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PROMINENT SHELBIANS LIVED HERE—Generally referred to as “the old McAfee house,” in earlier days, the home pictured above was one of the most interesting in the city because of the many important persons who have lived in it. The

house was built in the late 1850's by Augustus W. Burton and was located on South Washington street, a residential area that has produced some of the state's outstanding personalities. (Photo by McArthur).

LIFE

In Cleveland County's Early Days

By MAMIE JONES

When Shelby was laid off in 1840, the town limits were one-fourth mile each way from the Court Square. In 1849, these limits were extended to one-half mile each way. On all these Shelby streets there have lived citizens whose spheres of influence have been wide.

However, no area so small has produced so many outstanding personalities (or the progenitors of outstanding personalities) as has the small neighborhood on South Washington Street extending approximately two blocks north and two blocks south of the house pictured above. It is doubtful whether

in all of North Carolina there is another area of such small dimensions from which there have come so many citizens who have rendered important services in such varied fields of activities.

The house pictured above which, in earlier days, was generally referred to as “the old McAfee house,” is one of the most interesting in Shelby because of the persons who have dwelt within its walls.

AUGUSTUS W. BURTON

In the late 1850's Augustus W. Burton built this house, using a portion of the \$5,000 in golden eagles he had won in the Louisiana

lottery to pay for it. He would indeed be astonished if he could know the important Shelby people who have since lived there . . . including the (respective) mothers of certain important Shelby people.

The house was designed by a well known architect (I think his name was Gulon), and the extensive grounds were landscaped by a highly competent gardener. There was a beautiful Carolina cherry hedge around the yard, within which there was much rare shrubbery. At the time the above picture was made house and grounds

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had deteriorated greatly.

Mr. Burton and his wife, the former Julia Olmstead of Lincolnton, had lived in their new home but a short while when the War Between the States came, and Mr. Burton was elected captain of the Cleveland Guards, the first military company that went out from Shelby to fight for State's Rights and the Confederacy. He sold the house to Reese Roark who, with his family lived there for a number of years.

CLYDE ROARK HOEY

Reese Roark's daughter, Charlotte, married Capt. Sam'l A. Hoey. Their son, Clyde Roark Hoey, is one of the State's most prominent citizens. He is just now completing a six-year term as United States Senator, and will doubtless be re-elected this Fall.

Although his schooling was limited, his education is broad. When he was 16 years old he established the Cleveland Star, a weekly newspaper in Shelby, and before he had reached his 21st birthday he was elected, in 1898, as this county's representative in the legislature, and later served in the State Senate.

In 1936, he was elected Governor of the State of North Carolina, and during his four-year term was known as "the friendliest Governor."

He is one of the State's leading attorneys, and is frequently referred to as "the silver tongued orator from North Carolina." He is known all over the State as an outstanding Sabbath School teacher, and is prominent in the work of the Western North Carolina Methodist Conference.

EARLE McFARLAND

This young man who attained considerable prominence in governmental circles in Panama before his untimely death in 1932, was the son of Reese Roarks daughter, Belle, who married W. W. McFarland.

LeROY McAFEE

Col. McAfee bought the house from the Roarks. When the War Between the States came, LeRoy McAfee was practicing law in the eastern part of this State. He came back to Shelby, got a commission as Colonel and served during the War. During those humiliating days of Reconstruction from 1868 to 1874, following the crushing (not conquering) of the Confederacy, when the legally constituted officers of the State and Federal governments were intent on creating chaos instead of order and the Ku Klux Klan became a necessity, he is said to have been the Cyclops.

Col. McAfee was twice married. His second wife was a widow, Mrs. Eddins.

MISS MINNIE EDDINS

When Mrs. Eddins married Col. McAfee, her young daughter, Minnie Edins, lived with them in this house.

Miss Eddins was an accomplished musician. She taught voice and music at Shelby Female College. When she toured the state for a benevolent organization, giving concerts in a number of cities, the State papers referred to her as "the mocking bird of North Carolina."

She married W. Josh Roberts, and after her death he continued to live in the house. Later, his son, W. J. Roberts, Jr., sold the place.

J. A. ANTHONY

More than 40 years ago Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Anthony bought the house, and lived there for a number of years. Mrs. Anthony, who was quite artistic, remodelled the front, thereby changing its appearance, and making it most attractive.

Mr. Anthony was prominent in educational circles in the county. He served for fifteen years as County Superintendent of Instruction. He was also a lawyer, and in the late 1890's was elected as State Senator from this senatorial district.

GRAHAM ANTHONY

Their son, Graham Anthony, was 14 years of age when they moved there. Later, he was graduated from State College with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He now lives in Hartford, Conn., and by sheer pluck and perseverance has become president of the Colt Mfg. Co., the biggest firearms manufacturing company in the U. S. A. He is listed in Who's Who, and is generally rated as a millionaire.

THE WEBB-GARDNER HOME

In 1911, Judge James L. Webb and his wife, Kansas Andrews Webb, with their daughter Madge, now Mrs. Riley, and their daughter Faye and her husband, O. Max Gardner, a rising young attorney, bought the house and moved in. They added some rooms in the back, but the front remains as Mrs. Anthony remodelled it in 1906. It is now known as the Webb-Gardner residence at 403 South Washington St., and the house and grounds are generally considered as among the prettiest in Shelby.

JUDGE JAMES L. WEBB

Rev. G. M. Webb, father of James L. Webb, moved to Shelby from Rutherford county in the 1870's and was pastor of the First Baptist church here. James practiced law, was elected for two terms as State Senator, and later served 12 years as solicitor of the 11th Judicial District. In 1904, he was appointed Superior Court Judge and held this office until his death in 1930.

OLIVER MAX GARDNER

Mr. Gardner practiced law in the office of his father-in-law, Judge Webb, and later with O. M. Mull. He was elected State Senator, and in 1916 was elected Lieutenant Governor, and served with Governor Bickett.

About 1925 he and his associates

organized the Cleveland Cloth Mills of Shelby, a most profitable business venture.

In 1928, he was elected Governor of North Carolina, and soon after completing a four-year term he removed to Washington, D. C., where he engaged in the practice of law. In February, 1946, he was appointed Under Secretary of the Treasury by President Truman. In January, 1947, President Truman appointed him as Ambassador to the Court of St. James in London. Four hours before he was to sail for London to take up his duties, he died of heart attack.

Mr. Gardner was a man of very high ambitions, and he seemed to have the faculty of achieving those ambitions. I heard him make an address to a graduating class at Shelby High School, not long after he finished his term as Governor. His subject was, "If you want to, you can." He said that when he was nineteen years old he made up his mind he would be governor of North Carolina.

EDWIN YATES WEBB

Judge Edwin Yates Webb, brother of Judge J. L. Webb, lives next door to the Webb-Gardner home. After he had practised law for several years he was, in 1908, elected to represent the 9th District in Congress. Here he served on the Judiciary Committee, and took an active part in fighting liquor and narcotics. He was co-author with Senator Sheppard of the National Prohibition Amendment. After 16 years in Congress he was appointed by President Wilson as Judge of the N. C. Western Federal District Court, which position he recently resigned.

EDWIN YATES WEBB, JUNIOR

Judge Webb's son, Edwin Yates Webb, junior, now lives in Washington, D. C. An electrical engineer of unusual ability, he is listed in Who's Who. After the War he was sent by the Government to Germany to examine certain German patents, and bring back to the U.S.A. such patents as he thought might be used here advantageously.

THE WEBBER HOUSE

A few doors below the above-pictured house, at 505 S. Washington Street, the Shem Blackley house stands on the site of what used to be referred to as "the old Webber house." When the Blackleys built their home, this Webber house was moved off the lot, and part of it now stands on S. DeKalb Street.

According to my information, Amanda McAfee was living with her mother in this old Webber house at the time of her (Amanda's) marriage. Later, the mother, widow of Abner McAfee, married Mr. Webber.

AMANDA McAFEE

According to such records as are available, Amanda McAfee was 13 (thirteen) years old when she was married, at the home of her moth-

er, to Rev. Thomas Dickson (Dixon) who was nearly 30 (thirty) years of age.

She became the mother of the three Dixon preachers: Amzi Clarence, who ranked among the world's greatest Baptist preachers forty or fifty years ago; Tom, junior, who gave up the ministry to become a novelist and attained fame as a writer of stories of the South, including the "Clansman" and the "Leopard Spots," and the moving picture, "The Birth of a Nation." Her daughter, Delia, was a pioneer North Carolina physician, and her daughter, Addie May, was well known as an author and speaker. Frank Dixon, the youngest son, gave up the ministry to become a Chautauqua lecturer.

TOM DIXON, JUNIOR

Shelby's most famous son, Tom Dixon, Jr., lived for a short while at 508 South Washington (David White's residence). This was soon after his marriage to Miss Harriet Bussey, who taught in Shelby Female College. At that time Mr. Dixon was practicing law here.

ROBERT L. RYBURN

A block further down the street was the home of Robert L. Ryburn, an attorney. Mr. Ryburn was for years senior member of the firm of Ryburn & Hoey. He is described as: "The perfect gentleman, the wise counsellor, admirably equipped to occupy a seat on the judicial bench, a fine mind carefully trained and stored with useful knowledge, a character pure and without blemish, a heart full of love and tenderness." He died in 1935.

THE DURHAM HOUSE

On the vacant lot just below the Dixie Home store, about two blocks north of the house above pictured, there stood until recently the former home of another Cleveland County and North Carolina leader and statesman.

During those awful Reconstruction days of 1868 to 1874, Capt. Plato Durham stood as a rock in a weary land to the distressed citizenship of Shelby and Cleveland county.

Without his work in the legislature, North Carolina would have been even worse off than she was.

In this house were born his three sons: Rev. Plato Durham, jr., dean of the School of Religion of Emory University; Robert Lee Durham, educator and author, of Beuna Vista, Va., and Stonewall Durham, formerly a prominent attorney of Bessemer City.

Those named above are by no means all the persons who merit inclusion in this story. Later, I shall write of many others including Dr. W. J. T. Miller, and his sons, Andrew C. Miller, Dr. John F. Miller, W. H. Miller, and R. B. Miller, and Ansel Irvine Hardin, an inventor.

Among the women I shall mention: Mrs. R. B. Miller, Mrs. R. L. Ryburn, Mrs. McDonald, teacher in Shelby Female College, and Mrs. O. Max Gardner, who was the State's first lady when her husband was governor.

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