

# HISTORY OF CHERAW

BY MRS. ROBERT JENKINS 1967

Friday, Nov. 17 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of Cheraw as a town in 1917 and, although no special celebration is planned by present residents, there are many who look back on the past 50 years with fond memories.

It all began in 1906 when two railroad companies competed to build a railroad through the Arkansas Valley. Santa Fe completed the job and passenger service became a reality in and out of Holly each day, with freight service for beets being hauled to the Swink sugar factory. Many Valley farmers raised sugar beets and beet dumps were built every two miles along the tracks. Farmers hauled their beets to the dumps where they were loaded into freight cars for transportation to the sugar factory.

Arthur S Beymer, resident of Rocky Ford, owned 40 acres of land between Cheraw Lake and the railroad tracks, which he split into lots and sold at auction. People began building their homes and various business houses, and the town of Cheraw was born, so called by a Mr. Wiley who came here from Cheraw, N.C., and felt the name suited the area because of the lake located there. The word Cheraw means, "shining water".

The first grocery store in Cheraw was the Glace-Walters Grocery, owned by a Mr. Glace who moved his business from Center, a community two miles west of Cheraw, when he bought a lot in the new area, and entered into partnership with a Mr. Walters. It was in this store that the first post office was opened and Glace became its first postmaster.

Three more general merchandise stores were built shortly afterwards, and in 1907, a Methodist Church was built, with Chaplain Edwards as first pastor; followed by a brick school house in 1910, just north of the present school location; and a hay mill in 1911, which operated as an alfalfa mill until recently.

The church was destroyed by fire in 1955 and the townspeople immediately planned and rebuilt on the same foundation a much larger church. The school served only lower grades until 1921, when the district consolidated and high school and grade school was built, and in 1923 the first graduation ceremonies were held. Graduates at that time were Cecil Wade, Claude Rickman and Ada Thut. Wade still lives in Cheraw and works at the school. In 1959 the high school burned but was rebuilt and opened again in 1960.

Going back to 1913, Walter Painter built the hotel in that year and held a grand opening in 1914. Records show that 110 people attended the opening. The hotel is still in existence but is the private home of Neva Snyder today.

Other businesses added about this time were a pool hall, a livery stable, a shoe shop and the Santa Fe Depot, which is still in existence.

In 1915, a bank was built, called the First State Bank of Cheraw, with W.B. Moore as president, and listing a capital of \$10,000. The bank closed in 1925.

Also in 1915, Roy Kehl and Bob Young built a lumberyard and a garage called the "K & Y Garage, Don Paul's folks built a restaurant on one of the lots they bought at auction, and Dr. Hersom built and operated the drug store. Mrs. Young is still in residence in Cheraw and Mrs. Kehl lives on a farm just north of Cheraw.

In 1916, Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Houghton bought the drug store and, up until a few years ago when Mr. Houghton died, operated it together. Mrs. Houghton, who in 1966 was

awarded the Loins Club Good Service Award, still continues to serve people in the Cheraw community in the same capacity.

In 1917, Dr. and Mrs. Orville Pitney came to Cheraw, where he opened his office in the back room of the drug store, and remained until 1945.

Over the years, land north of the railroad tracks know as Kulp's Addition, was added to the town, and in 1917, it was decided to institute the articles of incorporation. All qualified voters held an election and Ed Deemer became Cheraw's first mayor, and six businessmen, W.B. Painter, Sherman Ball, A.M. Unruh, H. L. Liles, R. J. Goldsworthy and W. H. McKeoum, were elected to other Town Council.

L. H. Houghton became the first Town Clerk, a position he held for many years. At that time, the assessed valuation of the town was \$98,000 and in 1967, the assessed valuation had risen to \$467,000.

The present town clerk, Martha Shively, checked old records and came up with the first ordinance passed in the new town. It reads: "No horses, cattle, mules, asses, swine, sheep, goats or geese be permitted to run to loose on streets and no animal can be picketed on the street or in alleys or on any private property." Another ordinance of later vintage reads "A car or motorcycle may not be driven over 12 miles an hour through town". Violation of this ordinance carried a fine of not less than \$10 and no more than \$25.

Water had always been hauled from the artesian well in Center for use by Cheraw residents, and in 1917 a \$12,000 loan was floated to cover the cost of erection of a water tower and having a well dug. The water tower is still standing and other wells have been dug to supply the needs of the community. In 1967, four large filters were installed to filter iron out of the water.

Arbor Day was first observed on April 1, 1918, at which time all Cheraw residents brought elm and cottonwood trees in from the country and planted them along the streets in town. More than 100 of these 50-year-old trees still provide shade and lend beauty to Cheraw's streets.

Holbrook Lumber Co. suffered a severe fire in 1941 but was rebuilt and is now known as Holbrook Pump and Supply Co. The post office, which had been in the lumber and hardware building at the time of the fires, was moved to a grocery store owned by Mr. And Mrs. Bert Wade, since Mrs. Wade was postmistress at the time. At her death, Wade took over the job and upon his retirement, the job was passed on to Howard Wade, the present postmaster. A new post office was built and the grocery store changed hands with Mr. Guy Reynolds as owner. Mr. Reynolds died in 1967 and store was sold to Marion Hyder, who still operates the business.

Largest industry in Cheraw is the turkey processing plant. Charley Lyons, a native New Yorker, came to Cheraw in 1917, purchased a flock of 100 turkeys, fattened them mostly on grasshoppers and after they were dry picked and dressed, sold them to people in La Junta, Rocky Ford and Pueblo. Other farmers began raising small flocks and a turkey-picking shed was set up in back of the K & Y Garage.

Ralph Wadleigh became the first big turkey raiser, starting with 300 hens and increasing to as large a flock as 2,600 at one time. Eventually a turkey plant was built, known as Holbrook Turkey Growers Association, and a freezer plant came into existence in 1951 and a larger one in 1966. In 1967, the association sold out to Farmland Industries Inc., and this year 800,000 turkeys will have been processed by the end of the season.

Cheraw boasts a Co-Op feed mill and a Gooch Feed Mill, which supply feed to farmers, a new Catholic church has been constructed and a new Methodist parsonage has been added in the last year. Ren Wallace purchased the old Mexican colony property from the Holly Sugar Co., and five new modern homes are now located along the lakefront. Bill Stjernholm has built a large home in the north end of town and Ernest Stjernholm is in the process of building Cheraw's first apartment building. There is also a new firehouse with 15 volunteer firemen to man it.

A number of people are still living in the community who were around when the town began 50 years ago, including Mr. And Mrs. Robert Jenkins, J.F.Estep, Mrs. Eva Young, Ralph Wadleigh, Chris Hansen, Mrs. Houghton and Frank Houck.

Simon Schultz is the present mayor of Cheraw and members of the town council are Fannie Bosley, Howard Holter, Nick Jiminez, Harve Snyder, Fred Schaefer and Ernest Woodring.