

WENDELL, WAKE CO, NC

) Zebulon Record THUR 20 APR 1995 Zebulon, NC

Future auto sales lot has a history

By ANDREW SAUR

Gold Leaf Farmer Staff Writer

The George Scarborough farmhouse, once the site of the now-defunct Eagle Rock post office, had been home to four generations of the Wendell family, but the house that stood for 150 years and was still owned by the family has given way to progress.

At the southeast intersection of U.S. 64 and U.S. 64 Business, three miles west of Wendell, the Scarborough house was recently torn down to make way for the Gill Buick dealership that's moving there from Zebulon.

One of George Scarborough's descendants, Knightdale's Mary Pair, lives a short distance from the home.



Farm additions

Contributed photos

Over a century, a kitchen, a smokehouse (above) and a dairy were among the additions to the Scarboro farm.

I. George Scarborough

A. Eli Scarborough

1. Mary Candace Scarborough & 1961

m & l) - - -

a. - - - ♀ m & l) - - Pair

b. - - - ♀

c. - - - ♂

|| A granddaughter = Candace - - m & l) - - Tanque

Eagle Rock, Wake Co, NC
Wendell, Wake Co, NC

"It was my home. I have many memories of it," Mrs. Pair said. "It was a gathering place for the family."

The house was probably built in the 1840s or 1850s, according to a survey done by Kelly Lally, a Wake County planner.

The farm included "a two-story farmhouse, an outstanding ensemble of 19th-century domestic buildings and numerous barns," Ms. Lally wrote in "The Historic Architecture of Wake County," a book detailing her survey of about 2,000 Wake County buildings.

George Scarborough, a shoemaker, bought 290 acres between Marks Creek and Buffalo Creek in 1837 and later built the Greek Revival-style house on the land.

"The Scarboroughs were devout Missionary Baptists and members of the local Hephzibah Church. Scarborough was active in the Eagle Rock Masonic Lodge from the 1840s to his death in



The way it used to look

These old barns have given way to an approaching auto dealership.

1892," the survey states. He ran the post office from his home from 1874 to 1878 and was a justice of the peace, the survey said.

Eli Scarborough inherited the farm when his father died. He ran the post office from 1886 to 1914. He farmed tobacco, preached and taught Sunday School at Hephzibah and was the director of the Bank of Wendell, according to the survey.

Eli Scarborough was also a prominent politician, representing Wake County in the state House of Representatives from 1909 to 1911 then joining the county commissioners from 1911 to 1923. One of his grandchildren, Candace Tongue, followed his political lead and was the mayor of Wendell from 1979-1988.

When Eli Scarborough died, he passed the home to his only daughter, Mary Candace Scarborough, who left it to her three children when she died in 1961.

Mrs. Pair, one of the owners, moved from the house in 1956 when she got married, and for the last 25 years she and her sister in Raleigh and brother in Kansas City have rented the home.

Despite the years of wear, the house was still in good decent condition. "It was not bad. It was not in the best of shape, but it was

still home," Mrs. Pair said last week.

The home was significant to the family, Mrs. Pair said, but it was no longer practical to keep it.

"The three of us owned it, but not any of us were going to go back there to live," she added. And although George Scarborough's great-grandchildren would have liked to see the home preserved, Mrs. Pair admits the price she received from the Leith automobile dealership would have been tough to match.

Because of its historical and architectural significance, the property was on the National Register's study list, said Ms. Lally, who oversees the Wake Coun-

ty Historic Preservation Commission.

"It was definitely a worthy place," she said. Beginning with the three-year survey, Wake County has been working to preserve some of its significant properties for about six years.

Despite the loss of the Scarborough farm, Ms. Lally said the county has done well catching up with other areas that have been working on preservation for a longer time. The historic preservation commission began in 1992 and is the county's official body to identify, preserve and protect historical areas.

"The commission has done terrific things since they started,"

Ms. Lally said. The group of 11 county residents, including George Pleasants who represents eastern Wake, has successfully recommended six properties outside the Raleigh city limits designated as historic landmarks. Another seven sites within Raleigh have been successfully recommended.

County officials including Ms. Lally are also giving educational presentations to Wake County towns about the historic commission. The group has visited Knightdale and Wendell, and will visit Zebulon in May. For more information on the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission, call Ms. Lally at 856-6322.

WENDELL

Zelulow Record THUR 27 OCT 1994 Zelulow NC

Hinnant digs roots of family, Wendell

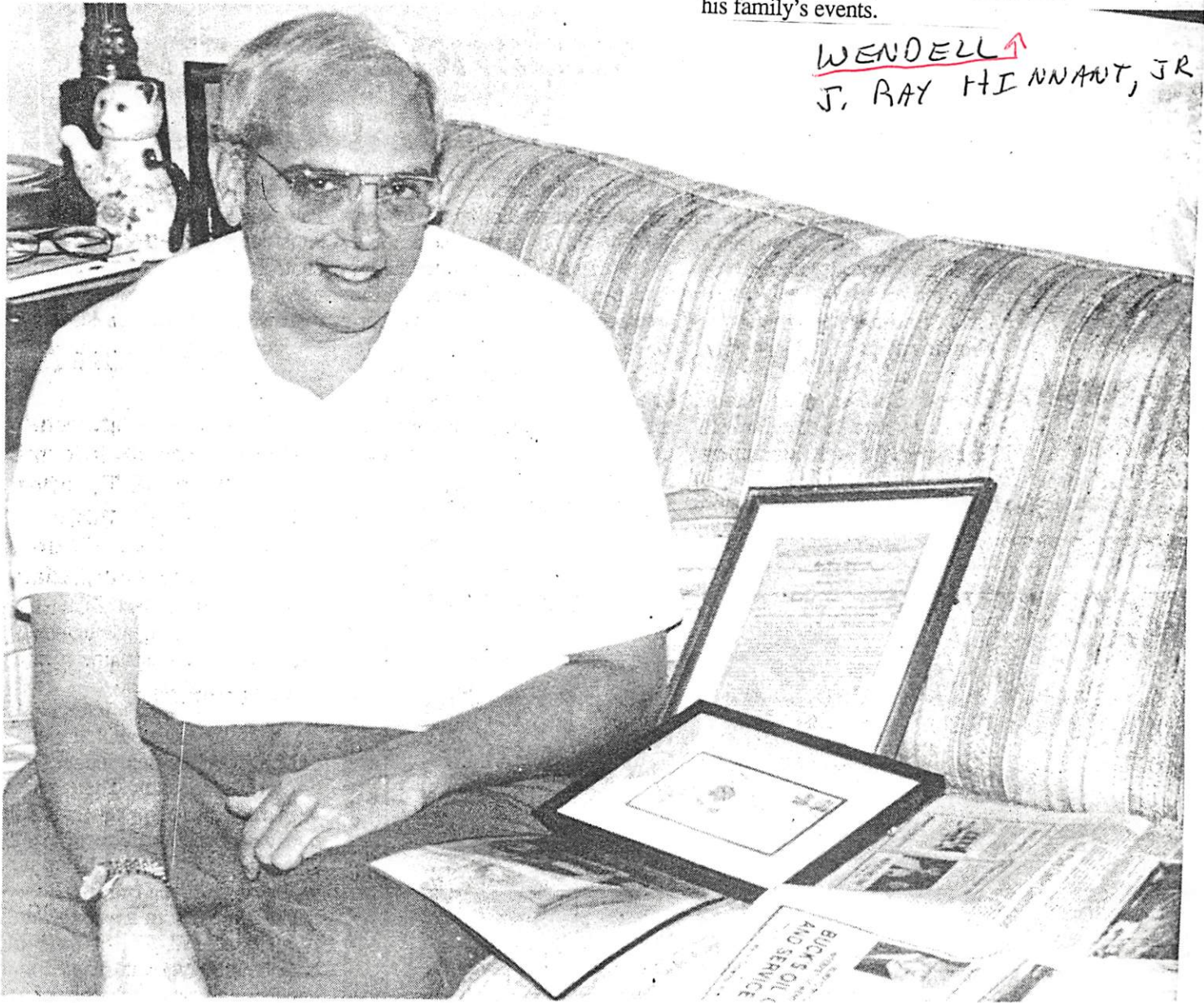
By ANDREW SAUR
Staff Writer

With a master's degree in history from East Carolina University, J. Ray Hinnant Jr. had planned to be a teacher of the subject. When the lifetime Wendell resident did not find teaching to his liking, he didn't give up — instead, he has

become the president of the Wendell Historical Society.

Hinnant's interest in history may come from a personal perspective. He is the third generation of his family to live in the town of Wendell, and the family was here long before the town ever existed. Hinnant has learned quite a bit about his family's events.

WENDELL ↑
J. RAY HINNANT, JR



Wendell historian J. Ray Hinnant displays some of the post office memorabilia, including the appointment letter for Bessie Now-

Photo by Andrew Saur

ell, one of the first postmistresses in 1904, that's part of the Wendell Historical Society's collection.



Eastern Wake unincorporated

This old map, which dates back to information from 1870, offers an early glimpse of eastern Wake County. At this time, Knightdale, Wendell and Zebulon did not exist, so the map uses homeplaces as landmarks.

Some of the places familiar today that can be identified on the map include Wakefield, Hepzibah (spelled "Hepsi-bah" on the map), Hopkins Chapel, Eagle Rock and Strickland's School House.

The map is reprinted here through the cooperation of Sue Holmes of Wendell.

MAP OF WAKE COUNTY

Drawn from Actual Surveys
by
FENDOL BEYERS,
County Surveyor.

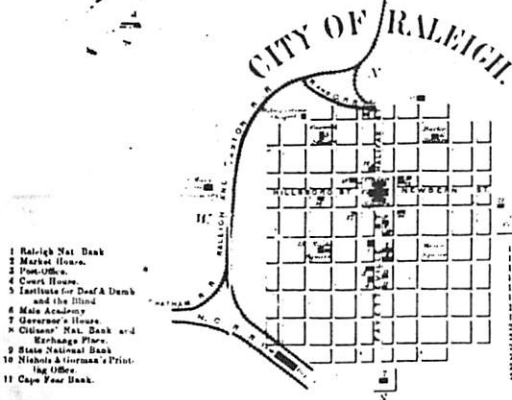
PUBLISHED BY
NICHOLS & GORMAN,
in connection with the Surveyor.

Scale: Two Miles to Inch.



Explanations:

County Lines	Pathways
Township	Rivers
Homeplace	Churches
Rail Roads	Mills
Roads	Houses



- 1 Raleigh Nat. Bank
- 2 Market House
- 3 Post Office
- 4 Court House
- 5 Institute for Deaf & Dumb and the Blind
- 6 Male Academy
- 7 Governor's House
- 8 Citizens' Nat. Bank and Exchange Place
- 9 State National Bank
- 10 Nichols & Gorman's Print. & Job Office
- 11 Cape Fear Bank
- 12 National Hotel
- 13 Yarnborough House
- 14 Exchange Hotel
- 15 Episcopal Church
- 16 Catholic Church
- 17 Presbyterian Church
- 18 Baptist Church
- 19 Episc. Parochial School
- 20 Baptist Female Seminary
- 21 Free School
- 22
- 23 Office of R. A. & R. R.
- 24 U. S. R. R. Depot
- 25 Presbyterian Parsonage

of the oldest churches here is Hephzibah, and my great-grandfather was a preacher at Hephzibah back in the

mid 1800s," Hinnant said.

Learning about the past is important for perspective, he added.

"I think it gives you an appreciation of where you are now by how you got here. I think you learn about how people lived in the past and the different problems they encountered and how they overcame them," he said.

Hinnant is not the only person to have an interest in his ancestry. About 60 people in this small town are members of the Wendell His-

torical Society, he said.

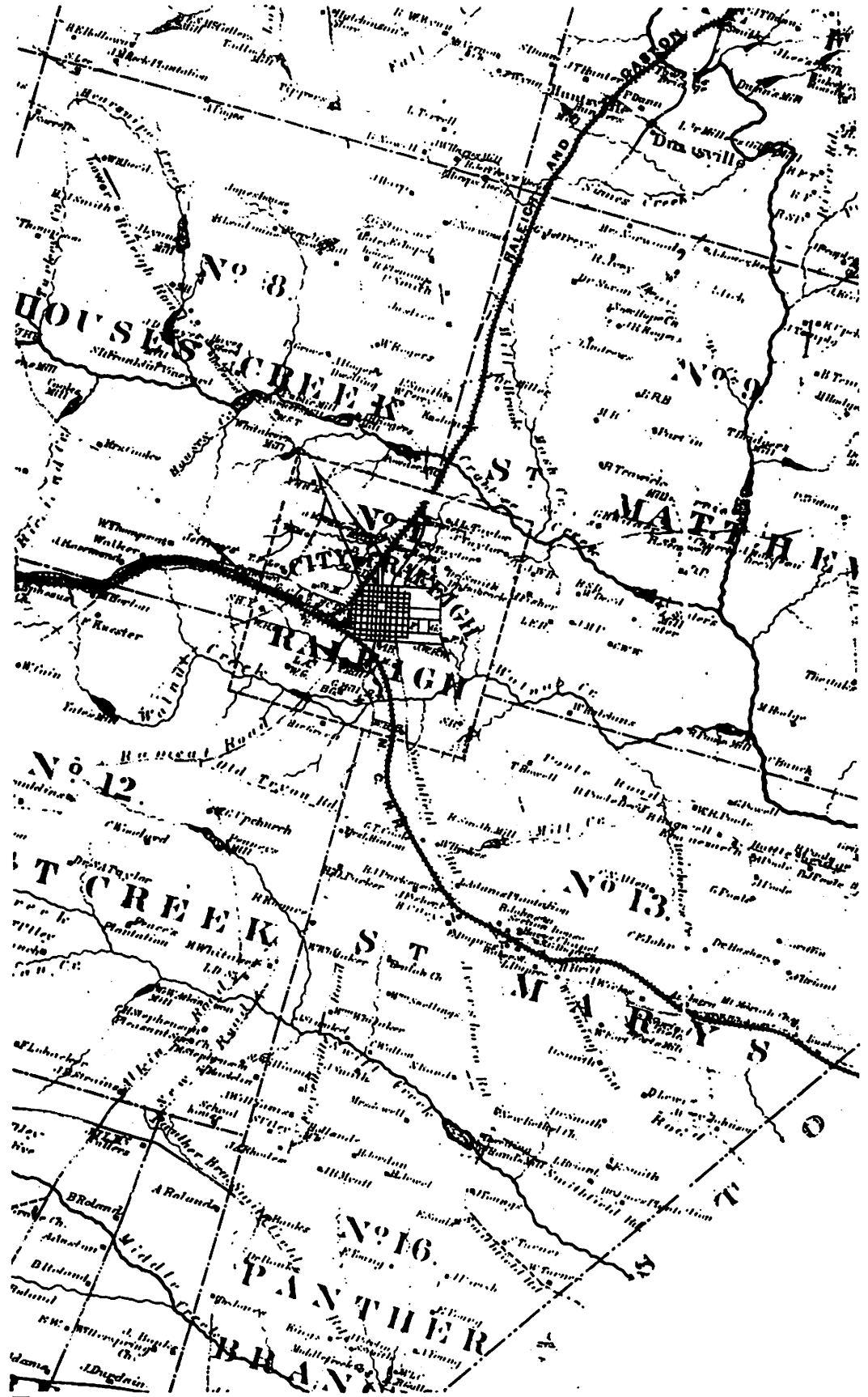
"The society was formed in 1974 with the purpose to bring together people interested in the history of Wendell and the surrounding territory," Hinnant read from the society's bylaws. "Also to discover and collect all materials which help establish and illustrate the history of this area and to preserve the material."

The society meets quarterly and often brings in guest speakers or goes on tours of historical sights. The group was also responsible for the restoration of the town's historic post office. Next on the society's list is a book on the history of Wendell.

"The Wendell Planning Commission was interested in having it, because they felt like in order to properly plan for the future of Wendell they needed to know where Wendell started from," Hinnant said.

Beginning in about 1850, the book will cover events from about 50 years before the town's incorporation in 1903 to the present. Because the town is only 91 years old, some Wendell residents have been around as long or longer than the town, and Hinnant said the society will talk to these folks to get firsthand stories.

Hinnant documents Wendell beginnings



The group will also gather what official records it can, although any original records from 1913 or before were destroyed in a fire, Hinnant said. Old diaries, manuscripts and newspaper clippings will also be used.

Despite the town's relative youth, Wendell is the home to

quite a few firsts in Wake County. The town has the first parent-teacher association, rescue squad and tobacco market in the county, Hinnant said. And the town had one of the first female postmasters in 1904, Bessie Nowell, and the society has her original appointment letter with the word "esquire" crossed out.

Hinnant expects the book project, which began about six months ago, to take two to three years to complete because most of the members of the historical society have jobs and can only research the book in their spare time.

In the meantime, Hinnant added, the group is actively looking for a place to put a museum to house all the important keepsakes it has found.

WAKE CO, NC - WENDELL

The Zebulon Record THUR 8 OCT 1987 Zebulon, NC

Wendell growth slow but steady in early years



Gold Leaf Farmer file photo

The original Wendell post office building was moved in early 1977 and is now preserved as a historic structure.

New municipal building, library highlight 1960s Wendell growth

(Editor's note: The following article on the history of Wendell is reprinted from a 1978 special supplement to the Gold Leaf Farmer. The author later became editor of the Gold Leaf Farmer.)

by David Roberson

The town of Wendell was incorporated on March 6, 1903. Before this date the community of Wendell had consisted mainly of the Wendell Preparatory School, established in 1891 by M.A. Griffin, and the post office at the store of J.R. Nowell, established that same year.

Although Griffin was appointed the first postmaster, he declined the position and Nowell served in his stead. The name Wendell was suggested by Griffin, who was an admirer of the poet Oliver Wendell Holmes.

The government of the new town consisted of a mayor and a board of commissioners with five members. They were to serve two-year terms of office. The first mayor was Burwell Baker, and the original commissioners were R.B. Richardson, C.Z. Todd, E.V. Richardson, J.W. Liles and T.J. Wheeler.

The town's growth was slow for the first few years. Some new businesses were started and a few families moved to Wendell. In 1906, however, a major event in the town's history occurred. This was the coming of the railroad. The Raleigh-Pamlico Line (later becoming the Norfolk-Southern) ensured the existence of the new town.

Besides opening up a means of transportation for the products of lumber and cotton mills, the railroad attracted many new businesses and citizens. Among these new citizens was R.B. Whitley, who moved to Wendell from Johnston County. Whitley became one of the town's leading citizens, operating a general store and engaging in real estate transactions. In 1907 he founded the Bank of Wendell, the first bank in the young town. He later served as a town commissioner for a brief period.

The coming of the railroad also brought a rather curious change to the town. The name "Wendell" was originally pronounced with the emphasis on the first syllable, as in the name Oliver Wendell Holmes. Train conductors and porters are given credit for changing the pronunciation by calling out "Wen-dell" (with equal accent on both syllables) as the train pulled into the depot. The revised pronunciation caught on and is used to this day.

By 1910 Wendell had grown to a town of 759 citizens and was entering a period of rapid expansion. A two-story brick school building was erected in 1911 and a portion of it is still in use. That same year saw the publication of the town's first newspaper, The Wendell Clarion. Originally owned by Scott Poole the paper changed owners and names until about 1920, when it became known as the Gold Leaf Farmer.

In 1912 the town's struggling telephone system was bought by Southern Bell for the sum of \$55 (Southern Bell's operators placed all local calls until the dial system was introduced in 1938.)

In 1913 the citizens of Wendell unanimously approved a \$15,000 bond issue for the installation of electric power. A municipally owned enterprise, the Wendell Light Co., provided the town's electricity by operating a plant on the Little River. Electricity was provided at night and on Wednesday afternoons. In addition to the electric plant, the town owned 43 acres of land and a grist mill on the river. These were usually rented to a town electrician, who had the responsibility of keeping the plant in operation.

A fire in 1913 completely destroyed the town offices and records up to that date. A \$100,000 bond issue for the construction of a new municipal building was approved three years later. In addition to the new municipal building, Wendell saw a good deal of residential construction at this time. Homes were built by recent arrivals

to the area and by some of the prominent citizens of the town. Among these new homes was one constructed by R.B. Whitley. Shortly after its completion, Whitley offered the use of the house as a temporary hospital for the town, which was hard-hit by the 1918 flu epidemic and had no permanent hospital nearby.

Heavy rains caused the Little River to flood in 1919, and the town's electric plant was destroyed. The town's property on the river was sold to Zebulon, and the Cumberland Rail Road and Power Co. became the source of electricity for a few years until its rather undependable diesel generators were destroyed by fire. Carolina Power and Light Co. then took over the task of providing Wendell's electricity, making it available 24 hours a day, in the summer of 1924.

The 1920s saw Wendell begin to modernize. Water and sewer facilities were constructed after the passage

of an \$88,000 bond issue. The first paving projects were conducted in Wendell between 1924 and 1926, with all of Main Street and Wilson Avenue being paved after approval of a \$110,000 bond issue. In 1925 the Wendell Recorder's Court was established, bringing judicial proceedings to the town for the first time and becoming a source of income for Wendell. (Wake County District Court sessions are still held monthly in Wendell.)

The depression of the 1930s was the first serious setback to growth. Although not as severely affected as some towns, Wendell still felt the pinch of these times. The town's population decreased from 1,239 to 980, and it was 1950 before Wendell recovered and its population reached 1,253. Some of the town's businesses were forced to close, but most were able to survive this period. The Farmers and Merchants Bank, established by pioneer educator Griffin, merged with the Bank of Wendell in 1931, and this

the Bank of Wendell to re-open.

In 1934 Wendell made its first major change in town government with the creation of the position of town manager. Wendell was one of the first towns in Wake County to use the town manager form of government. Russell Thompson, the first man to hold the post, served until 1962.

The Works Projects Administration (WPA) created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt was beneficial to Wendell. During the mid-1930s the WPA enabled the town to lay sidewalks, curbs and gutters along most of the streets. The sewage system was also expanded. For a brief period during the Depression, the town allowed those citizens unable to pay their water bills to receive 50 cents credit for each day they or their children would work on the streets.

The coming of World War II

brought an end to the Depression but the war years generally saw little change in the town. Wendell Mayor J. Harold Griffin was inducted into the U.S. Army in 1943 but returned to his position as mayor after serving his tour of duty. A new town well begun in 1944 failed and had to be replaced.

After the end of the war in 1945, Wendell began growing more rapidly and looking once more toward the future. New businesses began to appear again. The town adopted its first zoning ordinances in 1947. Another major paving project was begun in 1948 and completed the next year.

Wendell celebrated its 50th birthday with a three-day celebration in 1953. By now the town's population had attained its highest point to date, and in 1955 the sewer and water systems were expanded by the passage of two more bond issues.

struction of a new municipal building. Completed in 1963, the building housed the town offices, police and fire departments, and the local courtroom. (The fire department moved to a new station in the 1980s.)

The Wendell Public Library was also dedicated in 1963. The first town-supported library in the county, it had originally served as the town's Christian church. The building was donated to the town by the Mallie C. Todd family.

In the spring of 1967 the town

modernized its sewage system with the completion of a new sewage treatment plant.

The fall of 1970 saw another big event in the history of Wendell with the completion of the town's central business district project. Several years in planning, the project involved extensive revision and remodeling of the downtown area. Mayor C. Proc Dean and Town Manager Tom Larkins were ardent supporters of this project, which was completely financed by local

That same year Wendell Mayor J.R. Hester organized the Wake County Mayors Association and served as its first president.

1959 saw Wendell make a major change in its water system when a nearby rock quarry purchased by the town replaced the eight town wells as the principal source of water.

In 1961 Wendell voters passed a \$50,000 bond issue for the con-

struction of a new municipal building. Completed in 1963, the building housed the town offices, police and fire departments, and the local courtroom. (The fire department moved to a new station in the 1980s.)

The Wendell Public Library was also dedicated in 1963. The first town-supported library in the county, it had originally served as the town's Christian church. The building was donated to the town by the Mallie C. Todd family.

In the spring of 1967 the town modernized its sewage system with the completion of a new sewage treatment plant.

The fall of 1970 saw another big event in the history of Wendell with the completion of the town's central business district project. Several years in planning, the project involved extensive revision and remodeling of the downtown area. Mayor C. Proc Dean and Town Manager Tom Larkins were ardent supporters of this project, which was completely financed by local



Old site of the Wendell Post Office on Main Street