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LIFE

In Cleveland County's Early Days

By MAMIE JONES

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Before Cleveland county was erected in 1841, out of territory formerly belonging to Lincoln and Rutherford counties, it took a citizen living in what is now Number Six township as long to reach his county seat as it now takes to go to California, flying by fast plane. It is 25 miles to Lincolnton and a little further to Rutherfordton. Over bad roads with creeks and rivers to ford, travelling with a horse or mule team was slow.

RUTHERFORD AND LINCOLN COUNTIES

Tryon county was erased from the roll of North Carolina counties in 1779 for several reasons. One was that the citizens did not want to hear mentioned the name of the arrogant Britisher, Governor Wm. Tryon, for whom the county had been named when established ten years previous. They despised him. Another reason was that Tryon covered too much territory (80 by 45 miles) for one county. Furthermore, the population had so increased in the area that it was advisable to divide the territory into two smaller counties, which were called Lincoln and Rutherford in honor of two outstanding Revolutionary War generals.

The established dividing line between these counties began at a point in the South Carolina line, running North through the village of Earl; thence North along the County Line Road, this side of Buffalo Creek; and thence North to the Burke county line.

Since Number Six township now extends to Buffalo Creek, some of the inhabitants of the area were residents of Lincoln county; while those living west of the County Line Road were residents of Rutherford county.

PENNSYLVANIA-DUTCH AND SCOTCH-IRISH

Since the immigrants who settled these two counties were forebears of many present day Cleveland countians, it is interesting to know where they came from.

"During the early years of the 18th century immigration from Pennsylvania into this state was heavy. These immigrants drove from Pennsylvania in wagons. Arriving in the Piedmont section of North Carolina they settled in colonies to themselves for protection and for social contacts.

"The Scotch-Irish came first, and a large colony of them settled in Rutherford county. The Germans — or Pennsylvania-Dutch — came soon after and settled in the vicinity of what is now Lincoln county.

"There are no records to show just when the first settlement was made in what is now Rutherford county. It appears there were white people living in that section around 1730. We know that Westminster, or Britain community, was settled prior to 1740. Little Britain Presbyterian church was established in 1768." (Quoted in substance from Griffin's History of Old Tryon.)

According to Sherrills "Annals"