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JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The *Journal of the New Bern Historical Society* is a semiannual publication of the New Bern Historical Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the rich heritage of New Bern. Articles, letters, photographs, and memorabilia relevant to the history of New Bern and Craven County may be submitted to the editor for review. (Post Office Box 119, New Bern, North Carolina 28563 or nbhistoricalsoc@coastalnet.com).

UNION STATION: NEW BERN'S CROWN JEWEL OF THE RAILROAD ERA

Dick Lore and Buzz Mead

For some years now, the New Bern Preservation Foundation has had its restorative eye focused on the forlorn and abandoned but still magnificent old building that was for many years the focal point and nerve center of the city. Union Station was completed in 1910, a year when rail transportation totally dominated the movement of both goods and people in this country. By that time an elaborate infrastructure of thousands of miles of track had been laid throughout the United States, and the colorful old steam locomotives and cars of that era were relatively reliable, comfortable, and by far the fastest and least expensive means of transportation available.

This article is designed to give the reader some exposure to the era that inspired the building of such a grand railroad station in New Bern. We hope to document the pervasive importance of railroad transportation in every phase of the personal lives of the citizens of New Bern in 1910. Sadly, we live in an age when few people under the age of 60 have ever experienced the joy of a train ride. Hence, our task is a difficult one since contemporary travel by train is almost as exotic as riding a rocket to the moon.

Perhaps even more important, this article tells the story of how difficult it was for New Bern to acquire a new passenger station more than 90 years ago. The new facility had to be almost literally pulled out of the pockets of the railway companies by a coalition of determined citizens in the town. Finally, we will describe the current condition of Union Station. We hope that years from now, no one will

believe that their pristine Union Station was ever in such desperate condition.

Railroad Dominance in New Bern at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century

One excellent index of the importance of railroads during the beginning decade of the last century is the astonishingly large amount of local newspaper space devoted to railway activities. Detailed train schedules were printed in each edition of the *New Bern Daily News* and the flood of federal and state legislation dealing with railway bankruptcies, freight rates, and other railroad matters occupied a good portion of every edition. The local papers covered the railroads at what some would consider the micro level. Take for example the following account from the *New Berne Daily Journal* of September 3, 1910:

> . . . on Hancock Street yesterday afternoon the engine ran over a large dog owned by Mr. R. L. Thornton and horribly mangled the animal. Quite a crowd was collected by the dog's howls of agony . . . .

Perhaps it was a slow--a very slow--news day.

Hereafter, the abbreviation DJ refers to the *New Berne Daily Journal*, and the abbreviation WJ refers to the *New Berne Weekly Journal*. Both newspapers are available on microfilm at the New Bern-Craven County Public Library. Be warned; the *Weekly Journal* microfilm copies are much more legible than the *Daily Journal* microfilms.

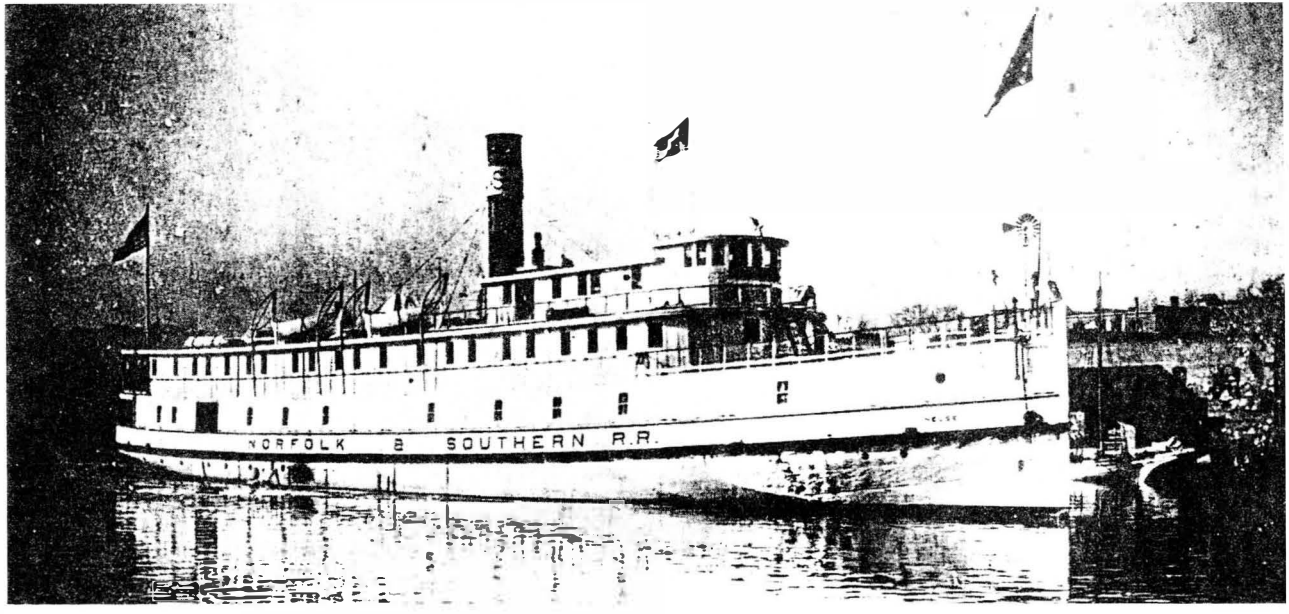
Despite the enormous economic and political influence of the railroads of that era, the local editor and proprietor of both papers, Mr. Charles L. Stevens, did not hesitate to criticize the railroads. Indeed, one gets the impression that Mr. Stevens relished a good fight with the local railways, and his editorial pen could get most acid at times. For example, the city of New Bern and the railroads had agreed earlier that any railroad tracks on city streets

meant that the railroad had to maintain that street. A spur along South Front Street to Union Point came in for some biting sarcasm on the part of Mr. Stevens:

> The usual condition of that street is almost the same as a timber road through a swamp, and in one place, just in front of a widow woman's door, a large hole has been allowed to cut out, which is continually full of stagnant water. Perhaps it is thought to be beneficial to her health. (DJ, 3/17/1908)

A later editorial (DJ, 8/4/1910) complained that Queen Street is "either a dust bin or a series of ponds, according to the weather." The editor then insisted that the Atlantic Coast Line should be compelled to pave its entire length. On October 12 of that same year another editorial in the same paper noted that the railroads, "not only show no desire to make their streets attractive, but worse, they leave them in a continual wretched condition." The Hancock Street rail line is still there but the long Queen Street line and the South Front Street rail tracks were removed years ago. Gone also are colorful editorials dripping with sarcasm and using the power of a widow woman to get across the message. Obviously Mr. Stevens was an editor from the old school of journalism and did not pull his punches no matter the economic power of his opponent.

Certainly by 1910 transportation by rail dominated its traditional rival and nearest competitor, water transport. Despite the elaborate network of natural waterways in eastern North Carolina, railroad transportation was steadily replacing boat service for both passengers and freight. Prior to 1908, if one wished to journey to the village of Oriental, most travelers would take the Neuse River steamer Martha E. Dickerman rather than endure a slow jolting ride over terrible roads by horseback or horse-drawn carriage. On January 3, 1908, train service from New Bern to Oriental began, and on that same day, the old river steamer ceased operations (WJ, 1/3/08). Moreover,



The proud old coastal steamer Neuse is at dock in New Bern. Note the Norfolk & Southern RR logo along the side of the ship. Railroad ownership of the steamer lines meant they enjoyed a monopoly on both freight and passenger service. (Prince, 1972)

since the railroads of this era also owned most of the steamship lines operating out of New Bern, the railroads had an effective monopoly on all freight and passenger services.

Editor Stevens was fully aware of the problems caused by the domination of rail transportation in the region and frequently used concrete examples to make his point. For example, in an editorial (WJ, 3/10/10) he noted:

> A local instance is of a merchant who with boat service paid one half the present freight "monopoly" rate and received his goods in one half the time that it now takes N & S with its boasted Albemarle bridge to deliver the same goods.

In sharp contrast to the sophisticated and elegant network of rails that connected cities, towns, and villages in eastern North Carolina, local highways were little more than cow paths in 1910. As a result the automobile was considered by most to be no more than a play toy of rich eccentrics, good only for limited in-town operation. Perhaps an unusually astute observer could have foretold the current dominance of cars and trucks from isolated reports in the *New Berne Daily Journal* of 1910. For example, the paper reported that a Mr. Hart from Tarboro made the journey from that city to New Bern in "about five hours" in his Reo touring car (DJ, 8/9/10). Mr. Hart may have been fibbing a bit. Given the sorry state of North Carolina roads in that era and the unreliability of early Reos, five days would be a more realistic time.

It is hard to imagine just how important trains were in the everyday lives of New Bernians when the grand old station opened for service. Virtually every item available in the local stores arrived by train, and the abundant industrial, agricultural, and forest products produced in this area left New Bern by train. Millions of board feet of pine, oak, cypress, juniper, and other trees were turned into lumber at local sawmills and shipped by train all over the

eastern United States. Thousands of tons of fish and oysters were shipped through New Bern from Morehead City to points north and west, giving rise to the nickname "The Mullet Line" for the early Morehead City to Goldsboro railroad. An editorial noted that "three solid car loads of fish passed through this city yesterday morning from Morehead City and Beaufort" (DJ, 11/17/1910). New Bern itself was an active center for fish processing and packing with several large fish houses along the Trent River.

New Bern was also a center for the production of "truck." Thousands of pounds of peas, potatoes, beans, lettuce, corn, and other vegetables were shipped annually to northern markets from New Bern. By 1910 refrigerated railroad cars were available, and produce could reach northern markets via the North Carolina and Atlantic Railroad to Goldsboro and then on the mainline to points north. Alternately, Norfolk & Southern provided still another, more efficient route north, particularly after completion of the Albemarle Sound railroad bridge. Boxes of fresh fish when properly iced could go to Norfolk and then on to major markets in New York and Philadelphia with a few boxes transferred at Chocowinity for transport to Raleigh (WJ, 9/8/1908).

Currently, one has to journey to Rocky Mount to catch a passenger train and the destinations of the government-subsidized Amtrak Company are severely limited. But in 1910 one could board the train in New Bern's Union Station and journey to virtually any village and hamlet in the country, no matter the direction. Venturing north from New Bern, train service was available to Vanceboro, Chocowinity, Washington, Belhaven, Norfolk and numerous smaller "whistle stops" in between these towns. To the west of town, train service to Kinston and Goldsboro as well as many smaller communities between these cities had been around since 1858. Trains ran every day to the south, through Pollocksville, Jacksonville, and on to Wilmington. And of course, after January of 1908, one could take the train east to Oriental and all the small communi-

The Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad

EXCURSION

EVERY SUNDAY

DURING AUGUST

SPECIAL TRAIN TO MOREHEAD CITY

LEAVES GOLDSBORO 8:00 A. M.

Reduced Week-End Rates

Rates shown below will be in effect every Saturday and Sunday to September 6th inclusive, and you may go down on Saturday and return Sunday. Tickets good on all regular trains, also on excursion trains when operated.

TAKE A SWIM IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

The Water is Fine and The Surf Is Wonderful

Free Admission to Beach

CONCERT SUNDAY AFTERNOON BY A POPULAR ORCHESTRA

TRAIN WILL STOP AT ALL STATIONS ON SIGNAL TO PICK UP, OR ON NOTICE TO CONDUCTOR TO DISCHARGE PASSENGERS

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A representative of the Atlantic Beach Corporation will board the train at New Bern to sell the regular 50 cent bathing ticket to those riding the excursion train for 50 cents. Ticket includes towel, bathing suit and locker.

	Round Trip	Train Leaves
[illegible]	$1.00	8:00 A.M.
[illegible]	1.00	8:17 "
[illegible]	1.00	8:35 "
Pinetta	1.00	8:50 "
[illegible]	1.00	8:55 "
[illegible]	.75	9:00 "

	Round Trip	Train Leaves
Caswell	$ .75	9:10 A.M.
Dover	.75	9:30 "
Dove	.50	9:30 "
Tuscarora	.50	9:40 "
Clarks	.50	9:45 "
New Bern	.50	10:15 "

ARRIVE MOREHEAD CITY 11:15 A. M.

Children under 5 years with parents or guardian will be transported free. Children over 5 years and under 12 years, will be charged half fare except when adult goes with children will be 40c.

Parents will meet trains and those having a sign on the taxicab will carry passengers between passenger station and the beach for fifteen (15c) cents per person each way.

R. W. DOZIER, Traffic Manager.

Returning Train Will Leave Morehead City At 7:00 P. M.

For fifty cents round trip, one could take the train to the beach in 1936. (Prince, 1972)

ties that still exist along Highway 55 east of New Bern.

To complement the profusion of regularly scheduled passenger trains, special excursion trains were common and designed to handle seasonal or holiday traffic and special events. During the summer months excursion trains ran from Raleigh and other points west to the beaches at Morehead City and Beaufort. Or for beach variety, New Bernians could hop a train to Virginia Beach, Virginia, or venture to exotic and distant Tampa, Florida. The round trip fare for the latter destination in 1910 was a modest $9. Certainly the railroad companies made money from these vacation trains, but the small fares were not the only reason they were promoting these beach excursions. Norfolk & Southern Railway owned the huge Atlantic Hotel in Morehead City in 1910, and the grand and elegant old Princess Anne Hotel in Virginia Beach was owned by the railroad servicing that area. Similar excursion trains ventured into western North Carolina and Virginia in the summer so passengers could enjoy the cooler weather or in the autumn could view the foliage.

In other areas of North Carolina, it was common for companies to charter an entire train to take their employees on a holiday outing. In Roanoke Rapids, The Simmons Company often reserved a large passenger train for their employees to spend a long day at Ocean View, Virginia. Employees and their families rode these charter trains at no cost. The kids would enjoy the roller coaster and other rides at this giant amusement park while papa and the grandparents hauled in spots and croakers from the fishing piers. In New Bern, organizations often chartered one or more passenger cars for a holiday outing. Saint Cyprian's Church and Sunday school class went on their annual excursion to Beaufort in eight coaches providing for about 500 people in June 1908 (WJ, 6/30/1908). Centenary Methodist Church reserved an entire train for their picnic that same month (WJ, 6/19/1908).

Virtually any celebration in the area meant that a special train (or trains) was available to transport large num-

bers of people to the event. New Bern's Bi-centennial Celebration in 1910 was a rousing success largely because huge numbers of people from all over the state could visit the old town so conveniently by special trains. Later in that same year Carteret County celebrated the opening of the newly finished Inland Waterway with a day filled with speeches, barbecue, and oysters. Citizens of New Bern were urged to take the special train to partake of this joyful day as a way to pay back all the folks from "Down East" who had visited New Bern on the occasion of our 200th anniversary.

Sometimes, however, these celebratory and recreational trains did not go as well as expected. In October 1910, Norfolk & Southern operated a chartered train for the citizens in New Bern to attend a presentation of Thomas Dixon's new play entitled, "The Sins of the Father." The play was being presented in Goldsboro. Alas, not every person taking this train was seeking a cultural experience nor were they as refined as you might expect. A free-for-all brawl developed among a group of drunken young men on the way over to Goldsboro to see the play, and one man was seriously cut with a knife (DJ, 10/14/1910). The temperance movement was alive and well in eastern North Carolina at this time, but apparently so was the appeal–and effects--of drinking Craven County corn whiskey.

The railroads operating in this area had a vested interest in improving the region's economy. Obviously, any increase in business in eastern North Carolina would mean an increase in demand for their passenger and freight services. In fact, there is good evidence that the railroads of that era were promoting local products in distant markets. An article appearing in the *New Berne Daily Journal*, October 14, 1910, congratulates Norfolk & Southern Railroad for displaying regional products at the Ohio Valley Exposition in Cincinnati, Ohio, and at a similar show in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

On occasion, a special train would be used for educa-

tional purposes or regional economic development. In 1910 the agricultural experts at North Carolina State College (now NCSU) were convinced that the farmers in eastern North Carolina should be raising more corn. The professors also wanted the farm population to learn the most recent and advanced methods for growing this crop. Accordingly, they leased a train, filled it with posters, leaflets, and the newest agricultural implements, and personally brought their message to virtually every hamlet in this part of the state.

Any discussion of the huge contribution made by railroads to New Bern's economy during the first decade of the twentieth century must include information on the extensive repair and rebuild facilities operated by railroads in the city during this period. In the area immediately to the west and north of Union Station, hundreds of skilled workers were employed to maintain cars and locomotives. There is even evidence that new passenger cars were built at these facilities (DJ, 11/17/1910). Certainly, major engine overhauls were routinely performed in the New Bern yard, and badly damaged locomotives were often repaired here. The facilities included the largest steam hammer in the state at that time. Designed to shape and form heavy metals, this hammer generated 3,500 pounds of pressure and was installed in 1909 (WJ, 7/30/1909). A disastrous fire in November 1909 destroyed a good portion of these facilities including the carpenter, machine, and paint shops as well as the round house, a storage building, and a number of locomotives, passenger coaches, and freight cars (WJ, 11/9/1909). More than 200 skilled workers were out of work as a result of this huge fire, but rebuilding started immediately and the destroyed facilities were replaced within a year.

New Bern's Struggle for a New Passenger Station

During the period 1908-1910, Mr. Stevens produced numerous editorials and articles on New Bern's desperate

need for a new passenger station. In one of his sharpest comments on the matter, he noted that, "A gentleman visitor says the current depot is a death trap and expressed wonder that there had not been a fatal accident. Someone no doubt will be killed" (WJ, 12/8/1908). Barely a week later, Stevens notes,

> Goldsboro is rejoicing over its magnificent union passenger station . . . while New Bern with four lines of railway entering the city is groaning over the lack of accommodations furnished by the old shack of a depot which barely served one railway twenty years ago. . . . Looking at the old station here it strikes one that we are going backward. (WJ, 12/18/1908)

Subtlety may not have been a strong point with Mr. Stevens, but he certainly got his message across.

Repeatedly Stevens published calls for a new passenger depot in no uncertain terms. In January 1909 his message was, "It is time for this city to call a halt and demand accommodations commensurate with the passenger business that comes through this city" (WJ, 1/12/1909). In February 1909 the *Weekly Journal* announced two meetings with railroad executives on the issue of a new station for New Bern had occurred (WJ, 2/9 & 2/12/1909), and then in the next month again raised the issue in an editorial entitled, "What about the union depot?" (WJ, 3/16/1909). In this latter editorial Stevens argued that the waiting platform is crowded with baggage trucks and express trucks that are likely to run over women. Moreover, he did not like the fact that women had to endure smoke from men in the cramped waiting room. Still again in a March editorial (WJ, 3/23/1909) Stevens asked if the union depot issue were dead and noted that it was a miracle that no serious accidents had occurred at the old station. Stevens produced a steady stream of similar editorials until he could finally announce in June of 1910 that the contract had been let for the new passenger station in New Bern. As we shall

see, his editorials certainly helped the cause of the new station. But approval and funding for the new station also reflected the work of a large coalition of New Bern citizens working for the same end.

In part, the funding problems for the passenger station reflect the fact that the United States was slowly recovering from a sharp business recession during the period 1908-1910. New Bern was most certainly affected by this recession, and both local papers commented frequently on the dismaying number of skilled and non-skilled workers who did not have jobs in New Bern. Economic conditions slowly improved, but the fast growing Norfolk & Southern Railway was a delayed victim of the recession when it went into receivership (WJ, 7/3/1908). The N & S bankruptcy shocked local business leaders and prompted an editorial stating that the Norfolk & Southern's "future is of vital importance to every trade, and industrial and commercial interest of the towns and cities along its lines" (WJ, 7/8/1908).

The bankruptcy of the Norfolk & Southern Railroad certainly complicated the effort to build a new passenger station in New Bern. Any new facility would be paid for strictly by the railroads serving New Bern, and thus the entire cost of the new station would be the responsibility of two railroads: Norfolk & Southern and Atlantic Coast Line. Note that no federal, state, county, or city funds were available for building railway passenger stations. In later years alternate forms of transportation would be generously supported by federal or state funds devoted to the construction of highways and airline terminals.

At the time, these two railroads virtually monopolized passenger travel in New Bern, and neither railway exhibited the slightest interest in building a new station in town. Both companies appeared to have a decided aversion to paying for passenger facilities anywhere. N & S resisted funding any portion of the new railway passenger depot in Goldsboro, and ACL was apparently happy to simply discharge passengers directly onto Queen Street in New Bern.

Reluctantly then, these two railway companies agreed to build a station. But not until a powerful coalition of New Bern citizens had forced the issue via the influence of a prestigious committee that met with the railroads for more than a year prior to final approval and funding (WJ, 4/15/10). The committee members represented both railroads, New Bern administrators, officials from the local chamber of commerce, and interested local citizens (WJ, 11/2/1909). Mr. R. A. Nunn, local lawyer and judge, was the first person to reveal that final approval was almost accomplished in August 1909 (WJ, 8/10/1909), but the construction contract was not awarded until June 1910 (WJ, 6/21/1910). (In 1923, Mr. Nunn would become the first president of the newly formed New Bern Historical Society.)

Construction of Union Station

Despite the obvious widespread interest in this construction project among the citizens of New Bern, surprisingly little critical information on the proposed new depot appeared in the local newspapers. For example, the name of the architectural firm that designed the passenger station was never revealed. An accomplished local architect Herbert Woodley Simpson was a member of the committee that negotiated with the railways on the new station. Although the bulk of Simpson's work involved residential architecture, he had designed larger structures such as churches, office buildings, and industrial plants. Thus, although Simpson was capable of producing plans for the building, there is no evidence that he was involved in its design. Most likely, New Bern's Union Station was designed by in-house designers who may have taken stock plans and modified them to fit local requirements. At one point in the committee's work, tentative plans for the new station were submitted by the railroads for approval by the New Bern Aldermen. These plans were rejected by the alderman (WJ, 9/10/1909). It is highly likely that Simpson

had a key advisory role in this decision by the board since his reputation as an architect was certainly well established at that time.

Similarly, no cost estimates or projected costs were ever published in the local papers, nor were the actual costs of construction ever made public after completion of the project. Remarkably, the local paper did not even name the contractor in charge of the construction. In a brief article in June 1910, the public was simply told that the railroads had decided to give the contract for construction to a "Newport News firm" (WJ, 6/21/1910).

Why all this secrecy over information that would be commonly available today for any comparable building project? Certainly in 90 years historians will be able to gather detailed cost and design information on the just-completed Neuse River Bridge by simply reading the *Sun Journal* for the years 1995-96. To understand the secrecy, one must note that the railroads of that era were involved constantly in lawsuits and legal battles with private citizens, businesses, shipper organizations, unions, as well as all levels of government. Sustained litigation over passenger fares and freight rates were routine. Legal problems with their labor force and right-of-way fights were also common, and the railroads were constantly suggesting advantageous regulatory changes or resisting new regulations they did not favor. As a local example of the former, Norfolk & Southern requested that train speed limits in the city of New Bern be increased from 4 to 10 miles per hour (WJ, 3/4/1910).

New regulations mandated that locomotives use electric lights rather than the old oil-burning lamps for night operations. Never mind the fact that the oil lamps were sooty, smelled, and provided no more than 100 feet of visibility to the operating engineer. The railroad companies insisted that the new regulation represented a needless expense. Victory was sweet for Editor Stevens, who informed his readers when the first locomotive with electric lights passed through New Bern (WJ, 3/15/1910).

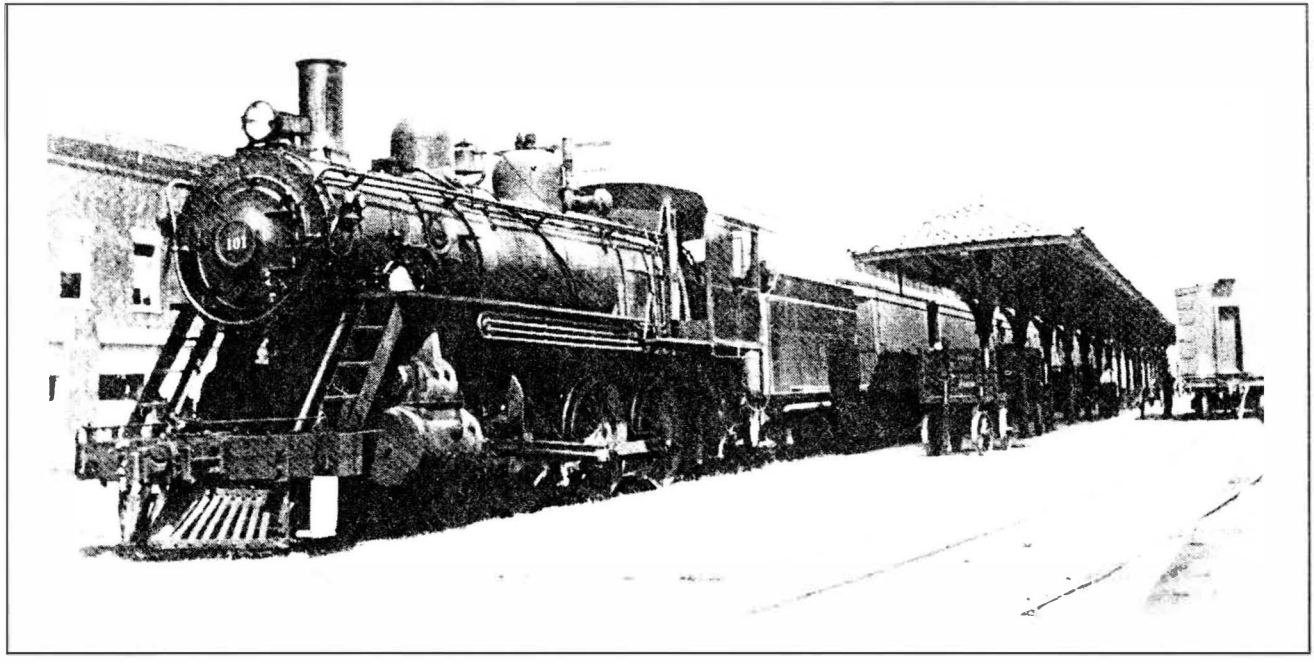
Given the pervasive legal problems--and most likely the tax consequences--of revealing cost information and contractor details associated with the new station, it is not surprising that the railroads withheld as much information as they could.

In contrast, we have a wonderfully detailed account of the construction of the new station from start to finish. Construction proceeded at a rapid rate. The contract was let in June 1910 and by July of that year the paper reported:

> Work on the new Union Station is rapidly progressing. The large force of workers who are erecting this magnificent structure were busily engaged yesterday in laying the concrete floor for the basement of the building. (WJ, 7/19/1910)

In early October the ornate cast iron columns designed to support the roof of the long passenger sheds arrived (DJ, 10/4/1910). Note that these long passenger sheds that ran parallel to the track are perhaps the single most important defining characteristic of a passenger depot of that era. The sheds were designed to protect passengers in inclement weather. Originally more than 2,000 feet of these sheds were present at Union Station. One passenger shed extended along the existing railroad tracks next to and along the long axis of the station. N & S passengers used this shed. Another passenger shed began in front of the depot and ran along the north side of Queen Street toward the Neuse River. ACL passengers used this latter shed. Of course, the old ACL tracks were removed years ago. The current absence of these picturesque structures often prompts visitors--particularly older visitors--to comment that "the old building does not look like a train station." Fortunately the beautiful cast iron columns are still there, secure, and in storage. They await restoration and rebuilding so that once again their presence can announce to the world: "This is a train station."

The weather had been favorable for construction work



In 1937, Engine Number 101 waits alongside a freestanding passenger shed at Union Station. Note the tile roof on the shed. The building behind the steam locomotive is the old "Sewing Room" which was only recently torn down. (Prince, 1972)

and by November of 1910 the *Weekly Journal* announced

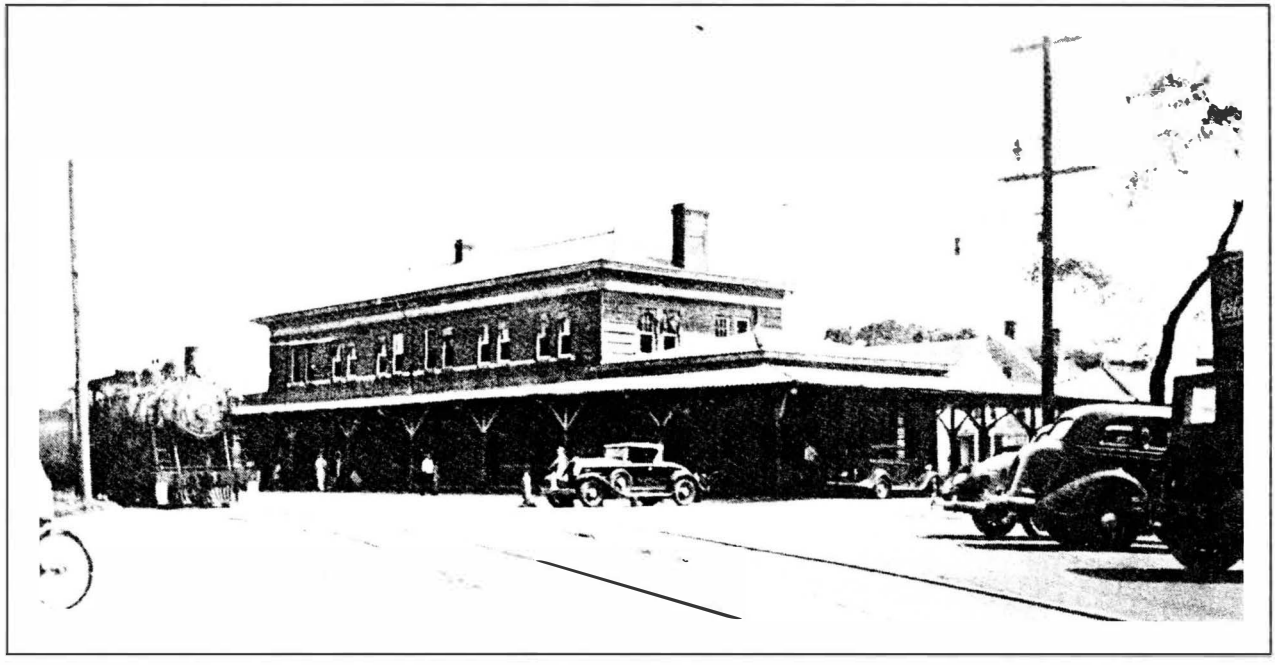
> practically all of the exterior work on the building has been completed and the concrete floors are now being laid. This will be followed by the painting and then the finishing touches will be added. (WJ, 11/11/1910)

By late December the large blackboards to display arrivals and departures of trains arrived (WJ, 12/31/1910), and ticket sales were slated to begin in the new station on January 2, 1911 (WJ, 1/1/1911).

Finally, in early January 1911, the station was open to the public (WJ, 1/6/1911). The entire building was illuminated for the occasion. Citizens could examine both waiting rooms (one white, one colored), and in the dining room Mr. Charlie Taylor was waiting on customers. New furniture was in place throughout, and the public could also visit the 12 brilliantly illuminated rooms on the second floor.

Current Status of Union Station

Union Station served New Bern well through two world wars and a terrible depression. For more than 70 years, countless numbers of citizens shed tears as they left loved ones in New Bern by train for distant jobs, colleges, or military service. Many returned for joyous reunions with family at the old station. In 1910 virtually no one could have foreseen the demise of railroads as the dominant form of transportation, but ever so slowly autos and airplanes eroded railroad dominance. The last passenger train to come through New Bern was on March 31, 1950, according to Prince (1972). Norfolk & Southern used portions of Union Station for freight operations until about 1987. The Oakes Lumber Company used some of the upstairs rooms until 1989. Thereafter, the grand old building was totally abandoned.



Still thriving in 1937, Union Station is shown here with the attached passenger sheds. Norfolk Southern trains used the sheds on the west side of the station while Atlantic Coast Line passengers used the south (or Queen Street) passenger sheds. (Prince, 1972)

Until recently Union Station was a pigeon sanctuary of the first rank. New Bern's pigeons began to gain access through holes rotted in the eaves of the building or via broken windows even before the building was entirely abandoned. As a roosting place and a nesting location, the building obviously represented the best accommodations in town for this species. As a result, until recently much of the interior of the building was covered in several inches of pigeon droppings.

The New Bern Preservation Foundation became interested in Union Station shortly before railroad operations ceased in 1987. Over the ensuing years, the Foundation has maintained an interest in restoring the building, but lack of resources coupled with negotiation difficulties produced little in the way of tangible results until recently. Still, a good bit of restorative work has been accomplished by the Foundation. Most critical, the entire roof of the building was redone several years ago with a state preservation grant as well as gifts from concerned individuals. Plywood covers have been installed over all windows and doors, and volunteers cleaned the entire interior of the building. Most encouraging, there are several key factors that can make an authentic restoration of old Union Station a reality and a project that can be done without a huge amount of money.

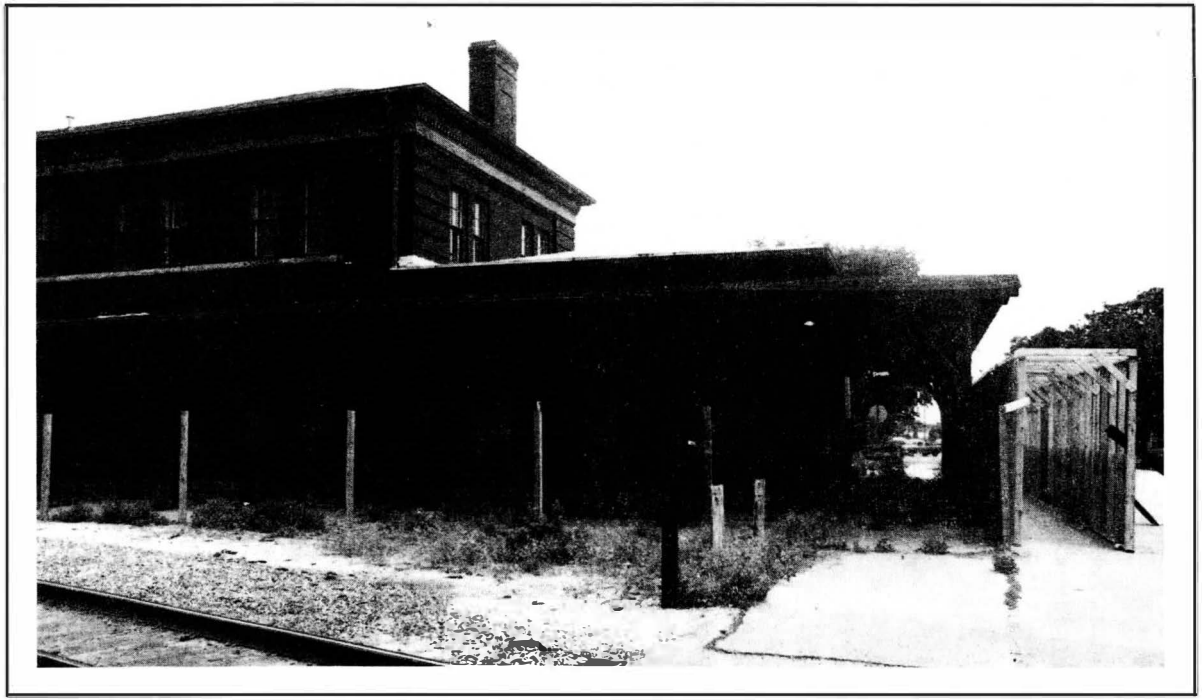
First, Union Station is essentially the same building it was when it was built in 1910. There have been no major changes in the initial design. The first floor still has two large waiting rooms (one for blacks and one for whites) and several small rooms for baggage, ticket areas, and offices. The second floor still contains offices and a center hallway the length of the second floor. Access to the second floor is by a single stairway. The building has a total of 7,500 square feet of floor space with 5,000 square feet on the first floor and the remaining 2,500 square feet on the second floor.

Second, it is possible that the long passenger sheds that once graced the exterior of the building can be re-

stored. The restoration of these passenger sheds is critical, because they clearly define the purpose of the building. Fortunately many of the elegant cast iron support columns for the passenger sheds are stored inside the building. Similarly, the striking mural that was displayed in the station for so long is still available. This beautiful oil painting is 4 feet by 15 feet in size and depicts the train stops from Morehead City to Goldsboro on the old Atlantic and North Carolina Line. According to Mr. Winslow Edwards, an unemployed and now unknown artist did the painting early in the depression. Mr. Edwards states that the artist was paid in daily rations of whiskey. The good news is that this painting is now undergoing restoration by a specialist in Greensboro, North Carolina, and will be ready to grace Union Station once again when the restoration is complete. A very recent report by the restoration specialist indicates the artist's first name appears to be Henri. Can anybody provide additional information on this artist? Original architectural and decorative elements like the columns and the painting described above are critical elements in any restoration project.

Third, as part of the initial steps for a restoration project, structural, brick, and foundation inspections have been completed recently. Happily there are no major structural problems. The estimated cost to make structural and exterior repairs is $350,000.

Finally, we note that the City of New Bern is actively negotiating with the North Carolina Railroad to obtain a long-term lease for Union Station. City officials now recognize that Union Station is the restorative lynchpin for River Station, the name for the entire area surrounding the old railway depot. Hence, a restored and functioning Union Station is the key ingredient in reclaiming and enriching this important New Bern neighborhood. A time line has been developed which provides for signed agreements by June 2001. Funding for the project will come from a grant administered by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Application for the grant will be made in



The New Bern Preservation Foundation did critical maintenance work on Union Station in the 1990s. This 1990 photograph was taken before the attached passenger sheds were removed. NBPF photo.

early 2002 with funds being available in early 2003. We hope that the entire restoration project can be completed by the fall of 2004. Whatever the date of completion, we intend to have an open house that rivals the first grand opening of the old station in early January of 1911. The Preservation Foundation and the City of New Bern welcome your ideas, your work, and any form of help you can contribute to the success of this ambitious and most worthy project.

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DEDICATION AND THANKS

This article is dedicated to the memory of Editor Charles L. Stevens. Mr. Stevens obviously loved New Bern and exhibited uncommon courage and leadership in his quest to see our town and this region flourish. Ninety-five years later, his articles and editorials remain a delight to read. Special thanks to Ms. Marea Foster, Reference Librarian, for her invaluable help.

WHERE DID GRAHAM TULL RICHARDSON GET HIS NAME?

Gordon N. Ruckart

After buying the Jerkins-Richardson House at 520 Craven Street in 1992 and reading Peter Sandbeck's description of the house in his compilation, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern and Craven County,* we wanted to know more. Capt. Thomas Jerkins had built the house in 1848-49 and held it as a rental almost to the time it was bought in 1901 by Robert Alonzo Richardson. During our research on the Richardsons, the name "Graham Tull Richardson" appeared. An obvious question was, "Where did he get the name "Graham Tull"?

Graham Tull Richardson (the first) was born in 1858, the son of John Heizer and Penelope Bogey Richardson. John and Penelope were owners and residents of Bellair Plantation on old Washington Post Road since 1838. The Bellair Mansion's Richardson connection continues today under the ownership of Mr. and Mrs. Graham Tull Richardson, III.

In *The Republican* newspaper of August 1843, Dr. John Graham Tull placed an advertisement announcing his services available at his office on Middle Street "next to Dr. Boyd's." One of his services was listed as "midwifery." The ages-old practice of naming a child after the family doctor was in play when John and Penelope were seeking a name for their eleventh child. Dr. Tull delivered the baby who was given the name Graham Tull Richardson.

Dr. Tull was the son of Eliza Graham (1794-1875) and Isaac Tull (1785-1823) of New Bern. In addition to son John Graham, they had a daughter named Harriet. After

Isaac's death in 1823, Eliza married Craven Metts, the son of Frederick Metts, Jr., and his wife Polly Burton.

Eliza Graham had an illustrious lineage. She was the daughter of Dr. Chauncy Graham, Jr. (1754-1800), who traced his mother's ancestry to Chauncy de Chauncy of Canci near Amiens, France. It seems this Chauncy went to England in 1066 with William the Conqueror. Eliza's father's ancestry can be traced to William de Graham who obtained lands from David I, King of Scotland, in 1124.

The first Chauncy to arrive in America was the Reverend Dr. Charles Chauncy (1592-1671), who was born in Hertfordshire, England. He arrived at Plymouth in 1638 and pastored churches in Plymouth and Cambridge. He was appointed president of Harvard College in 1654. His wife, Catherine Eyre, was the granddaughter of John Still, Bishop of Bath and Wells, England.

Charles and Catherine Chauncy's youngest son Israel (1644-1703) was born in Scituate, Massachusetts. He is second on the list of founders of Yale College and was elected president of the college in 1701 but declined the honor. Israel and his wife Mary Nichols had a son named Isaac (1670-1745), who graduated first in his class at Harvard College in 1693. Isaac was ordained in 1696 and ministered for almost 49 years. It was Isaac and wife Sarah's daughter Abigail (1701-?), who married the Reverend John Graham, the second son of James Graeme 9th of Garvock, Scotland, and his wife Amelia, daughter of Sir Robert Moray. The Reverend Graham was a direct descendant of Sir William Graham (11th generation) and his wife Princess Mary, daughter of Robert III, King of Scotland, who were the ancestors of the Dukes of Montrose. John Graham (1694-1774) graduated from the University of Glasgow, then studied theology in Edinburgh and was ordained for the ministry there. He emigrated from Ireland to Boston in 1718, settling first at Exeter, New Hampshire, where he pastored until 1722 when he moved to Stratford, Connecticut. After 10 years there he was named the first minister of the Southbury Church in Woodbury. He died

and is buried in Woodbury.

John and Abigail Chauncy Graham had nine children: John (graduated from Yale in 1740), Robert (no data), Chauncy (graduated from Yale in 1747), Andrew (died in 1785), Elizabeth (married Daniel Bull in 1744), Love (married John Brinkerhoff in 1755), Sarah (born in 1735, died young), Abigail (born in 1737, died young), Richard Crouch (graduated from Yale in 1760), and Abigail (married John Hinman).

Son Chauncy (1724-1796) married Elizabeth Van Wyck in 1746. He served as Chaplain of the Colonial Forces in the Province of New York in the expedition against Canada in 1760.

Chauncy and Elizabeth's son Chauncy, Jr. (1754-1800), married Sarah Merwin (1760-1799), daughter of Lieut. Miles Merwin and wife Mary Talcott of Durham County, Connecticut. He served during the Revolution as surgeon in the hospital detachment, New York Troops, joining the militia at Fort Edward on October 10, 1776. He practiced medicine in Connecticut and New York, moving later to Virginia and finally to Murfreesboro, North Carolina, in 1788. He died there in 1800.

It was Eliza, the daughter born in Murfreesboro in 1794 to Dr. Chauncy and Sarah Merwin Graham, who married Isaac Tull on February 1, 1814. And it is their son who became Dr. John Graham Tull of New Bern. Dr. Tull married Julia West Hollister on March 11, 1843. Julia was the daughter of William Hollister, the prominent New Bern ship owner and merchant, and his second wife, Julia Hollan West, whom he married in 1817. (Hollister's first wife died before he came to New Bern in 1801 from Lyme, Connecticut; his second wife died in 1827 after bearing three children. His third wife Janet Taylor, who bore him two children, was the daughter of another prominent New Bern trader Isaac Taylor.)

Dr. John Graham and Julia West Tull later moved to Philadelphia. Their four children were Julia J. Tull (1848-1934, the only family member buried here in Cedar Grove

Cemetery); Isaac Tull, who lived in Anniston, Alabama; Dr. W. (or M.) Graham Tull of Philadelphia; and H. G. Tull of Staunton, Virginia.

SOURCES

Genealogy compilation from John Mitchell. Copy available in the New Bern-Craven County Public Library.

Visits with the Richardson family and use of family Bibles and other papers.

NAT AND THE YANKEE SOLDIERS
PLUS
MIZ FANNY'S RECIPE
FOR EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA BARBECUE

Sylvia Whitford

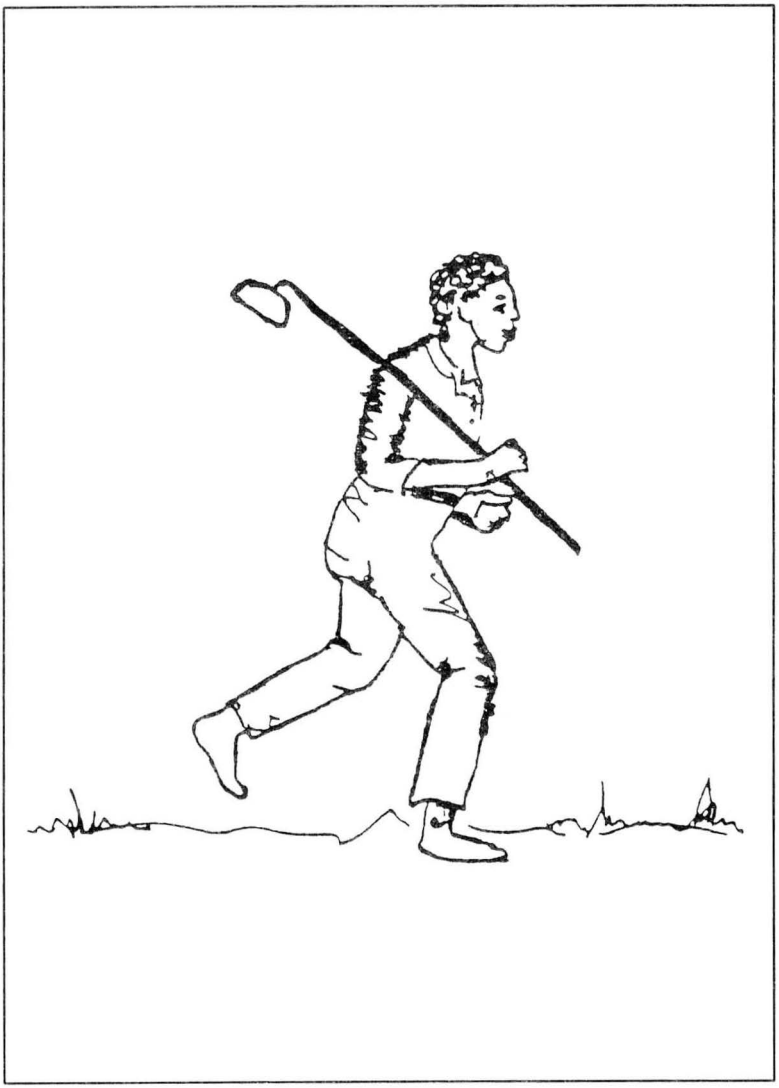
Editor's note: This article was published privately by the author and distributed to the Whitford family and friends about a year ago. Ms. Whitford works part-time for Tryon Palace and resides in New Bern.

The following account is a tale about Mr. David Dunn and his trusted servant Nat, who lived and worked in Caton, North Carolina.

During most of the Civil War, New Bern was a well-fortified outpost for the Union Army. Frequently Union troops traveled through Caton, a loose-knit settlement of families who eked out a living from the land. Many of the families who lived there had farmed their land since before the Revolutionary War. Caton was located 12 miles from New Bern on the road to Core Point, where the ferry to Bath was located.

There is always work to be done around a homestead, and this day began like many others: David Dunn was working around the barn, and Nat was plowing the field behind the house.

Mr. Dunn heard the faint clop of soldiers' horses and noticed their dust well before they came into view. He put down his tools and went to the front porch to wait. He dreaded the encounter to come. "Yankees comin', Miz Fanny," he called to his wife. Mrs. Dunn was preparing dinner. She began to cry softly. Mr. Dunn opened his Bi-



Nat.

ble to read a soothing passage.

When the troops arrived at the farm, one of the soldiers stepped carefully across the cornrows and told Nat he was a slave no longer. "Unhitch the mule, boy, and come with us."

"Mr. Dave ain't gonna lak dat," said Nat.

"Get on the mule, boy, I'm telling you you're free, and you're coming with us to Blounts Creek."

Instead of jubilation over his freedom Nat was frightened out of his wits. He didn't want to leave the place he called home. But the soldier insisted, and finally Nat obeyed. Nat and the mule sailed across the fence when the Yankee slapped Maud on the rump. Mr. Dunn sadly watched Nat and Maud ford Little Swift Creek with a splash. He last glimpsed them going down the road at a fast clip with the soldiers.

A month or so later this same troop was returning to New Bern from Fort Hill. Nat was still traveling with them. It seemed to Nat he had exchanged one master for another.

They were travelling after dark; no moon to light the way as they neared the community of Caton. About three miles from the farm, Mr. Dunn kept his hogs hidden in a secret place in the dense woods (in the event a group of marauding soldiers happened by). Every evening before he went away, one of Nat's chores was to ride Maud to this hidden spot, feed, and water the hogs, and return home by moonlight.

On this dark night, as the troops approached the concealed path through the woods, the mule quietly turned aside and made her way to the hog pen just as she had so many times before. Nat rolled his eyes skyward and murmured to himself, "Thank you, Lord Jesus, thank you." He hardly breathed lest the soldiers notice his absence.

Nat spent the rest of the night silently huddled in fright near the hogs. With first light, long after the soldiers had gone, Nat swung up on Maud and cautiously took off

for home. When he arrived at the farmhouse, it was hard to tell who was happier, Nat to be home or Mr. David to have his trusted slave and friend back.

POSTSCRIPT

Mr. Dunn later sold his small plantation to a neighbor Mrs. Lewis D. Whitford, whose husband died on their dining table in 1891 during an operation for appendicitis. The land is still owned today by the Whitford family.

There is no record of what Mrs. Dunn was preparing in her kitchen when the Yankee troops arrived, but it very well may have been pork barbecue, a dish served often in eastern North Carolina at that time, a southern custom that has spanned the years.

The ingredients have been updated here so that you may prepare and enjoy this delectable dish, where pork is transformed into mouth-watering barbecue.

THE RECIPE

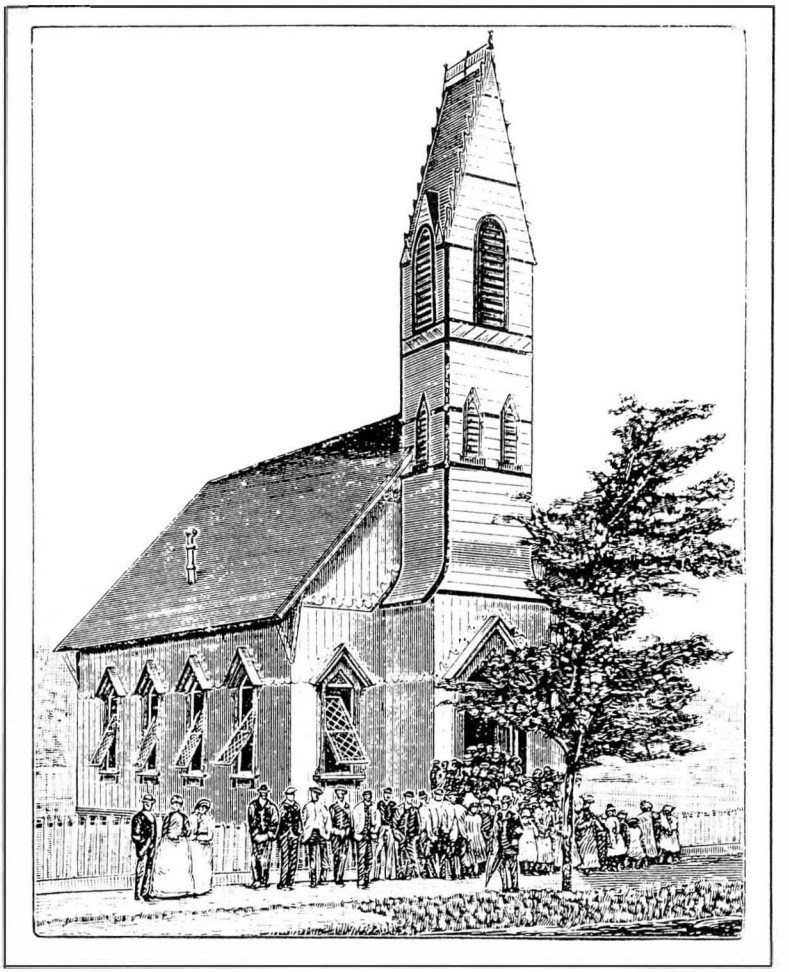
Ingredients for the sauce:

½ gallon apple cider vinegar
¼ cup brown sugar
¼ cup red pepper flakes
2 fluid oz. Tabasco Sauce
1/8 cup ground black paper

Roast one or two fresh pork shoulders, weighing about six pounds each, at 250 degrees for five or six hours. The meat should be very tender, literally falling off the bone.

Transfer the meat to a large platter or bowl. Remove and discard all the skin and fat. Chop the remaining lean meat into small pieces and, while the meat is still warm, add two teaspoons of salt and two cups of sauce per shoulder; mix well.

Yankees have been known to serve barbecue on crackers, but Southerners fork it down with fried cornbread and slaw. However you choose, it is a delight to the palate you'll never forget.



Ebenezer Presbyterian Church of 1881. (Vass, 1886)

EBENEZER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Mary Brigham

The end of the Civil War brought many changes to our area. Among these was the beginning of independent black churches in New Bern and in James City. Not that there had not been black congregations before. It had been tried but not too successfully. Now, however, with the black population free and independent there was a new desire for independent black churches. Among these was the present-day Ebenezer Presbyterian Church.

For many years there had been black members in First Presbyterian Church. It was in 1878 that some of these people decided to "step out in faith." On November 24, 1878, Ebenezer Presbyterian Church was organized under the direction of the session of First Presbyterian Church with the Reverend Lachlan C. Vass and Elders George Allen and William Hollister. The Reverend B. B. Palmer, who had helped with the organization, was the first minister. There were 11 charter members: John Randolph Sr., John Randolph Jr., Caroline Barham, Lavinia Willard, George H. White, Julius Willis, Caesar Lewis, William O. Randolph, Jane Coats, L. Palmer, and W. W. Lawrence.

At the same time three ruling elders were elected for the new church: John Randolph Sr., Julius Willis, and George H. White. Mr. White was one of the most prominent men in the area. He had graduated from Howard University in 1877, settled in New Bern and studied law under William J. Clarke. He soon embarked upon a distinguished political career, being elected to the senate in 1884 and later elected to the office of District Solicitor. *The New Bern Journal* characterized him as being "probably the

ored lawyer in the State and is a man who sustains a good moral character in this city."

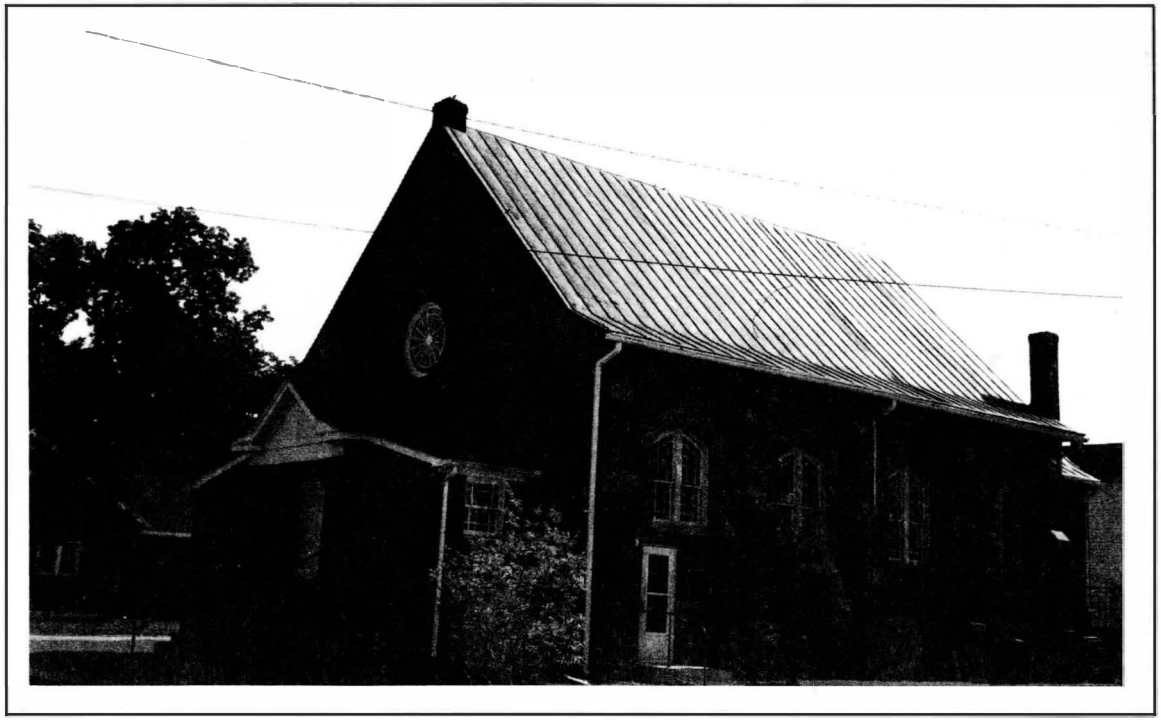
The Reverend Palmer soon retired and was replaced by the Reverend A. A. Scott, who served for the next ten years. The written history of the church states that

> with the earnest efforts of the members of Ebenezer, the generous aid of First Presbyterian Church, the many good friends in New Bern and other places, a beautiful frame building was erected on Pasteur Street, near the Railroad Station.

Total cost for the church and lot was about $1800. Additional work was done later bringing its value to $2500. William O. Randolph, a charter member, drew the plans and oversaw construction of the building.

The church was a frame building with board and batten siding. The windows, of stained glass, had triangular window heads in approved Gothic style with elaborate sawn work hoods. There was a distinctive gable roofed bell tower sheathed with horizontal boards. The tower boasted a silver bell sent from England to a church in Philadelphia who gave it to Ebenezer. Unfortunately, during a severe storm, the steeple and bell were blown down, and the lovely bell was broken.

The church and adjacent manse on Pasteur Street served the people for over 40 years. Then in 1922 tragedy came in the form of the Great Fire while the church was under the leadership of the Reverend O. E. Sanders. Now New Bern had had fires ever since its founding in 1710, and each time the city had tried to improve with more stringent building codes and fire safety measures. No doubt the city fathers thought they had matters under control by this time. This fire has been well reported elsewhere, and we need not say more than it started December 8, 1922, at the Rowland Lumber Company, in the northern part of the city. By the time it was finally brought under control, it had consumed 1000 homes and businesses, with



EBENEZER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IS KNOWN AS A FRIENDLY CHURCH. NBPF photo.

costs of over $2,000,000. Three thousand people were left homeless.

The church and parsonage were directly in the path of the fire as it swept south and west. Many members lost their homes in this horrible conflagration. But imagine their sorrow to discover that their beloved church had also been destroyed. To lose a home was bad enough, but not having any place to gather as children of God was a blow beyond understanding. Many could not reconcile their plight and moved from town, hoping for a better life elsewhere.

After the fire, First Presbyterian came to the rescue by offering the use of its religious education building for church and Sunday school while the congregation decided what to do. Later they donated hymnbooks, literature, and seats for the newly established Sunday school.

A new church was built in 1924 on the corner of Bern and Cedar streets. It is known as the friendly church on the corner. The architect and builder was H. F. Sutton, member of the Trustee Board of the church. Many people donated not only money but also labor. For example, the steps, porch, and one day's labor were given. Pianos were given for the sanctuary and Sunday school. The new building cost more than $10,000.

The new church of brick is in the Gothic Revival Style. It has the steeply pitched roof and the gabled entrance common to this style. The windows show characteristic arched lintels trimmed with stone. In November of 1997 Ebenezer Church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A plaque near the front door was installed in February 1998.

In the period of 1974 to 1980, when the Reverend Robert Johnson became pastor, many renovations to the church were carried out. The sanctuary was carpeted, new varicolored windows were installed, indoor bathrooms were built, the church was repainted, and an oak baptismal font was donated in honor of Elder Hester Butler by her sister Elder Martha Robertson.

Since his coming, Pastor Johnson has put his emphasis on Christian outreach and has involved the church in the community. He has been instrumental in organizing an Interdenominational Evangelism Team, a group made up of members from different churches who meet regularly for Bible study. He invited Religious Community Services to use the church's basement for the temporary soup kitchen until they could build their own building.

The people of Ebenezer say that their church was built and then rebuilt "to establish a home base for the future generation, to fellowship, to serve, to be a beacon light in the community and to lift up the name of Jesus."

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BOOK REVIEW

George Henry White: An Even Chance in the Race of Life, by Benjamin R. Justesen. (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 2001. xxii, 471 pp. $45.00)

This biography of the last African-American to serve in the U. S. Congress who had been born in the era of slavery will be of interest to New Bern history buffs and others. George White's professional life began in New Bern where the open involvement of the relatively prosperous black community in the life of the city undoubtedly was favorable to the intelligent and ambitious young man. The author Benjamin R. Justesen began this work 25 years ago when, as a reporter for a North Carolina newspaper, he was given an assignment to write a piece on George White. This sealed his interest in White, and he continued to work on the biography on a part-time basis, but full time for several years more recently.

The picture of George White that emerges is a forthright man of great integrity, ambitious, dedicated to service as a teacher and principal, and as a lawyer dedicated to even-handed justice for all. In his four years as a U. S. Congressman there was an increasing focus on attempts to protect the rights of black people as the nation slipped into that tragic retrogression which we characterize as Jim Crow.

Justesen's genealogy of George White provides a rich description of the interrelationships among free blacks, slaves, and whites in the remote farm and forestland of Columbus County. His study leaves open the possibility that the historical marker on Broad Street could be technically correct – that he was "born into slavery" in 1852 – but

shows with certainty that he was raised and lived as a free black in an economically secure farming family. His stepmother Mary Anna Spaulding (the only mother he ever referred to) and his father Wiley F. White were both free blacks.

George White's early education was fragmentary, but a diploma from Whitten Normal School in Lumberton and a recommendation from its director David P. Allen enabled his entrance into the recently opened Howard University in Washington, D. C. In May 1877 he came to New Bern with a certificate from Howard, but not a degree, to be principal and teacher at the public school for blacks. He soon took on similar responsibilities in the parochial school for blacks operated by First Presbyterian Church. He began "reading law" under retired Judge William John Clarke and was admitted to the bar in 1879 as the only black in a group of 30.

White began his family in New Bern, marrying Fannie Randolph in February 1879; their daughter Della was born the following year. Justesen reports that they lived in a middle class black neighborhood on Pasteur Street one block from Queen Street—a neighborhood that was obliterated by the historic fire of 1922. New Bernians may recognize an error in the description of the house that George White built on Johnson Street in 1890, that it was ". . . an impressive twelve room house." This erroneous description of the modest six-room house is drawn from a biographical dissertation at Howard University by George Reid in 1979.

The general method of the biography is to intersperse personal information among extended and detailed descriptions of the political conditions and machinations that surrounded the career of George White. This reviewer suggests that readers may find the political material more meaningful if they read the final chapter early, particularly Justesen's broad conclusion (p. 421):

Ultimately, he had not succeeded in politics because

> he could not compromise when circumstances required it; his pride had been the great stumbling block, the pride of a warrior whose defeat is certain but who fights on for the noble cause.

The reader can then test this conclusion against the totality of the description of the man and the political context.

Benjamin Justesen's description of George Henry White the man and his detailing of White's career as teacher and widely respected lawyer, single terms in the N. C. House and Senate, and his eight years as solicitor for the Second Judicial District, as well as two terms in the U. S. House of Representatives is a tribute to a worthy man whose service had fallen into obscurity. It is also a signal contribution to the history of the era. The author judges George White to have been a failure at politics because of the absence of substantive legislative accomplishments. In the North Carolina legislature his emphasis was on education, proposing a bill which would have increased the mandatory education requirements. In the U. S. Congress his most notable effort was to make lynching a federal crime. Neither measure passed during his terms, but did pass in later years. In Congress the tide of history largely reduced his efforts to fighting a rearguard verbal defense for the welfare of his race.

After leaving Congress in 1901 George White remained in Washington for a few years in law practice while hoping for an appointment to a government job, but his prospects for this were reduced by the assassination of President William McKinley. After the death of his third wife Cora Lena Cherry, originally from Tarboro, North Carolina, who had been in ill health for years, White moved to Philadelphia. (His first two marriages were very brief, both wives succumbing to sickness.) In Philadelphia he continued his law practice and established one of the first banks for black people in that city. White also established a settlement of some 2000 acres in New Jersey for blacks. The settlement was soon named Whitesboro. He

died in Philadelphia on December 28, 1918.

A full biography of White these many years after his death in 1918 was made doubly difficult because he left no collection of personal papers. The 14-page bibliography is testimony to that difficulty and also shows something of the methods of the task. It includes histories, newspapers, all kinds of public records and documents, biographies and personal papers of other people of that era. In short, by covering all available material that was likely to have some mention of George White, a remarkably full picture of the man and the context within which he lived and worked has been drawn. The extensive bibliography and details contained in the many footnotes will be useful to others who may wish to flesh out other aspects of the tragic era in which the Jim Crow retrogression frustrated the career of George Henry White, and largely reversed what had been gained by the Civil War at a cost of 600,000 lives.

Duncan A. Harkin