here and there tracts of sand loam and light gravel, all having however, a strong clay subsoil. Fruitful yields have invariably followed the careful cultivation of these lands, and while cotton has been the principal crop (28,000 bales ginned in the county last year) splendid results have also been obtained in corn and all staple vegetables. Any kind of grain or fruit common to the temperate zone can be grown in Union county and intensive farming together with increased pasturage will, in the near future, bring about a diversity in products and a new impetus to stock raising which will add greatly to the wealth and importance of this section.

Climatic conditions are singularly favorable to the preservation of health and the promotion of longevity. The county's elevation and fine natural drainage give it many advantages over sections of lower altitude by reason of purer air and freedom from malaria and poisonous gases which are so frequently found in low and marshy localities.

The mean annual temperature here is about 61 degrees, the thermometer seldom ranging higher than 90 in Summer, or lower than 32 in Winter. Cool nights are the rule during the warm season, and the dry, brisk weather common to the colder months is very invigorating and conducive to active and healthful effort.

G. M. STEWART.

George Marshall Stewart, born in Union county in what is now New Salem township, October 3, 1855. He is a son of Coleman Stewart, who was also a native of this county and served in the Confederate



G. M. Stewart.

army nearly four years. He enlisted in Company I, 48th N. C. Infantry early in 1861, serving with the army of northern Virginia until he lost his right arm in the battle of the Wilderness. The mother of G. M. Stewart was Jane (Ross) Stewart, native of Union county. Mr. Stewart moved to Wingate from New Salem township in 1890 and engaged in the lumber business about ten years, when he also became interested in general merchandise business, continuing in these lines many years, other enterprises now requiring much of his time. Mr. Stewart is a large stockholder in the State Bank of Wingate, and in the Mt. Croghan Bank in South Carolina, owns stock in cotton mills at Monroe, and is interested in various properties in Lee county, N. C. In October, 1876, he married Ellen Elizabeth Perry, daughter of Jeremiah Perry, native of Union county.

Mr. Stewart has been one of the most active and progressive men connected with the affairs of Wingate. He was one of the founders of the now famous Wingate School, donating liberally both land and money toward its establishment and success; was one of the organizers of the State Bank of Wingate, is a town commissioner, and member of the board of trustees of Wingate School.



Residence of G. M. Stewart.

TAXABLE VALUES.

Of the 388,958 acres comprised within the limits of Union county, the amount under cultivation will



The Late T. C. Eubanks.

not exceed 20 per cent; and in view of the fact that all land in the county is tillable, it will be seen that a population of nearly 35,000 is practically supported by the products of one-fifth of the county's area. From these conditions it might be reasonably inferred that a population of at least 150,000 could be easily supported upon the agricultural possibilities without considering the addition of industrial development.

Great opportunities are here presented for progressive farmers. With good land, excellent schools and churches, good transportation facilities and social advantages of a high order, there should be no difficulty in combining the comforts of life with the prosperity that is sure to follow intelligent farming in this section of the South.

The values of property, real and personal, as returned for taxation for 1911 are:

Farms and town lots . . .	\$4,586,500
Personal property	3,277,560
Railroads, telephone and telegraph companies, express companies, etc.	1,223,723
Bank stock	203,315
Building and Loan Associations	26,012
Various minor corporations,	42,267
Total value of all taxable property	9,359,420

For 1910 the total value was 7,728,619

Gain in value since 1910 1,630,801

The value of school property July 1, 1908, was only \$22,817—white, \$18,770; colored, \$4,047.

Number of school districts, 120.

On July 1, 1911, the value of school property had increased to \$39,535. White, \$34,400; colored, \$5,135. Number of districts, 122.

Some of the public schools of Union county operate under more favorable advantages than the regular public schools, having been specially endowed from private and individual sources; while the special tax



The Late J. McC. Price.

employed in several districts has resulted in an unusually high standard of education as compared with other localities of equal population and area. Notable examples of this kind are the schools of Wingate, Unionville, Marshville, Wesley Chapel and Meddington, which will be treated in detail elsewhere and in connection with township matters.

TOWNSHIPS FORMED.

Before the formation of regular townships the affairs of the county were managed by militia districts, there being thirteen of them, each containing one company of soldiers commanded by a captain. Owing to this fact, the districts were known as "captain's beats," and usually took the name of the commanding officer of that particular locality. At central points in the districts voting places were established and election returns made therefrom in much the same manner as returns are now made from townships.

In 1869, after the new constitution of the State was framed, under the Reconstruction Act, surveys were made and the townships of Goose Creek, New Salem, Sandy Ridge, Lane's Creek, Jackson and Buford were laid off and their boundaries defined, in addition to Monroe. In 1879 the township of Vance was formed from portions of Goose Creek and Sandy Ridge, and several years later Marshville township was formed from portions of Lane's Creek and New Salem, being the last township division made up to the present time.

Within the boundaries of the regular townships, in some instances, charters have been granted to municipal organizations by the Legislature: Waxhaw, in Jackson; Watauga, lying in Monroe and Marshville; Unionville, in Goose Creek; Indian Trail, in Vance; and Marshville, in the township bearing the same name.

WINGATE SCHOOL.

It is no wonder that the people of Wingate express themselves with so much pride when reference is made to their splendid school. There is good reason for so doing, as it is by far the finest school building in the county, aside from its high standard of graduation requirements



J. W. Bivens.

Fully \$12,000 have been invested in the building and equipment of the new establishment.

There are now upwards of 300 pupils in attendance, 53 of which are from outside counties, representing North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. The interior arrangement of the building is ideal for school purposes, comprising six large classrooms, library and reading room, music room, debating rooms for the young men's societies, a hall for the young ladies' societies, and a fine auditorium fitted with a commodious stage, and having a seating capacity of 650. Proper care and skill are shown in the heating and sanitary appliances, and nothing appears to have been overlooked in providing comfortable and healthful surroundings for the students.

A beautiful grove of pines and a bountiful spring of pure water are attractive features of the school property comprised in the 26 acres owned by the corporation. The old frame structures formerly occupied by the school will be remodeled and converted into dormitories for the boys and girls whose homes are at points remote from Wingate.

WINGATE.

This thriving little town of about 400 population is on the main line of the Seaboard railway, and seven miles from Monroe by public road. It is delightfully situated, being in a fine farming section, with unusually attractive and healthful surroundings. Numerous handsome residences and substantial business blocks bear evidence to the prosperity and advanced taste of its inhabitants. There are two rural mail routes from the town over which daily deliveries are made, and a well equipped telephone exchange makes connections to all points. A large cotton gin, saw and grist mill are in constant operation, while an extensive business is done by the local merchants. One thousand seven hundred bales of cotton were shipped from this station last year besides many car loads of lumber and cordwood. A prosperous bank and one of the finest schools in the State also enhance the dignity and importance of the place. A regular charter was granted by the Legislature in 1901, providing for a mayor and five commissioners, the corporation limits now being one mile square. Descriptions in detail of prominent interests of the town together with biographical sketches of several of the progressive citizens are given below.