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OLD LOVELACE BRIDGE, shown under construction shortly after the turn of the century. It connected Nos. 1 and 2 townships and was the result of faithful plugging by County Commissioner D. S. Lovelace who realized its necessity to make No. 1 township, south of the river, a real part of Cleveland county. This picture is the property of A. A. Alexander of Rt. 3, Union Rd., Gastonia, son of the

late Tom Alexander, who built the bridge. One span fell in during construction. Some people called it "crooked bridge" because it had a bend in the middle. For years it was the longest bridge in the county and the scene of many early picnics. A few years ago this was replaced by a new steel and concrete bridge, built by the State.

LIFE

In Cleveland County's Early Days

By MAMIE JONES

The prosperity of this outstanding county of ours — with its growing towns, its cities and its villages — was not attained in a day nor in a year. The foundations for our progress were laid by our forebears, now long since dead. And because we must not forget their names nor their deeds — I have written from time to time of persons of whom many of you have never heard.

MAJ. JOHN BISHOP HARRY

When, in 1841, (after the erection of Cleveland from portions of Rutherford and Lincoln counties) lots were sold off the 150-acre land-grant that was the beginning of the city of Shelby, Maj. J. B. Harry of Lincoln county served as auctioneer and cried the sale of the lots, giving his services for the benefit of the embryo village.

In auctioning these lots, Maj. Harry assured the buyers that one day Shelby would have a population of at least 500 persons. He was such a forceful, persistent auctioneer that the lots brought far better prices than had been anticipated. With this auspicious beginning land values have remained high in Shelby even unto this day.

John Bull Harry, as he was usually called, came to this section from Maryland. In 1835, he was elected to the State Senate from Lincoln county. The next year, in 1836, during the Texas revolution "a goodly number of men under the command of (Major) John B. Harry" set out for Texas to render assistance to the revolutionists. However, the North Carolina men did not arrive in Texas until after the victory at San Jacinto, and the establishment of the Republic of Texas.

Soon after his return to Lincoln county, where he had kept a tavern and occasionally worked at his trade of clockmaker and silversmith, he removed to a home he had built near Grover, where he had extensive farming interests and a number of slaves.

In 1844, he was elected a member of the special court, composed of five justices of the peace, whose duty it was to preside over the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions for Cleveland county for that year.

BELWOOD IN 1897

I have before me a special edition of the Cleveland Star published in 1897, which contains write-ups of many of the county's prominent citizens. In this paper

there is a full page article titled "Growing Belwood" and including stories about the village and some of its leaders and business men. The statements hereinafter enclosed in quotation marks are direct quotations from this article.

CAPT. LEM. J. HOYLE

About 1867, Capt. Lem. J. Hoyle (a grandson of Peter Heyl, the pioneer) moved from Lincoln county into what is now the Belwood community. There wasn't much there then except a cross-roads and a tannery, and a post-office called Black Rock, which name was later changed to Belwood. There Capt. Hoyle brought his family and established a general merchandise country store. Of him the Star article says:

"Few men in the county are more universally popular than Capt. Lem. J. Hoyle, founder and builder of Belwood. Capt. Hoyle has been identified with every progressive move in the county for the past thirty years, and his prominence and popularity as an orator of no mean ability is well known."

Capt. Hoyle's contributions to this county are too numerous to enumerate. The best known are:

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Service on the Board of County Commissioners for several terms; represented the county in the General Assembly, one term as a member of the House, and one term a member of the Senate; and two terms as Clerk Superior Court for Cleveland county. He was a leader in Methodist church circles, and was once elected by the Western North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to represent that conference at the meeting of the General Conference of the M. E. Church, South. Perhaps Capt. Hoyle's greatest contribution to this section was his co-operation with other associates in the Belwood community in the establishment of Belwood Institute, a preparatory boarding school running ten months in the year. County schools were operated only three

or four months each year, and this school provided educational opportunities for youths who would otherwise not have had them.

In 1898, when Capt. Hoyle was elected Clerk of the Superior Court for this county, he moved his family to Shelby. He was re-elected for a four-year term, and in 1906 was succeeded by his son, Frank L. Hoyle.

WILLIAM DICKSON LACKEY

Before leaving Belwood Capt. Hoyle sold out his store to Stamey Brothers and W. D. Lackey. The Stameys gave their time to their Fallston and Beams Mill stores, and Lackey managed the Belwood store, assisted by F. L. Hoyle, and R. A. (Bob) Hoyle.

"Mr. Lackey is a shrewd man, but his stern integrity is always persuasively potent", says the Star article.

In 1914, W. D. Lackey was elected sheriff of the county, and moved with his family to Shelby. He was re-elected, but ill-health forced him to resign in the middle

of his third term; and Hugh A. Logan succeeded him.

M. P. GANTT & COMPANY

"The tannery and harness shops of M. P. Gantt & Co., are a tower of strength — financially — for Belwood" says the article. "It is one of the oldest in the county. The tanners are M. P. Gantt, W. C. Gantt, and Henry Beam, colored. Harness, collars, and bridles are made by H. F. Jones and F. B. Ford, two expert workmen. John Bell is saddlemaker, and William Short & Co. . . . make collars by the job lot."

Melvin P. Gantt was killed in a railroad wreck near Chatanooga, Tenn., on September 25th, 1904, (or was it 1905?).

W. B. HOYLE & CO.

The firm specialty of W. B. Hoyle & Co. was horse collars and harness, although they operated also a tannery, grist mill and rock quarry. D. L. Hoyle was general manager; other employees were R. L. Williams, John Yount, Max Hoyle, and F. B. Weaver. D. H. Upton was manager of the rock quarry, and Lem London operated the roller mill and the grist mill.

The Belwood Shoe Company was also operated by W. B. Hoyle & Co., in connection with the tannery. They made shoes for men, women, boys and children. "They have been in business four years. F. W. Campbell is manager. J. S. Quinn and P. W. Bangle are the workmen. The capacity is twenty pairs of shoes per day. They have manufactured and sold 2500 pairs of shoes this year" (1897), says the article.

"More cotton is carried to the cotton gin of D. B. Alexander than to any other gin in this section," says the article. "He has two gins, and with three hands can gin twenty bales a day. He has a large saw mill and does a big business in shingles and lumber."

BABER & TOWERY

"This firm is composed of Messrs. B. A. Baber and J. B. Towery. They are general wagon and buggy manufacturers. They do repair work in wood and iron", says the Star article.

In 1905; B. A. Baber moved his family to Shelby. About 1907, he was appointed postmaster under the Republican regime, and served for 8 years. He was succeeded in 1916 by W. J. Roberts.

THOMPSON & GANTT

The advertisement of Thompson and Gantt indicates that they handled building materials and glass.

The article continues: "W. H. Thompson has one of the finest mica mines in the state. It is being worked regularly and good deposit of mica are found."

Just after the turn of the century W. H. Thompson moved with his family (his wife was Frances Hoyle, granddaughter of Peter Heyl, the pioneer) to Shelby, and established the W. H. Thompson Lumber Co. on West Warren St.

BELWOOD INSTITUTE

In the late 1880's residents of Belwood community felt the need for better school facilities. Several citizens co-operated to secure the services of a good teacher. Dr. Robt. E. Ware, recently graduated from college took over the school. Later, several buildings were erected and Belwood Institute was established. This educational institution ranked among the best of the preparatory schools in the state. The benefits to the community were immeasurable.

In 1897, this school was under the management of F. S. Aldridge and H. B. Craven, graduates of Trinity college. The board and tuition for the ten-months terms was from \$75.00 to \$100.00.

In addition to Craven and Aldridge the teachers were: Miss Sallie Nowlin, primary; Mrs. L. J. (Ella Round) Hoyle, music and art; and A. H. Littlejohn, book-keeping.

J. B. IVEY, OF CHARLOTTE

Although it is not mentioned in the write-up of Belwood, yet it is of interest, locally, to know that J. B. Ivey was, for a number of years, in business at Belwood. In the early 1880's he clerked in Capt. Hoyle's store. In 1885, he became a partner under the name of Hoyle & Ivey. In February, 1893, he was married to Miss Ella Gantt at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. P. Gantt, in Belwood.