

1896-1911: Progress in Rowesville

[15 Sep 1985]

(Third in a series).

When the Columbia Register reported the success experienced by John F. Simmons in the operation of an axe handle factory at Rowesville, The T&D picked up the account, adding that the county should have "a hundred or more similar enterprises."

Rowesville now had a graded school with an enrollment in 1896 large enough to make it necessary to employ an assistant to the principal. To this position G. W. Dukes was appointed. (Ibid.)

According to the paper (25 January 1899), W. C. Crum recently been elected Intendant; wardens were now C.J. and Robert Baxter, Warren C. Fairey and C.E. Wolfe.

A copy of the by-laws of The Cotton Bank of Rowesville indicates that the organization of this institution was completed in the latter part of 1906. Its capital stock at that time was \$15,000 divided into 150 shares with a par value of \$100. The incorporators were Thomas M. Dukes, John F. Simmons and W.E. Smith, all of Rowesville. This bank was liquidated in 1922-1923.

Apparently the telephone reached Rowesville in 1906-1908 through the organization of the Branchville and Rowesville Telephone Company.

In 1908 a three-year high school was established by the combining of "Dukes' school" and the Rowesville school. But this made the recently built graded school too small, so trustees were now planning to erect "at an early date" a building just for the high school department. (Ibid., 24 April.)

An important industry in 1909 was the Rowesville Cotton Oil Company, which, now under a new management, was operating both day and night. (Ibid., 25 November.)

There were also seven sawmills in a radius of five miles of the town which were shipping from 15 to 25 carloads of lumber per week. Rowesville had "the distinction of shipping the largest number of crossties of any point on the Charleston division of the Southern railway." (Ibid.)

The Rowesville Cotton Oil Co., reported the paper (22 July 1911), was sold at the Orangeburg courthouse for \$25,000 by one of the directors, George V. Zeigler. The bid was made by Raysor and Summers, attorneys.

1917-'31: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE HISTORY OF ROWESVILLE (4)

[19 JAN 1991]
Since the participation of the United States in World War I began in April 1917, it isn't surprising that the musical cantata at the end of the school year at Rowesville featured patriotic songs and flag drills. A large audience filled the auditorium and, according to The Courier (4 June), "Old Glory" was very much in evidence. And the next night the Hon. J.A. Berry

delivered "an eloquent and forceful address" to the graduating class, which consisted of four girls — Flossie Barton, Ruth Cox, Thelma Crum and Edith Funchess — and two boys, John M. Sain and Oliver F. Whetstone.

The school was now a new \$9,000 brick building. And the trustees — T.G. Robinson, W.E. Smith and F.W. Whetstone — were having the grounds

beautified. For the year just past, Mrs. Jenie C. Glenn had served as principal.

Since Rowesville had had considerable sickness during the summer months, the County Health Department in 1920 had the school children vaccinated; in addition, local authorities had ordered the installation of fly-proof sanitary toilets where needed. A marked decrease in the amount of sickness, particularly of typhoid, during the summer months, proved the efficiency of the measures taken. (The T&D, 23 June)

In 1929 the graduating class consisted of five students, one less than in 1917 (a reminder that Rowesville was primarily an agricultural community with no industry or large business in town that would encourage a substantial growth in population). Diploma recipients and their roles in the graduation exercises in 1929 were Jessie Lee Ashe (prophecy), Charles Dixon Hopkins (class history) Margaret Jennings (class will) Eva Murphy (valedictory) and Mabrys Westbury (salutatory) Main speaker for the occasion was Hugo S. Sims, Orangeburg editor and lawyer. At this time J.L. Griffin was superintendent (Ibid., 30 May).

Two years later the following received diplomas: Luell Dukes, James Funchess, Alm Hopkins and Frank Whetstone Superintendent A.J. Thackstor of the Orangeburg city school addressed the graduates before a large audience. (The T&D, 2 June 1931)