



FINDING AND KEEPING

VAUGHAN, NORTH CAROLINA:

OUR HOMETOWN

JAMES W. CLARK, JR.

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Cover photograph of Roy Pierce courtesy of

Roy E. Pierce, III and his wife, Kendra

DEDICATION

To all of us whose energy, respect, and commitment to humanity create and sustain a sense of community in neighborhoods such as Vaughan:

The children of Thomas and Nora Ellington were Harvey, Mabel, Eunice, and Almeda. They lived on the farm E. C. Robinson owned south of Vaughan. There Mrs. Ellington died January 6, 1929. Twenty-year-old Harvey came to the nearby residence of Matt and Vallie Nelson and asked if Cap'n Matt would drive to Vaughan and bring back two women to shroud his mother's body. Agnes Riggan and Mrs. Bob Brown came back with Mr. Nelson to support the Ellingtons that afternoon.

The next day in the Harris-Shearin cemetery east of State Road 1530, the Jesse Shearin Road, and not much more than a mile across the bare winter fields from her bereft family's dwelling, Mrs. Ellington was buried.

That night or the next, well after dark, the members of the Nelson family were awakened by a serenade of string music coming from their front porch. The guest musicians were Mr. Ellington and Harvey. The three Ellington sisters were not present.

Wishing to show her family's sincere appreciation of this musical tribute but not wanting to interrupt it, Miss Vallie, a trained musician herself and the mother of six Nelson girls, quietly opened the front and screen doors and rolled apples to the players across the porch floorboards. Her thoughts were of her neighbor's death on Old Christmas Day and the grieving but grateful family she had left behind.

Mr. Ellington and Harvey played on into the night. May their strings serenade us forever.

CONTENTS

- 1 Where Did You Hear These Things?
- 17 The Coming and Going of Browne's Turnout
 - 43 *So One Morning I Shook One*
 - 47 *Lucinda Brown's Children*
 - 47 *The Goodloe Girl Flora Mae Brown Shook*
- 52 Vaughan and the Vaughan Family: 1879–1924
- 115 Vaughan at Ground Level: 1900–1925
- 129 The Great Expression of Vaughan: 1925–1940
- 155 Shot to Death, Killed, and Murdered at Vaughan
 - 155 *Shot to Death with a Rabbit Gun: February 8, 1907*
 - 159 *Wary Watchman Isaac Piland Killed: July 23, 1913*
 - 164 *Buddie Brown Murdered and Gone: June 5, 1936*
- 167 Many Voices: One Hometown

WHERE DID YOU HEAR THESE THINGS?

My mother Edith Nelson Clark had been aiming for 100 when she died of congestive heart failure in 2010 a week after her 90th birthday. During her last twenty years, she told me many of the local stories and kinship connections I've related in this account of Vaughan, North Carolina, where she had been born in 1920. Since her death I've reviewed all the materials I had heard from her, Ruby Phelps Chewning, and other elderly residents of this once thriving, eastern Warren County village forever split between River and Judkins townships. The waters of River Township flow north toward Lake Gaston, created by damming the Roanoke River in the early 1960s. The waterways of Judkins end up in the Tar River to the south.

Instead of starting with the best stories I have heard, I begin my account of our hometown with a short review of the printed materials I have used because the narrative itself unfolds without reference numbers and notes.

Numerous relatives of early residents of this eventual railroad town have shared family records with me, a native whose first relatives did not come to Vaughan until 1919–20. Betty Weaver's excellent synopsis of her mother Virginia's detailed genealogy of the Tom Evans extended family and their neighbors has been invaluable. The late Mable Vaughan Riggan of Cary, N.C., gave me a compilation of her family history, and Bruce Vaughan Sherrod and his wife Flora supplemented it. A member of the Faulcon-Browne family, Ray Killeen, allowed me to copy the large file he and his wife Dana had made of their family connections and land transactions in North Carolina as well as in Virginia. Marie Nicholson Gay

and other members of the Shearin-Harriss family have generously shared documents and prints plus detailed stories about their lives and holdings in and around Vaughan. I surveyed numerous other families, white as well as black, and transcribed the information they submitted. In that process I accessed articles by Ruth Mincher with Clifton Alston's photographs that had appeared in *The Littleton Observer* in the late 1950s. Mrs. Mincher's grandson Roy E. Pierce, III, and his wife Kendra have shared with me additional photos from the Pierce family archives. Rebecca Leach Dozier, author of a history of Littleton's leadership through 1920, has been very generous with information she uncovered about Vaughan where her mother once taught school.

I have also relied from time to time on Lizzie W. Montgomery's 1924 *Sketches of Old Warrenton, The County of Warren* (1959) by Manly Wade Wellman, and Kenneth McFarland's *The Architecture of Warren County, North Carolina, 1770s to 1860s* (2001). Through correspondence Brenda Barnes Mays has allowed me to explore her family archives that reach back on both sides of her paternal line to her great grandfathers W. T. Carter and Alexander T. Barnes. Mr. Carter was born in the area when Vaughan was called Browne's Turnout; Mr. Barnes was a Pennsylvania native who served in the Union Army during the Battle of Gettysburg. He moved his family south in the 1880s. These two prominent citizens tolerated each other for their family's sake but were never friends. Daniel, the son of Mr. Barnes, married Mr. Carter's daughter Mary Ella, beloved as Mae, in March 1914. She was my most personal connection to Vaughan's early history.

Near her father's home place, Confederate veteran John L. Evans had run a store beside the old road from Warrenton to Halifax. In 2015 the Evans store ledger from around 1850 turned up in the office of Warren County Clerk of Court Richard Hunter. Knowing of my project, he handed this tattered artifact to me; his doing so has proven to be both a puzzle and a means of expanding this project. With the approval of one of Mr. Evans's descendants, I have now offered this bound treasure to professional conservators employed by the State of North Carolina.



Mae Barnes
Courtesy Ed and Ruby Thompson

These various resources in whatever form, in addition to newspapers .org plus NC ECHO, official records in Warrenton and Raleigh, local church records, and updated cemetery registries, have deepened my awareness and understanding, as have the easily accessed US Census data to be found online through 1940 at Ancestry.com

For the history of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad and the successor Seaboard line, I have depended on Cecil Kenneth Brown's *A State Movement in Railroad Development* (1928) as well as "Railroads and Reconstruction in North Carolina 1865–1871," the 1959 doctoral dissertation of Charles Lewis Price at Chapel Hill. Garreth M. McDonald's *Chronology of Railroad Building in North Carolina 1832–1935* (1999) and *A Compendium of North Carolina Railroad Operation 1869–1969* (2007) provided specific details about equipment and lumber company rail operations in Warren and neighboring North Carolina counties. My other sources of railroad lore have been John Gilbert and Grady Jefferys' 1969 *Crossties Through Carolina* and the 2001 *Directory of North Carolina's Railroad Structures* compiled by Art Peterson, Tony Reeve, and William L. Dowdy.

The deep wisdom and steady encouragement of Mary Lib Taylor of Norlina have inspired and guided me in countless ways. I succeeded my father on her team that updated the three-volume *Warren County, North Carolina Cemeteries* (2011). She gave me a copy of Flora May Lloyd's invaluable 1934 letter about the white and black Browne/Brown family of Oakley Grove as well as Barbara Sinn Bumbalough's *Come with Me to Germantown: Ridgeway, North Carolina, Revisited* (2000). This book is a model of well documented, illustrated local history. Mrs. Taylor also referred me to the *Journals of William Emmanuel Bugg*, edited by June Banks Evans (1986).

Gradually I came to see that some of the pretty well established or documented factual accounts I have used would always lack either absolute proof or willing acceptance among members of the local families who are suggested or identified in episodes. While it would be unthinkable to produce any book about Vaughan without including these incidents, I have meant to be discreet, even if some of the items are already legendary. My occasional speculations in the absence of firm facts only add to the mystique. I've occasionally consulted, since Mother's death, Joyce Nelson Stanford and Matt Nelson, Jr., my aunt and uncle. Edgar and Ruby Thompson, friends since childhood, have encouraged my work and offered advice and images. My siblings and other natives as well as friends and relatives from elsewhere have also provided wonderful suggestions,

pictures, copyediting, and references to new sources of useful materials. Included in this group of people are Jack Armistead, Nancy Cox, Louise Dolan, Edward Funkhouser, Tim Sit, and my Nixon cousins of Roanoke Rapids as well as their mother Margaret, my aunt.

Finally, it seems to me that images, maps, local legends, and plain surmises are as much a part of the cultural history of Vaughan and its earlier railroad sidings known by whatever name as are the indisputable facts and figures about our hometown. Tragically, a persisting tendency to glorify the rise of this place as a boomtown during the second decade of the twentieth century has obscured the truly sordid medical and legal tribulations of the family that gave the place its enduring name. What happened to a majority of the Vaughans of Vaughan is as sobering as the biblical story of Job. I think you will agree.

I

My own introduction to the facts, folklore, and folly of this place on the south flank of which I was born in 1943 is still vivid. Our family moved into town before I was 3 years old. From the age of 9 until I left Vaughan in 1961 to enter the University in Chapel Hill, I had, besides family farm work, two other chores that revealed village lives and legends to me.

As the newspaper boy, I delivered the *Raleigh News and Observer* to about 30 families early each morning on foot. That way I could read the news as I went from house to house. So I knew from as early age who lived where, who rose early or late, and whose paper went on the front or back porch, behind a screen door, in the car in the garage, or in a special box hung beside the front door. To get these deliveries exactly right, I also learned every shortcut and footpath in the village as well as the dirt or paved streets, the railroad, and us 158. Whose dogs might bite me I also found out the hard way.

Some of the people I knew from my paper route were among the folks who traded at Daddy's store and service station on the highway. A few newspaper customers who lived outside of Vaughan came to that store to get their copy daily. Before I even got out of bed, one or two anxious stock market investors regularly picked up theirs from the bundle the Trailways bus driver had thrown off in front of our store. When I was not in school or occupied elsewhere, I clerked there too. It was my other non-farm job. Mr. Henry Eason had built and operated this store, later selling it to Mr. Johnny Shearin, who rented the premises to Daddy.

After World War II, for several years our growing family lived in the

Eason house behind the store where Daddy clerked. He and a partner eventually purchased the entire stock from Mr. Eason, and Mother and Daddy bought the nearby Roy Vaughan house from Alice Harriss Nicholson. We moved there and grew to be a family of nine—our parents, four daughters, and three sons. I was the second oldest and, for almost a decade, the only boy.

During the thousands of hours of boyhood I spent in and around Daddy's store, I heard older local men, most of whom were white, tell and retell stories they would not have told so freely or so often if women had been present. Whenever a female customer or visitor came into the store, the man who held the floor either changed the subject or grew quiet until we were alone again. At no time was any verbal punch pulled because I was listening. Sometimes I even asked for clarifications, especially about kinship!

One of Daddy's main clerks and one of my trainers was Mr. Dan Shearin, a heavy-set, older man who suffered from heart troubles. His temper was sharp, but never with me, and his feelings were hurt easily and often by others. Sometimes he sulked. These traits never affected his waiting on customers, nor did his temper deter his friends who hung out at the store from joking with him, goosing him in the back, or telling stories about him. Come what may, Mr. Shearin chewed Apple tobacco. So he was the person who made it alright to spit tobacco juice into the trash cans that were set about inside the store. He also was the person who told tall tales about the other men who idled there, hoping for something exciting to be said or done. His habits were OK because they were his. One of my daily jobs was emptying the trash cans and burning that soggy debris. I hurried through this outdoor task because I did not want to miss a tale or an eruption of anger, real or feigned, inside the store.

Mr. Shearin had two brothers-in-law who could outdo him in the tall-tale department. George claimed that his John Deere tractor shook so badly on a cold morning that all the buttons had fallen off his clothes. Yet it was Elijah, called Liege, who most often took the cake for exaggeration. One fall afternoon he came to the store and reported that he had just finished digging his sweet potatoes. One of them, he said, was so big the railroad track in front of his house had caved into the hole in the field.

When the man who delivered Merita bread arrived each Monday through Saturday, any of Mr. Shearin's pals who were in the store stood up and fished around in this overall pockets for a nickel. Each one who found one would "throw to the crack" in the floorboards. It was their

favorite game of chance. The owner of the nickel that landed squarely on the crack won all the other money on the floor. The bread man was an expert player. He and Mr. Shearin, whom he called "Goodman," frequently argued about placement of the winning coin. I always found their dispute strange because the Merita man was also a popular basketball referee in the regional athletic conference.

Mr. Shearin had quit farming soon after his 1913 marriage and gone to work for W. H. Fishel and then Johnny Shearin in the log woods as a sawmill crew boss, eventually becoming a scaler or estimator. He had a knack for looking at standing timber and calculating how many board feet of lumber a tree would produce. Later as a clerk in Daddy's store, he could calculate in his head the bill of a customer with equal accuracy. It angered him if anyone, man or woman, questioned his sum. His wife, Miss Minnie, was not frequently in the store, but if she was there, he was better behaved than usual for the duration of her visit. One of his oldest friends, Mr. Reid, liked to tell stories about their boyhood days. Stopping by after an unsuccessful fishing trip to Walker's Creek one Easter Monday, Mr. Reid was complaining about being feeble; but in bragging to his old running buddy, he changed his tune: "You know, Dan, I believe if my wife was dead and I walked by her grave, she would still get pregnant." No one said anything. Mr. Shearin spit in the can.

He and Mrs. Shearin had raised a family of four healthy and helpful children: Ila, Sarah, Pearl, and Charlie. They lived in various houses in and around Vaughan. These include the ruins of *Oakley Grove* and *Favonia Haunts*, the Privette house on Evans Road, the old Charlie Tucker-Bud and Vender Pegram house, and the old John Vaughan residence facing the railroad. This dynamic family history freed Mr. Shearin along with his store buddies, even those idlers who were single, to make the ups and downs of other local families one of their favorite topics to gossip about. My fascination with kinship was born.

Who so and so's real father was, of course, caught my youthful attention—even after I had heard a story a dozen times. Eventually I came to see that, allowing for faulty memories, the quirks of individual narrators, and willful exaggerations, these men knew and freely shared among us an informal history of our village. I paid attention.

How dead, swaddled newborn babies found from time to time in local rabbit gums got there was another recurring tale. Complete with family names and addresses. Only later did I wonder what was done with a

baby's remains when the man who claimed the gum opened that door on a frosty morning. I still wonder all these years later.

Other topics were not gruesome but exotic. Perpetual motion, for example. Before 1940 a very black cousin of one of the white idlers had taken up watch repair as a vocation after returning from a trip up North. Business was slack. Tinkering in his shop Frank Brown became obsessed with the motion of clocks. What really made them tick and tock? He shared his fixation too many times, and he and his search for perpetual motion got wound into a local legend, one not at all flattering to him. He moved his shop to higher ground to lessen, he explained, the vibration of his experiments caused by the traffic on us 158. But the damage was already done. The sage idlers declared that Frank was plain cuckoo. Beyond repair.

Who had been the most respectable moonshiners in the rigidly segregated Baptist congregations, black and white, I also learned from these men. The Methodist congregation, then just a few old white women and a white man or two, was too moribund for spirited activity of any kind. All the Negroes, I imagined, were Baptists, even though they had two separate church buildings, nothing between them but a hay field—and lots of pride. Some white detractors said if you could read you went to one; if you were black and semi-literate, you attended the other, smaller one. It was even called a chapel, not a church. The sobering swagger of religion notwithstanding, I learned not only who the moonshiners were but also which local merchants sold them sugar and other ingredients including hog feed for the mash and the quart and half-gallon jars to contain the white lightning. Vaughan made moonshine in my youth, not bootleg whiskey, and some of the stills ran day and night, whether located on a spring branch or in a tobacco barn. Revenuers knew these places and the 'shiners too.

Some moonshine jars, empty or still half full, may have been in the side-track boxcar one fabled Friday evening many hard years ago when local poker-playing white men were surprised by their weary housewives. Taking the law into their strong hands, these noble women took all the money on the boxcar floor and headed home alone or to a local store to buy groceries. The names and faces of these payday heroes left behind in the rail yard, the idlers in Daddy's store did not hesitate to identify. I imagine some of them even spoke from first-hand experience.

One of these guilty, surprised husbands, a man of considerable wealth,

much of it actually coming from his wife, kept accounts of his various enterprises on any handy surface but rarely on paper or in bound ledgers. The slats that formed the sides of the wagon of the farmer who was getting fertilizer on time, for example, they would do just fine as an account until fall harvest when the debt came due. Or this rich creditor who gambled for other men's weekly wages, much of it paid out to them by himself, might write the debt on the side of one of the buildings he owned, even, someone swore, in the palm of his hand if the credit were short-term—or hopeless.

He was inventive in other ways. If he were present at a construction site, where, for instance, sills were being placed to support a new structure, he would pee in a handy bottle and pour the urine along the beam to see which end was high and which was low. And if there was no bottle handy, he urinated on the beam itself.

Holding title to sawmills and numerous farms of field crops raised on shares—corn, cotton, tobacco, wheat—he also owned hundreds of acres of standing timber. Pigs, cows, horses, and mules aplenty were jointly held by him and his tenants. Their houses, some of them built before the Civil War, allowed black families to subsist alongside white families. On one of these places, the story goes, lived a white farmer and a white woman with their ample progeny, none of it having had the benefit of clergy. So one Saturday afternoon this landlord stopped by for a visit and while on the scene performed a wedding ceremony. His prayer book was a mail order catalog and his witnesses were the proud children of the newlyweds.

No stranger to holy matrimony himself, if this rich justice of the peace without portfolio attended Sunday school with his wife and children, he must have paid scant attention. For my informal faculty of country store idlers swore to the following tale: While fishing with a few white friends off the North Carolina coast, this mighty one and his yeoman crew ran into a fierce storm off Nags Head. The boat they were in was probably inadequate to withstand the high winds and crashing waves. But that was not the only crisis. “Dang-hell, dang-hell,” the rich man cried out as he struggled to pray: “What’s the name of that man they hung on the cross?”

When I told Mother this legend, she laughed knowingly, having heard it from her daddy. Then, assuming our family's flimsy decorum in such matters, she asked: “Where did you hear this?” I told her even though she already knew my source. For Mother, having grown up in Vaughan and lived there almost all her life, was well acquainted with the gossipy idlers who now spent the years of my boyhood on the slatted benches either

inside or outside of Daddy's store. Having farmed their lives nearly to the end of their rows, they just sat and talked now. Sometimes they fussed with one another, and occasionally cursed vehemently if someone disputed a fact or a remembrance. Such daily dramas had become their only productive employment.

That and the shattering of my innocence.

But it was already too late. I knew by then the familiar names of the white and black whores in the vicinity, including which ones of them were visited by which local husbands and fathers. No story I ever read in any issue of *The News and Observer* I delivered daily equaled these and many other idler tales. And when one of these storied sisters of mercy stopped by our store for gasoline or ice cream, it was all I could do to handle the pump or the scoop. Mere information is cheap, I learned, but early understanding is expensive and hard to manage. I did not stop listening though.

One evening in the late 1950s, I heard the following brief sermon with my own adolescent ears. The long-deceased rich man who had once struggled to pray to What's His Name was this lay preacher's daddy. Local men, my father among them, had made their annual fishing trip to the coast. After several days, they had returned to Vaughan with a huge catch. Mostly amberjacks. That evening after supper, as this crew assembled to talk, the rich man's son arrived at Daddy's store very agitated and uncomfortable. He guzzled a Coca-Cola to settle his stomach. Then Mr. Jesse Harriss turned to me: "You know, boy, how in the Bible Christ fed that great multitude with just a few fish. Well I think I know how He did it. He must'a give 'em some damn amberjacks!" The surrounding men's roar of laughter said "Amen."

Mother's daddy and Mr. Jesse were special friends. One a non-native, vaunted tobacco farmer and Baptist deacon who sang bass, the other a Vaughan native and an absolute mechanical genius. Both men were capital swearers as well. Whenever Sam Johnson, Granddaddy's black tenant, got drunk in town and needed to pee, like so many local men, white as well as black, he went to the forge in the rear of Mr. Jesse's machine shop for relief. One Saturday afternoon Sam's tipsy swagger provoked Mr. Jesse, and the result was a well-oiled verbal zinger of which the machinist was so proud that he told Granddaddy in my presence exactly how his words had fit together: "Matt, I called Sam a 'God-damned, hickory-nut-head-son-of-a-bitch.'" That Sunday, after church let out, Granddaddy advised my mother that by working at Daddy's store I was hearing very bad language and might pick it up myself. Laughing, she later shared his concern

with me. What amused her was clear: I could hear worse language than Mr. Jesse's from my Granddaddy almost any day at our farm. Yet besides being an active member at the Vaughan Baptist Church where he rarely missed a service, he was a generous man. I loved him. I still remember a special day from the summer of 1952. Granddaddy had included me, age 9, when he drove with his daughter Lois, an Air Force officer home on furlough, to see the massive John H. Kerr Dam. It was being completed in Virginia just north of his boy hood home in Granville County, North Carolina. Awed by the amount of raw earth I saw being moved at the huge construction site, when I got back to Vaughan I told Mother, Daddy, and my sisters: "The world God is creating will soon be finished." This trip outside my familiar area had been like a Bible story to me.

II

Clerking at Daddy's store, whatever I heard and saw or experienced, became an initiation for me. However unfamiliar. I was, ironically, always well protected by the men who gathered there. For while they did not spare me as they told and retold their tales, they always created a safe place for a young boy to deal with customers both known and unknown, drunk or sober. I never felt vulnerable and was rarely alone. If Daddy, one of his hired clerks, or Granddaddy was not there and all the idlers had gone home, almost always a few regular customers who were still-employed white men kept me company.

Several of these fellows, the fathers of my friends, often dressed and wore their hair in the style of Bing Crosby. How this singer and movie star had developed his local adult fan club I never learned, but having served in and survived World War II, they deserved their illusions. I recall no instance, though, in which Vaughan's white women assumed Hollywood identities. They had not been away in the military. Some had never been away, period.

While men young and old taught me much I did not truly need to know about Vaughan and its heritage, another service they provided was invaluable. As often happened, former residents of the village and its surrounding farms would come home for a visit. And when they did, they stopped by Clark's Store and Service Station. The idlers who were present could tell me who these people were, a valuable store of knowledge then and now. Male or female, white or black, out of these returning natives I built a huge collection of faces and names, a network spun out of the memories of the idlers. They and I had hardly been anywhere contrasted to the

worldly Bing veterans and these visiting natives now living in Detroit, Boston, Baltimore, somewhere in New Jersey, and Washington, DC.

Several Negroes among the many I knew well I met and respected or came to love on my own without being influenced by other adults who gathered at the store. No mere hearsay put me in the know about these special individuals. One encounter was coincidental.

One summer day after I had a license to drive Daddy's truck, I was moving it from our house to the store in the afternoon. When I came to the top of the hill and crossed the Embro Road, Sophie Reavis was kneeling on hands and knees beside the road. I knew this elderly Negro woman mainly as Alma's mother, our neighbor. I stopped the truck, got out, and went around to speak to her. I did not use her name, but told her who I was. She hardly responded. With no one else in sight, I helped the stricken, heavy-set old lady to her feet and into the nearby passenger seat of the truck. Her walking stick and purse I loaded with her. Turning around in the road, I drove her back to where she lived, and Alma Clanton Brown, her adult daughter, came out immediately to meet us in the yard. We helped her mother out of the truck and onto the back porch. I told Alma all I knew. Then I said for her to send one of her daughters to our nearby house or the store if she needed more help.

Her mother's walk into Vaughan that hot 1958 summer afternoon had put more strain on her heart than it could bear. In a few months she passed away after Alma hospitalized her. My opportunity to assist this ailing person marked me for life. I was an unprepared boy who did not think once of the danger of moving her from the roadside where I found her. Still I'm glad I came along and could help her get home to Alma's.

III

Two quite extraordinary African American adults stand far out in my reminiscences today, one woman and one man. My young heart imagined their true human value for itself, a treasured experience as liberating for me as my formal education would be. In our relationships, these two great people removed their racial shackles and unlocked mine. True to a Vaughan custom regarding esteemed, elderly Negroes, the honorifics "Aunt" and "Uncle" apply to them.

Even in summer, Aunt Mollie Plummer always wore black satin dresses that reached the ground, a raven wig, and a fancy hat to match. So attired, this merry widow traversed the five miles from home to Vaughan, several of them through the woods, when she was over eighty. She could

manage, I felt, because she was a sorcerer. She had special powers. A conjure lady, if you will. As refined as any other older female I had ever seen, white or black, she knew and used the charms of a mysterious craft no longer in common usage there.

Yet part of her charm was her way of being her exceptional self and still abiding by the ordinary conventions or customs of local people. The US Census shows that like everybody else Aunt Mollie had a date of birth. On July 27, 1876, she became the daughter of Cad and Fanie Shearin. Mollie married Thomas Jefferson Plummer, Jr. on December 8, 1907, at Coleman's Store in Churchill. J. R. Wright, a Baptist minister, officiated. The groom, whose mother was Mary Pitchford Plummer, was 30, his bride 31. Destined never to have children, this couple lived and farmed on the Plummer place west of Eaton's Ferry Road in River Township until his death from influenza March 14, 1944. His grave is marked in the nearby Ellis-Milam Family Cemetery off Fleming Mill Road. Mollie lived on, her house the best one in the Ellis-Milam cluster of domiciles deep in the River Township woods north of the William Henry Walker farm.

I became enchanted by this lady in black during these years of her widowhood. July 5, 1968, at age 91, she passed away at Boyd's Rest Home near Macon, having spent her last few years there. Her brother Cad Shearin, Jr. oversaw her burial in the cemetery at Pine Grove Baptist Church on the Churchill Road. No grave marker or stone confirms this information from her death certificate. That seems appropriate.

She had her ways. As long as I knew of her by virtue of her shopping forays to Vaughan, Aunt Mollie called me her boy. I was intrigued and grateful. At last one summer when her business was completed at Daddy's store, all by myself I was old enough to drive her to her home, way off the paved road and into the forest along an almost impassable wagon path. Her magic spells alone got us through. Aunt Mollie's brown-skinned Caucasian features, accentuated with such style and a large black pocket book, never showed any doubt about our progress from mud hole to mud hole. For all I knew she had flown out of there that morning over the treetops before daybreak. I could believe it! There was no red mud on her black dress.

Once we bounced our way to her house, she told me to stay in the truck and look away from her as she took the spell off her dwelling. I intended to obey, but from what I did see, it was clear that she unlocked her door without using a key. Instead Aunt Mollie carefully removed black threads from the door and the front windows, these threads here

and there knotted around whitened bones saved from birds and chickens she had slaughtered and enjoyed as food.

Her conjure security system removed, she motioned me inside and showed me where to place her provisions in her tidy house. I had never seen a place so thoroughly scrubbed. It was elegant. Her secret, she claimed, was wet creek sand and a corn shuck mop. When it was time for me to leave that day and thereafter, I always wanted to stay.

Part of me is still there with that preternatural queen, now long dead or years ago spirited away, her charms with her. Poof. Where did she come from, where did she go? Just once after college and other essentially rational relationships, I spent an entire afternoon searching for her grave. Finally I realized how silly it was to expect Aunt Mollie Plummer to have a mere marker beside her husband's in the untidy Ellis-Milam Cemetery near where she had lived. I gave in to reality and came away, only to find a rather boring version of her life and death among US Census data.

I had noticed by the mid-1950s that Aunt Mollie paid no attention or respect to the Negro men who usually populated the benches in front of Daddy's store in good weather. In winter they sat, if there was room, on the long bench near the kerosene heater inside the store. She would quietly acknowledge the white men seated there, but not the blacks whom the white men sometimes included in their gossipy conclusions. Two of these blacks were widowers, Haywood Meadows and Adolphus Brown, and now lived alone within sight of the store. Their wives dead, their children had married and moved away. Two other Negro men had never married. Truculent Sandy Jones had been kicked out of the county home for being cantankerous with staff and verbally abusive to other inmates. Brain damaged, the white men said, Sandy had drunk too much leaded moonshine as a boy in Vaughan. Tolerant if not accepting of Sandy was crippled Herbert Johnson, a colored peddler who lived alone near the Johnson School House/Jesse Shearin Road. He bought candy wholesale from salesmen at our store and sold it to the black school children who came along the path just outside his little house. With no relatives in Vaughan, he was a survivor, an old man who walked to our store and back with difficulty and determination, his satchel over one shoulder and his humped back bent forward. Aunt Mollie occupied a totally different world from the one Herbert and the other black men inhabited. She disdained any man who appeared not to work, I concluded, and that added to her magic potency.

Sandy Jones's nearest neighbor was Uncle Enoch Davis, a gentle col-

ored man I affectionately set far apart from the others. He spoke to Aunt Mollie; it hurt me that she never spoke to him. Unlike her and Alma's mother but like Sandy, Enoch had grown up in Vaughan as the son of midwife Aunt Bertie Davis who birthed white as well as black babies. He had married and moved as a young man to another part of Warren County to farm. Alone late in his life, he made his way back, not precisely to where he had been born, but nearby. It was a lean-to shack by a wet water branch on the Embro Road. Lula and Cicero Brown had lived and died there, they and the shack being leftovers from Dr. Ridley Browne's huge plantation. Uncle Enoch would slowly walk to Daddy's store from there.

He had broken his right wrist years ago in an accident at a sawmill where he worked whenever his farm chores allowed. The break had been badly set, if it had been set at all. The result was that his right wrist and hand made almost a right angle to each other. He may never have heard of a right angle, but he had one; and he was acutely aware of who he was. He also knew most of the Negro and white men and women who came to shop or sit all afternoon at our store. One white man in particular, one of the local Bing Crosby guys, was of real interest to Uncle Enoch. They would talk across the color line with sincerity and mutual concern, in other words, with real devotion. The old black man called his white friend, a generation younger than he, "Mr. Russell," his given name, not his surname.

One Saturday night closing time was approaching, and Uncle Enoch was still sitting alone on the long, slatted bench inside the store as I filled the drink coolers and swept the floor. No one else came in. Thinking something might be wrong, when I finished sweeping near where Uncle Enoch sat, I sat down beside him. He placed his normal left hand on my right knee and quietly told me why he had come home to Vaughan to die.

He said Mr. Russell, whom I knew well, had been a driver and salesman for the McPherson Bottling Company in Littleton. One day many years ago in driving near where Uncle Enoch and his family were living and farming, Russell's truck hauling 7-Up, NuGrape, and Orange drinks in addition to Pepsi Colas had accidentally struck and killed Uncle Enoch's only grandson. Eventually the single, still grieving old Granddaddy had come back to Vaughan so he could see and talk to Mr. Russell, the last person who had seen this very beloved grandson alive. When he finished his story Uncle Enoch let go of my knee and said to me, "You is my only boy now."

I locked and barricaded the front door of the store and turned out the

lights as he and I approached the back door. We went out together. At the top of the hill, he headed to his shack, and I went home to bed. My dog Mitzy had heard me slam the back door of the store and soon appeared out of the dark to walk down the dirt road with me. For particular reasons that long-ago night, I valued Uncle Enoch and my little guard dog Mitzy very much. I still do.

IV

Given the demographics of Warren County, then and now, still almost seventy percent Negro or African American, I always knew far more black than white people. These men and women farmed with us, traded at Daddy's store, or worked in our home whenever a new baby came along and Mother needed assistance her mother or sisters and we older children could not provide. I fondly recall Roxie Rand, Minnie Clanton, and Vester Ratliff's wife Maggie in these care-giving and housekeeping roles. Ashley Taylor and his refined wife Nora also come to mind; he had a crackling voice, when I knew him, and was a special friend of my Granddaddy Nelson. Others Granddaddy and Daddy valued included Eddie and Mazie Strong, William and Mary Bullock, Carrie and Louis Terry and their children, plus the Buster and Daisy Taylor family as well as Uncle Prince Ratliff who knew how to doctor animals and people too. Zebulon and Pearl Sutton's sons worked year after year in the tobacco fields and barns with us. Blind Uncle Whit Williams, past his prime, was a village resident known to all. When he pleased, he tapped his way with his white and red cane across the railroad tracks to us 158 from his little house behind the home of Myrtice and Roy Pierce near the white Methodist and Baptist churches. Anyone who saw Uncle Whit standing there beside the busy highway went to help him cross.

Living southeast of Vaughan, but always reliable friends and coworkers, were Sam and Queen Johnson, Charlie and Lou Smith and their children, plus the abundant Burgesses, headed by Diamond, Lee, Mary, William, and Alma, near Odell. Of these African Americans, Sam was the most apt to pull a drunk after the workweek was over. In season the workweek meant farm work from March through November for our Clark and Nelson family. We grew and harvested grain and flue-cured tobacco. Several of the men who watched over and educated me at the store did light work for pay during our harvest of tobacco and its preparation for market. In these barnyard settings, women and children were present, and the stories exchanged were less graphic but still celebrated local events and per-

sonalities. I should add here that hard-working Sam Johnson's hickory-nut head was full of solid sense and kindness when he was sober.

v

Daddy and the older men and boys who worked for him taught me how to run a business, but it was the idlers who hung out at the store who gave me the informal history of Vaughan. I fondly salute these unwitting teachers and the unaccredited "academy" they ran. Gifted in sketching, I sometimes drew these men and other store scenes on the brown paper bags on hand to put customers' groceries in. Except for one of Aunt Mollie, no picture I ever drew was worth even a hundred of the idlers' words.

The old slatted bench inside the store burned with the building just before Christmas in 1960. Worn slick by its legions of sitters, this bench turned to ashes, but the many stories it had fostered still envelop me like smoke as I reflect. While most of these tales were essentially negative or satirical accounts of local citizens or events, my own research has, in fact, confirmed the core of the idlers' versions more often than it has validated the sunny views of Vaughan's native boosters and apologists.

And as for fire, that element that destroyed the store and the slatted benches inside and out in the last days of 1960, Vaughan might have been more blessed, if there had been more fire, not less. For the public health record of the village has been horrible. Its modern founder John F. Vaughan, who gave his name to the place, died in 1890 of malaria. Tuberculosis, flu, pneumonia, heart disease, and typhoid fever carried off local folks who had no very good sense of hygiene and were not aware of the germ theory of sickness or the manifold dangers of tobacco. If certain houses had burned accidentally, sparing their inhabitants, pestilence might have been decreased. In the household of ill-fated John Vaughan's brother Charlie, for instance, four sons grew up. All of them died of TB between 1914 and 1916. The second to die was Roy who was licensed and had practiced medicine locally since 1909. Did he bring the killer disease home with him from his training in Virginia? Local legend says "No." It says a Negro moonshiner who worked in that home was the carrier. He survived, perhaps because he drank his own whiskey religiously. He died of something else over a decade later. But I'm getting ahead of history.

THE COMING AND GOING OF BROWNE'S TURNOUT

That the said land hereinafter described to wit: Lying half mile southeast of Vaughan Station on Raleigh and Gaston Railroad and bounded on the north by Mrs. Evans and Sol Shearin, on the East by each of Mrs. John Shearin and others, on the South by Dr. Browne and West by Dr. Browne, containing thirteen hundred acres more or less. . . .

—THE LATE MARY ANN FAULCON BROWNE'S 1840
DOWER DIVISION, WARREN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT,
NOVEMBER 1, 1884

Flowing from southern Virginia into North Carolina, the mighty Roanoke River became a major artery of trade for Native Americans as well as British colonials. When Bute and later Warren County residents travelled east or west between Hillsborough, Warrenton, and Halifax, they crossed north-south trails giving access to two Roanoke ferries, Robinson's and Eaton's. Local laws then directed that major routes lead to the nearest landing. Thus early roads and paths did not always favor village-to-village wayfarers in this evolving border county. For this reason and others, Warren remained closely associated through commerce, marriage, slave trade, and inheritance with the tidewater Virginia counties to the northeast.

Full cooperation with Virginians, therefore, was a natural feature of a new Roanoke River project in 1815 when the North Carolina Legislature subscribed stock in the Roanoke and Cape Fear Navigation Companies. This mutual improvement effort had actually been underway since the 1790's because the deep-draft Roanoke and its tributaries served both states. The first phase of the new project became evident in 1816 when

cross-border leaders chartered the Roanoke Navigation Company. Of the \$130,000 in stock, Virginians subscribed the larger share of \$80,000 as work got underway. By 1828 the intended improvements were largely completed on the Dan and the Staunton and as far as Weldon, North Carolina, at the falls on the Roanoke. Improvements downstream to the Albemarle Sound were less successful, although providing Roanoke Valley planters a commercial route to the Atlantic Ocean in North Carolina had always been one rationale for the undertaking. This shortcoming's effect on trade was mitigated by the completion during the 1830s of Virginia railroads from both Petersburg and Portsmouth to Weldon to benefit from trade with the upper Roanoke Valley.

Annually, with few exceptions, and sometimes biannually, the Roanoke Navigation Company paid dividends to its North Carolina and Virginia stockholders in that decade. This profitability suggests that the previous political efforts to confine North Carolina commerce exclusively within the boundaries of the state had been largely ill advised. The state had lost considerable money in looking for ways to keep home-grown products from enriching Old Dominion middle men. For the trade with Virginia went on regardless, and the railroads built from Petersburg and Portsmouth to Weldon, with North Carolina's permission, allowed commerce to increase just as bright leaf, as opposed to burley tobacco production in particular, was booming north and south of the mighty Roanoke.

Southside was the name given by landed residents in Isle of Wight, Surry, Nansemond, and Southampton to the central North Carolina and Virginia border counties below and above the Roanoke.

THE FAULCONS AND BROWNES

Ridley Faulcon Browne was born on the Southside in Warren County, North Carolina, December 27, 1828. His Roanoke Valley world was immense. There were, for example, the 2,300 acres owned by his mother and father north of Little Fishing Creek and east of the road leading from Warrenton to William Eaton's Ferry. Their home usually called *Oakley Grove* sat near the center of this large plantation and the adjacent holdings of Jacob Faulcon, Ridley's maternal uncle. Lending money on interest and annually leasing slave men, women, and children to small farmers far and near were family traditions; but tobacco was their golden commodity. Cotton prices were frighteningly fickle. The scores of slaves who were not leased out were the backbone of the family economy that also included livestock, corn, vegetable, and wheat production. To the north

was the familiar domain of Virginia where the hogsheads of tobacco were marketed throughout the year as prices dictated. In Virginia's Tidewater, Ridley could also claim kinship with leading families in which cousins almost always married cousins, thereby bringing known pedigrees, more land, and seasoned slaves into the arranged unions.

Ridley was the most apt of the seven surviving, white Browne offspring at *Oakley Grove*; they were a brother and five sisters younger than he. When he was just ten years old, the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad tracks were laid just a mile north of his home place on an easement his daddy had sold the railroad company in early 1837. Contracts to develop the line had been let the previous year along the route of the envisioned railroad from the Roanoke River in Halifax County to Raleigh. During the spring and early summer of 1838, at a rate of about ten miles a month, stringers of oak capped with straps of iron were spiked to wooden crosssties. By May this track was in place on cuts and fillings within sight of Ridley's home. Between March and May 1840, the complete line of about eighty-five miles between Gaston on the Roanoke, through Warren via Henderson, and on to Raleigh was finally opened for cargo and then passengers. Engineering the bridging of the Tar River, Cedar Creek, the Neuse, and finally Crabtree Creek in Franklin and Wake counties lasted from the fall of 1938 until the spring of 1840. The span of the Tar River bridge was 846 feet long and 94 feet above water level; Cedar Creek required a bridge 528 feet long and 70 feet high. Another engineering challenge remained undone for over a decade at the railroad's starting point in Halifax County.

Not until 1853 was a branch line of about a dozen miles cut through rocky terrain and ledges along the southern shore of the Roanoke east of Gaston to connect the Raleigh and Gaston line to Weldon, the original Virginia-North Carolina rail hub. Ridley was grown and a married doctor by then, but he still remembered his fascination and occasional fear of train travel during his boy hood and student days, moving along over questionable tracks at the amazing speed of eight to twelve miles per hour, first en route to Chapel Hill and later Philadelphia. Yet he had dreamed since 1840 of a day when there would be a railroad depot or warehouse on his family's land. What would this station for passengers and commerce be called? Maybe Browne's or Browne's Siding, or, his favorite, Browne's Turnout.

Ridley's mother Mary Ann Faulcon Browne had been born at *Oakley Grove* too. From her the visionary boy got a good sense of responsibility and possibility. She taught him that her paternal grandfather John Faul-

con, Ridley's great grandfather, had moved to Bute County, North Carolina, in late summer 1772 from Surry County, Virginia. The following May he married Lucinda Brown Person, the young widow of Benjamin Person. This couple purchased about 400 acres of land in two adjacent tracts south of the Roanoke. In 1779–80 the husband served the new Warren County as its first senator in the North Carolina Assembly. Senator Faulcon had also been one of the commissioners appointed to locate the new county seat, designate a courthouse site with a jail and stocks, and draw a grid for the surrounding village of Warrenton. By 1790 the John Faulcons owned and worked seventy-eight slaves, having also bought additional land north of Little Fishing Creek. He and Lucretia Faulcon together raised two sons, Jesse Nicholas and John, Jr., and one daughter named Martha. Powerful and respected, John Faulcon died a very wealthy citizen in 1812. His 1811 county tax listing had indicated that he owned 4,035 acres of land and 36 slaves.

From this prosperous sire, Mary Ann Browne told young Ridley, her own father, John Faulcon, Jr., had inherited the *Oakley Grove* plantation north and east of Little Fishing Creek, of about 1,163 acres with 18 slaves. There she had grown up in the same Federal-style house in which Ridley, his brother Jacob, and their sisters were now living. By 1835 over one hundred slaves made the plantation prosperous. The older boy already knew that his mother's mother, Mary Ann Faulcon Faulcon, also from Surry County, Virginia, was yet another cousin who had married a cousin from the Southside.

Both John, Jr. and Mary Ann Faulcon Faulcon, married since 1807, had died by 1826, two years before Ridley was born in the second year of the marriage of their daughter Mary Ann Faulcon to her Virginia kinsman Dr. Lafayette Browne. Cotton prices rose and fell precipitously during these years of change for the new family.

Mary Ann Browne would tell her oldest child that dire economic story as well as a happier one about his being named for Day Ridley, her father's maternal grandfather. This Hertford County, North Carolina, planter married to Martha Thorpe had been a member of the Provisional Congress that met in Halifax, North Carolina, April 4, 1776, to draft the *Halifax Resolves*. It provided for an alliance with other American colonies in declaring independence from England but reserved to North Carolina the sole and exclusive right to form its own constitution and laws. Colonel Day Ridley later served in the American Revolution until his death

in 1777. He left his widow and their daughter Martha. She married Dr. Samuel Ridley Browne, Jr.

Their son was Dr. Lafayette Browne, Ridley's accomplished father. From him came the boy's love of learning and his growing desire to become a plantation master who also practiced medicine. In fact, this boy who was descended on both sides from Day Ridley, the source of his name, would become the sixth doctor in as many generations of the Browne family of Tidewater Virginia and Southside North Carolina. They were Samuel, Jesse, Samuel Ridley, Samuel Ridley, Jr., Lafayette, and finally Ridley Browne himself. Moreover, Ridley would become the best educated doctor of them all, encouraged by his father until Dr. Browne, at age thirty-eight, died intestate after a short illness in early November 1840. Edward Alston, one of the administrators of the large Browne estate, was also appointed guardian for Ridley, who would study Latin, Greek, English, and mathematics with tutors at *Oakley Grove* before attending the University of North Carolina in 1845–46. The train provided him transportation as far as Raleigh. There he hired a coach for the rest of his trip to Chapel Hill. Brother Jacob briefly enrolled in the University as well, but studying, never his strength, became a minor priority in 1846–47, for Ridley had moved North for medical studies. Jacob quit school and came home.

After Ridley's successful year at Chapel Hill, he studied in Philadelphia at Jefferson Medical College for two years and graduated in 1848. When he returned home, he practiced medicine within the family and among the slaves, courted, and then in 1851 married his cousin Henrietta Collins Browne, a daughter of Dr. Albrigton Browne of Nansemond County, Virginia. Briefly they lived there as well as at *Oakley Grove* with his mother, still a widow. Four of Ridley's sisters were also living mainly at home. Alice had died in October 1849, and Vesuvia, the brightest of these girls, spent the 1849–50 school year at the coeducational Warrenton Collegiate Institute. During this busy period two overseers, Sherwood Harriss and Berryman King, deployed numerous slaves who made the family's tobacco and other ventures thrive. Up in Nansemond in 1852, Ridley and Henrietta's first child, a weakly son named Lafayette, was born. Meanwhile, a mile to the west of *Oakley Grove*, Jacob, a new uncle at twenty-two, had already begun to live and work his own slaves on the plantation he had inherited more than a decade earlier from his Uncle Jacob Faulcon. Single, young Jacob, the materialistic Browne of his generation, was in his element.



Favonia Haunt Rear View

North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library at Chapel Hill

Two miles to Jacob's west on a hill, the new parents Ridley and Henrietta soon began establishing their domain on their family land. Their second child, Vivion, another unhealthy son, was born in 1854. By then they had named their plantation *Favonia*, a variant of "Favonius" meaning "the west wind, that propitious herald of spring and its dominion over plants and flowers." Sometimes they referred to this attractive place as *Favonia Haunt*. It may have been under their influence that the more down-to-earth Jacob began to refer to his place as *Faulconia*. It sat to the east about midway between *Oakley Grove* and *Favonia Haunt*.

RAILROAD PROSPERITY

Busy as both brothers became after 1850, Dr. Browne and Jacob had convinced the company that was taking over operation of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad to erect a depot with a siding or turnout on their lands. Thus Browne's Turnout, as young Ridley had dreamed, became a depot between Littleton and Macon Depot after October 1, 1851. They might not have expected a rail siding so soon, but well before 1855 the young doctor, his brother, and their mother had a more convenient outlet for their tobacco, with over 5,000 acres under cultivation by slaves. Dr. Browne, his own children coming along, was understandably as concerned with

marketing the family's tobacco and other commodities as he was with the health of his family and the numerous slaves owned by the Brownes. The local railroad once again stimulated his dreams and plans.

For during the decade of his education at *Oakley Grove*, Chapel Hill, and Philadelphia; his marriage to his cousin Henrietta; and their establishment of their plantation at *Favonia*, Ridley had learned a hard, practical lesson himself. In traveling by train in North Carolina, to Philadelphia and back several times, and into the Tidewater, he realized that of all the railroads he used, the original Raleigh and Gaston had been the most perilous and poorly maintained. This realization represented a considerable challenge to the young planter who recalled his boyhood excitement at the coming of the line that was now his family's main outlet to markets. If a much-improved railroad with a local siding had not been possible, becoming market-starved and land-and-slave-poor would almost certainly have been their plight, young Dr. Browne mused:

Some of his family's history concerning the railroad had been cautionary to him. His father had sold the original Raleigh and Gaston Company an eighty-foot wide right-of-way through the family's lands for \$250.00 in late February 1837, a year of economic panic nationally. Late that June, Nathaniel Macon, the Roanoke Valley's elder statesman who had not opposed this state-based, internal improvements, had died at Buck Spring. Dr. Lafayette Browne had not been called to his bedside. Ridley's Uncle Jacob Faulcon, a railroad commissioner, had died that same year. During that period Dr. Browne, his daddy, had made a loan of \$1,800, due with interest January 1, 1841, to the president of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad Company. Local trains began to use the tracks, and by September 1838 engines pulling or pushing cars moved as far southwest as Henderson and returned northeast. Finally on March 21, 1840, although some work on the line remained unfinished, the first train made it through to Raleigh. The Capital City celebrated for three days; but it was planting season at *Oakley Grove*, and apparently no members of the Browne family made the trip.

Soon after his father's sudden death that November, Ridley heard his tutors say that celebrating the completion of the Raleigh and Gaston line as if the railroad itself would be a success was bad business. As a matter of fact, Dr. Lafayette Browne's loan to the Raleigh and Gaston was not repaid to his estate on January 1, 1841, and by April 1, 1843, that loan was officially considered a bad debt by his two estate administra-

tors. To recover as much of the money as possible, accordingly, Edward and Alfred Alston sold the loan at half its face value to Thomas Twitty; Mary Ann Browne had indemnified the transaction.

Challenges of his mother and her immediate family back then were as pressing as the trouble the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad Company was already experiencing. For Mary Ann Browne had been pregnant when her husband died without a will November 4, 1840. Plans were already underway for the 1841 crop year as the 1840 tobacco crop was being prepared for market. The Warren County court readily granted Mrs. Browne a delay in the settlement of Dr. Browne's huge estate which included 114 slaves and over 2,800 acres. In addition to Edward Alston who served as his guardian, there was Alfred Alston who served in that role for Brother Jacob. Nathan Milam was guardian for Alice, Ida, and Vesuvia; Samuel Alston served for Lucy Jane and the new baby who had been born March 9, 1841, and named Mary Lafayette for her mother and late father who would have been married just fourteen years that spring.

The railroad was still in business just across the north fields, but according to his mother and his guardian, it found itself unable to support its operations and repay its loans or provide its private stockholders a true dividend. In fact the trustees were paying interest out of capital because the rail traffic did not meet projections, and the roadbed and equipment were deteriorating from lack of maintenance. The \$500,000 in bonds first endorsed by the NC Legislature in 1839 had led, in time, to several large state loans to the company before December 29, 1845, when the state officially assumed ownership of the Raleigh and Gaston for the sum of \$363,000. In preparation for this last-ditch rescue, Governor William Graham, State Treasurer Charles L. Hinton, and others had made a tour to inspect the condition of the line. They prepared an odd report in which the system was described as being "in better condition than expected." In truth, in less than a decade of service the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad was in a very bad state of repair.

Ridley had learned that while he was a medical student in Philadelphia during 1846–47, the first year of state ownership of the Raleigh and Gaston, improvements indispensable to the continued operation of the line were made. They included two new locomotives, ten miles of new iron straps laid on existing stringers, replacement of culverts washed out since 1843, and new alignment of the Roanoke River bridge spans at Gaston. Nonetheless passenger and cargo as well as mail busi-

ness remained far below expectations. Every turn of the wheels of the cars, however slow and empty, damaged the machinery and the tracks. In December 1850 a civil engineer named S. Moyland Fox had reported on his inspection of the rails; he was amazed that the trains could operate at all.

After Ridley returned to North Carolina to be a doctor and slave master, marry Henrietta, and establish a family at *Favonia* about half a mile south of the tracks, he learned first-hand what Fox had found—dilapidation of the road due to lack of drainage and repairs; eroded, settled, and narrow embankments; missing culverts; deterioration of stations and depots east and west. Yet he needed a turnout himself. While bridges were in fairly good condition, some stretches of the wooden track were entirely without iron strapping for eight or ten feet, and about one-third of the crossties and stringers were unsound on this railroad that North Carolina still owned.

Then in 1851–52, as if blown in by the west wind, there came a change for the better. Fox had estimated the cost of putting the operation in good order at \$401,908. The value of salvaged scrap iron subtracted from this total decreased the amount of new money required for the job to approximately \$361,000. In late January 1851, the NC Legislature passed an act to incorporate a new Raleigh and Gaston Railroad Company. As owner of the existing railroad operation, the state would exchange it for half of the \$800,000 capital stock in the new company. The other \$400,000 would be raised in cash and used to recondition the line and equipment. The legislation, furthermore, set October 1, 1851, as a deadline for the new company to be in operation. This deadline was met.

It is not clear that Dr. Browne or any other member of his family invested in this 1851 venture, but during the first full year of operation a new depot called Browne's Turnout became a regular stop on the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad. The roadbed had been reconditioned throughout and laid with new 51-pound, iron U-rail, including the new siding to serve the Brownes and their neighbors. In a sense, Dr. Lafayette Browne's loan had finally been repaid. The total cost along the entire eighty-six-mile line from Gaston to Raleigh was over \$500,000.

Connecting the Raleigh and Gaston to the successful Wilmington and Weldon line at Weldon in 1853 paid dividends immediately. North Carolina's investment in this phase was one half of the \$175,000. The other half was privately funded. Business on the Raleigh and Gaston responded

immediately by showing revenue increases that first year and the following years. In 1854 the company paid its first dividend of three per cent. Good dividends followed in 1855, 1856, 1859, and 1860. Costly and extensive repairs consumed the dividends in 1857 and 1858, but in the latter year the company still increased its annual revenue by \$232,080. This sustained achievement also reflected the connection of the Raleigh and Gaston to the North Carolina Railroad at Raleigh. Two lucrative services were offered on the expanded lines: A through passenger ticket from Weldon and points south to Augusta, Georgia, and the easy movement of freight between Charlotte, Portsmouth, and Petersburg without transshipment or expensive intermediate handling.

Accordingly, the Browne plantations' tobacco economy flourished in the decade of the founding of Browne's Turnout and the establishment of a sound operation for the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad. Far from being land-and-slave poor without access to markets, Mary Ann Browne by 1850 owned real estate worth \$3,918. Her son Jacob's acreage was valued at \$2,900, and Dr. Ridley Browne, a single young physician living at *Oakley Grove*, was acquiring land on which to develop *Favonia*. In the most productive tobacco region in the state, the total yield increased during the decade from twelve to thirty-three million pounds, owing in part to the rapid displacement of burley tobacco by the bright leaf variety. Five million pounds of the latter were produced in Warren County in 1860. Requiring intensive land use, fertilization, and hard work by slaves, tobacco plantations could still clear from \$400 to \$700 per worker each good crop year. This level of income from tobacco agriculture alone more than doubled the value of land and human chattel owned by the Browne family. As never ever before, the necessity of maintaining a healthy workforce called on Dr. Browne to devote his medical skills to his immediate family and the hundreds of slaves his family owned. He was clearly a plantation doctor, not a country doctor, during these years. Yet mindful of the education of his growing family, he built a separate school room on the grounds of *Favonia* and hired tutors.

His mother Mary Ann Browne, meanwhile, used some of her considerable wealth to turn the Federal-style house at *Oakley Grove*, where she had lived all her single years, married life, and widowhood, into an Italianate-Gothic Revival mansion. Warrenton builder Jacob Holt designed and supervised the extensive renovation in the late 1850s. Such were the living conditions at *Oakley Grove* during this period that Ida moved in with Jacob at *Faulconia*, while Lucy and Mary Lafayette went to live at

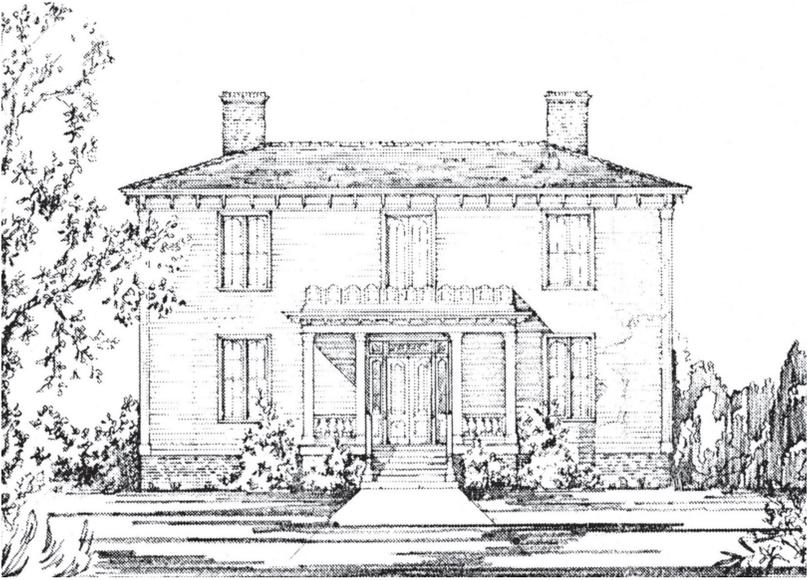


Favonia Haunt School

Favonia Haunt with Ridley and Henrietta. Motivated by the prospects of marriages for Ida, Lucy, and Mary, her three daughters who were still single, Mrs. Browne remained at home to supervise the major work on the house. Vesuvia had already married wealthy cousin Jesse N. Faulcon and moved into Halifax County. Another reason for upgrading the home place, simply, was to create a residence that befit the position Mary Ann Browne occupied in the region. She as a widow with family, overseers, and slaves, had managed to grow a considerable fortune into a huge one in two decades.

By 1860 her son Ridley owned real estate worth \$10,000 plus personal property valued at \$37,000. His brother Jacob was much wealthier, declaring to the census taker \$50,000 in real estate and \$69,000 in personal property. Mother Mary Ann valued her real estate at \$12,000 and her additional worth at \$56,365. Retarded Ida, more and more dependent, made no such declaration, but sisters Lucy and Mary Lafayette indicated just under \$75,000 as their combined real and personal worth.

One of Mary Ann Browne's daughters did get married in the improved and enlarged *Oakley Grove*. Lucy Jane Browne married Dr. Samuel Williams Eaton of Walker's Hill on Shocco in the new showplace on January 17, 1860. Her mother had laid new carpets and hung new draperies in the grandly renovated house, the front part of which had been raised on



Artist Rendition of *Oakley Grove* Renovation

Courtesy Ray and Dana Killeen

a high brick foundation with heavy, molded corner pilasters. Broad eaves with large brackets supported a low-pitched hipped roof, while paired windows on the front and at each end were complemented by the double front doors with a portico above with its matching doors.

In the diary kept by the engaged daughter Lucy Jane appear wedding notes both happy and sad. She is sad to be saying her good-byes to “Old Oakley.” She had in mind the servants who had sustained her needs and maintained the original Federal-style house, now incorporated into the new mansion which still seemed strange to her. There was nothing bitter-sweet about her entry for January 12, however: “Have been sewing all day. Last night I wrote a letter to Dr. Eaton. This morning got a box from the depot with my collars and sleeves. Brother Faulcon sat with us tonight. I had fun making sleeves.” Lucy and Jacob Faulcon Browne were especially close siblings, and he was upset about her plans to marry and could not bring himself to be present five days later at the wedding ceremony performed by Thomas G. Lowe in the mansion.

Dr. and Mrs. Eaton, the same diary shows, spent their honeymoon in Havana. They found Cuba not especially to their liking except for the fashions he purchased for her there. Some days both she and he did not feel

well. Back in New Orleans and then Mobile to visit friends, they slowly made their way by train back to Browne's Turnout, reaching there February 26, 1860. After being away almost five weeks, Lucy remained at *Oakley Grove* while Dr. Eaton returned to Walker's Hill to prepare for her homecoming in western Warren County.

Their marriage would be unsettled by more than the Civil War. Pregnant for a second time, Lucy Browne Eaton died without a will in November 1864; her baby girl did not live either. There was an heir, however, a son named Lafayette Browne Eaton who had been born March 16, 1861. He grew up on Shocco, across the county from most of his relatives, and became embroiled against them in legal conflicts over Browne-owned land for much of his adult life. His Uncle Ridley would be the unwilling but fair-minded antagonist in these battles related initially to settling, after 1883, the estate his brother Jacob had amassed starting with his 1838 inheritance from his uncle.



Interior Detail, *Oakley Grove*
 Courtesy the State Archives of
 North Carolina

ADJUSTING TO CHANGES

But before the story of Browne's Turnout moves through the Civil War and this founding family's sad demise, a look at the larger community in which the Brownes once thrived is instructive. The best view of their white neighbors and associates alike is provided by the exact notes made by administrators Edward and Alfred Alston in settling some of the affairs Dr. Lafayette Browne had left unsettled when he died intestate in November 1840.

At the estate sale finally held at *Oakley Grove* December 15 and 16, 1841, the following people, in addition to the widow Mary Ann Faulcon Browne, made purchases: William J. Archer, Samuel T. Alston, Edward Alston, Ransom Aycock, Alfred Alston, James T. Browne, John E. Boyd, Sandford Jenkins, Harris Bobbitt, James Burrows, Ann Bellamy, John R. Bobbitt, William Burrows, Samuel Bobbitt, Harry Bobbitt, Newell Carter, Anthony Downtin, William W. Daniel, David D. W. Downtin, John Davis, John Egerton, Grey Egerton, Buckner Eaton, Elizabeth Ferrell,

James Felts, Henry A. Foot, Oliver D. Fitts, Thomas Ferrell, Thomas Fleming, Thomas E. Harris, Kinchen Harris, John Hardy, Sherwood R. Harris (overseer), William F. Harris, Lucretia Harris, Silas Harris, Curtis Hardy, Daniel W. Harris, Jacob R. Harris, Joshua Harris, Howel Harris, John H. Hawkins, Robin E. Harris, William L. Harris, Drury W. Harris, Henry Harris, Sterling Johnston, John Jenkins, Andrew Johnston, Thomas J. Judkins, Albert Gamaliel Jones, Littleberry King, Isaac Little, William C. Lancaster, James Myrick, Nathan Milam, M. J. Montgomery, Hardy Myrick, Gid Nicholson, Benjamin Nicholson, James W. Nicholson, Dr. John P. Nicholson, Nat Nicholson, William Person, Benjamin Powell, Thomas Palmer, John W. Price, John Rodwell, Benjamin Robertson, William D. Riggan, James Robertson, Littleton F. Riggan, Robert Riggan, Weldon Robertson, Thomas W. Rooker, Xanthus Snow, George Shearin, William Stallings, Zach Shearin, Sherwood Sledge, R. E. Smith, Edward Steed, Elisha Shearin, Frank A. Thornton, Herod Thompson, Doctor Williams, George Womble, Anderson Wright, and Henry G. Goodloe.

What did these people making up a virtual census of the region's white population actually buy that day, a decade before Browne's Turnout was established? A mule sold for \$66.00, a bay horse for \$65.00, a pair of carriage horses for \$75.00, a secretary full of good books for \$85.00, a sideboard with decanters for \$66.00, 45 barrels of corn for \$146.70, one yoke oxen for \$29.00, a black horse for \$36.50, a white horse for \$41.25, a carriage and harness for \$150.00, a cow with heifer and steer for \$17.55, a sorrel filly for \$38.50, and four hogs for \$20.04. These prices show that in the early days of the nearby railroad, investment in horsepower remained very significant. A good carriage was more expensive than a fine piece of furniture, and two oxen were more expensive than a cow with a heifer and a steer thrown in for good measure.

The circumstances on the plantation at the time of Dr. Browne's unexpected death in November 1840 had led the estate administrators to identify some of the Browne slaves by name as well as by their annual rental or lease value in 1841. Leander, \$105; Mack, \$78; Henry, \$106; Billy, \$36.25; Edmund, \$90; Washington, \$57.25; Abel, \$53; John, \$40.50; Burwell, \$60; and Will, \$40. For 1842 the list of slaves leased or rented out to white neighbors or associates included Joe, \$55.50; Washington, \$40.50; Abel, \$48.75; Primus, \$5.25; Moses, \$55.25; Isaac, \$2.25; Gabriel, \$51; Edmund, \$57.25; Jim, \$8; Burwell, \$42.75; Will, \$56; William, \$41.75; Henry, \$4.50; Leander, \$74; McDonnels, \$56.50; Bob, \$65; Sam, \$31.50; Ambrose, \$60; Jacob, \$58; Richard, \$4.25; Macklin, \$3; Henry, \$74; Billy, \$75.25; Tom,

\$53.25; Robertson, \$60.25; Cary, \$52; Perry, \$53.25; Drew (blacksmith), \$125; Rosanna, .50; Philis, \$16; Caty, .55; Winny, \$6.50; Lizy, \$21; Charlotte, \$10; Drusilla, \$6; Mary, \$8; and another Caty, \$25. The full listing by the administrators revealed that the white citizens who leased these slaves were, by and large, the same ones listed above as purchasing items at Dr. Lafayette Browne's *Oakley Grove* estate sale in December 1841, a full year after his death.

A simultaneous religious development in the local white culture of the 1840s left its record too. Some of the same citizens who took part in the estate sale and slave market were leaders in the first church to be formed in the place that would soon become known as Browne's Turnout. James G. Robertson, who had bought lumber at the 1841 estate sale, on April 18, 1846, sold two acres of land for \$2.50 for the erection of a church to be called Pegram's Chapel Methodist Church. It is unknown whether an individual member or several generations of the George Pegram family were honored in the naming of the new church. About eight years after its founding, John L. Pegram, old George Pegram's grandson, married Martha Jane Robertson, the daughter of the farmer who sold the land on which the church had been built. She was twenty; he was more than twice her age. Together they had eight children, future leading local citizens among them

The Pegram's Chapel site, including a spring, was on the Eaton's Ferry Road about a hundred yards north of its junction with the road from Hillsborough and Warrenton to Halifax and about half a mile north of the railroad. The trustees of the Methodist Church, South, involved in the purchase were William W. Riggan, Jesse Myrick, John E. Boyd, Hardy Myrick, James Riggan, Daniel Shearin, John B. Powell, Samuel Bobbitt, and Joseph Egerton. E. H. Riggan and Thomas W. Pegram witnessed the transaction that was registered in Warrenton June 30, 1846. Young Ridley Browne had been away in Chapel Hill that year. No member of his family joined in the founding of this church. If they or their slaves worshipped there, God alone would still know.

Pegram's Chapel Protestants, like the Methodists at Whitaker's Chapel as well as Eden Church in Halifax County about two decades earlier, were splitting off from the Methodist Episcopal Church and associating themselves with the Methodist Protestant Church. Informed by the revivalism or reform of the 1820s, these believers were markedly democratic or Jacksonian in practice and advocated lay representation in church government and the elimination of the office of bishop. At the site on Eaton's

Ferry Road they erected a clapboard building. At its front stood a two-tiered, central bell tower with a double door topped by rounded boxing. A gothic window on each side of the tower and two on each side of the sanctuary completed the design except for capped shutters or ventilators that appointed the front and both sides of the tower below the top tier where the large bell hung. The name of the founding pastor of Pegram's Chapel was not preserved. Exactly who were called to worship there also remains unclear, but the name of the first organized house of worship or meeting house in the vicinity brings into the story the family name of Pegram, one destined, like many others, to influence the area without the wealth of the Faulcons and Brownes. At times in the decade preceding the War Between the States, worship at Pegram's lasted several days for many believers.

THE EVANS-SHEARIN LEDGER

Well within sight of this new church, half a mile south and across the Old Halifax Road, John L. Evans opened a general store and saloon. He was the second husband of Mary Frances Shearin Myrick, Zachariah and Mary Bobbitt Shearin's oldest daughter. Her first husband James C. Myrick had died. The 1850 and 1860 censuses indicate Warren County as the birthplace of Mr. Evans who married Mary Frances, already the mother of two children, in early May 1847. She was four years his senior. Perhaps she had been the source of the money he used to open the business in 1851–52, the same year the surrounding community became Browne's Turnout with a railroad depot. On the premises of the Evans business or nearby, Claiborne Shearin, youngest brother of Mary Frances, had previously run a store. He was also a farmer, as his brother-in-law John had been between 1847 and 1851.

John Evans's leather-bound ledger, passed down in the Shearin family through more than a century and a half, preserved a record of two kinds of local commerce, two different business eras, and two kinds of compositions. In the first instance, customer accounts for household items and dry goods plus nails and other hardware appear among plentiful evidence of alcohol consumption—gin, brandy, wine, and whiskey by the drink at the bar or in pints, quarts, and gallons to take away. The storekeeper also had laudanum for sale, some of which he debited to himself. Dr. Ridley Browne, his brother Jacob, and their mother Mary Ann were prominent Evans customers through 1853–54. The neighboring Brack family and scores of other folks, white as well as black, ran accounts in the ledger. By

Doct. R. Brown

X25

To John S. Evans Dr

1852

| | | | | | |
|------|------------------|--|--------------------|---------|-------|
| July | 13 th | To 1/2 gall + 1/2 Cysters | 3/4 | 65 | |
| " | " | " 1 paper Tacks | 4 ^o | 78 | |
| " | 13 | " 1 Horse Rasp | 4/6 | 07 | |
| " | 14 | " 3 ^d nails for John Eaton | 4 ^o | 75- | |
| " | 16 | " 6 ^a do do | 4 ^o | 19 | |
| " | 20 | " 12 ^a do do | 4 ^o | 37 | |
| " | 23 | " 1 ^a Board | 2/3 | 75- | |
| " | 24 | " 100 ^a do | 4 ^o | 38 | |
| Jul | 7 th | 5 ^o nails 1/2 gall Cysters | 4 ^o 3/4 | 6 25 | |
| " | 11 | " 10 th nails for John | 4 ^o | 81 | |
| " | 18 | " To Leather | 1/2 | 82 | 10.00 |
| " | 21 | " 17 th nails | 4 ^o | 63 | |
| " | " | " 32 Bushels coal | 3 ^d | 25- | |
| Mar | 3 rd | " 10 th nails | 4 ^o | 96 | |
| " | 5 | " To Lye | 9- | 63 | |
| " | 9 | " 15 Bushels coal | 3 ^d | 72 | |
| " | 10 | " 6 th nails | 4 ^o | 45- | |
| " | 11 | " 14 th Bushels coal | 3 ^d | 38 | |
| " | 15 | " 8 th nails 4 for Eaton | | 44 4.92 | |
| " | 20 | " 50 Bushels coal | 3 ^d | 50 | |
| " | 22 | " 6 th nails 4 for Eaton | | 1 30 | |
| Apr | 2 nd | " 25 Bushels coal | 3 ^d | 37 | |
| " | 7 | " 1 Spool Thread 1/2 by Hon. Mr. J. | | 75- | |
| " | 8 | " 23 1/2 Bushels coal | 3 ^d | 33 | |
| " | 12 | " 37 1/2 Bushels coal | 3 ^d | 70 | |
| " | 17 | " 20 do do | 3 ^d | 2 33 | |
| " | 27 th | " 20 do do | 3 ^d | 60 | |
| " | " | " 6 th nails do | 4- | 2 10 | |
| May | 9 th | " 20 Bushels coal | 3 ^d | 38 | |
| " | 11 | " 20 th nails by J. K. Kline | 1.25 | 60 | 10.15 |

Dr. Browne's 1852 account at Evans's Store
Funkhouser Image

1853. George W Brack Dr.
 To John S Evans Ho. & cts.

| | |
|--|----------------|
| June 13 th 1 pair Boots - - - | 3 50 |
| July 25 th 7 1/2 yds. domestic at 10 ^{cts} | 65 |
| " " 1 doz. buttons 4 d. - - - | 0 6 |
| " " 8 1/2 Hair Trunk 12 ^{cts} - - - | 2 00 |
| August 18 th 1 1/2 yds. lace at 9 d | 13 |
| | <u>\$ 6.40</u> |
| Sept. 10 th To Cash loured - - - | 1 00 |
| | <u>\$ 7.40</u> |
| Drawn off. | |

George Brack's account at Evans's Store
 Funkhouser Image

1855 Mr. Evans had ended his store and saloon operation precisely when the local tobacco economy was booming. Had he decided to return to farming as well?

A blacksmith had begun to use the old ledger for his business by 1859, the same year Mary Ann Browne finished remodeling Oakley Grove into a much finer residence than it had ever been. The blacksmith's use of the ledger continued during the Civil War era as the vastly reduced farm economy dictated that broken farm equipment, even on the former Browne plantations and elsewhere, be repaired instead of replaced. At the same time writing paper became scarce. Thus the venerable ledger's extra spaces throughout exhibit samples of local children and adults' struggles to master cursive writing. There are draft letters, love poems, postal addresses, and even a recipe for tanning animal hides with lime, ash, and water. Directions for planting ground peas also take up space in this unique archival volume.

When he began this ledger in 1851, Mr. Evans had been an apt accountant; initially he had had steady penmanship and could add. His cursive was excellent. Whenever a running account was paid, he wrote that it

was “drawn off,” meaning “paid in full.” He also used an hour glass symbol for the same purpose in daily accounts, as in the saloon. He wisely took advantage of the railroad located just south of his store in stocking his shelves with thread, various bolts of cloth, hats and shoes, silk handkerchiefs, and fish as well as other necessities including hardware and barrels of booze. M. R. Beckham, the local Raleigh and Gaston superintendent, was a regular customer. In March and April 1852, he bought on credit a pair of shoes for \$1.25, a box of pills for .25, a pint of whiskey for .13, four and a half dozen eggs for .45, and a half-pint of whiskey for .06. In July he charged two pounds of shot and one-quarter pound of powder. It came to .27. Lewis Ash, a Negro tailor who occupied space in the Evans home, ran a two-and-a-half-page account throughout 1852 that came to \$41.48 when it was “Drawn off” on December 22. Besides supplies for his livelihood, such as alpaca wool, cambric, flannel, linsey-woolsey, calico, edging, buttons, flax thread, and pants clothe, he charged tobacco products, molasses, corn meal, and an endless supply of whiskey, brandy, and sugar. Shoes, socks, and a vest with trimmings were on his account as well.

How this store and saloon failed, whoever was in charge, as John Evans drank too much by 1854, neither he nor anyone else named in the ledger revealed. The scrawled accounts recorded and eventually marked paid between 1859 and 1865 or later include no record of grape brandy or whiskey. Instead, there are entries for decrepit wagons and buggies; horses needing new shoes; and broken hoes, shovels, and plows. These blacksmithing accounts were signed by John P. Shearin, another of Mrs. Evans’s brothers.

John Evans himself, apparently sober again and above forty years of age, twice served actively in the Confederacy—April–June and September of 1863 until late March 1865. A private in rank, he survived both tours in Company F of the North Carolina 12th Infantry, but Mary Frances Evans became a widow again before 1870. Her nephew Peter, who also had served in the Confederacy, farmed after the war to support a large family of children, one of whom was named Octavia. By the time she became in 1904 the third wife of W. T. Carter, a twice-widowed neighbor almost twice her age, her scribbling in the old ledger, formerly used by Mr. Evans as well as her paternal grandfather, had improved significantly. While Mr. Carter, not a veteran, was destined to become a future local and county leader, his father-in-law Peter Shearin, crazed by his military experiences, died in the insane asylum in Raleigh in 1913.

TIMES SCORNFUL OF HOPE BUT NOT HONOR AND RESILIENCE

Landed and very wealthy people whose ancestors in North Carolina and Virginia had taken a prominent role in the American Independence movement, the Brownes of *Oakley Grove*, *Faulconia*, and *Favonia Haunt* were not active combatants in the Civil War. If Ridley and Jacob themselves had volunteered or had had healthy white sons of proper age, the number of slaves they jointly owned, ironically, would have exempted all of them from Confederate service. In contrast, all six sons of slave-owning State Senator Dr. Thomas Jefferson Pitchford, a former UNC student who had studied medicine in Philadelphia ahead of Ridley Browne, left *Long Branch* in the southern part of Warren County to fight between 1861 and 1865. One of them was sent back home, being too young to enlist. Of his five older brothers, all of whom had attended Wake Forest College, two were killed in action. Dr. Pitchford himself several times went to battlefields in Virginia to minister to a wounded son or to bring family remains home to *Long Branch* for reburial.

It is clear from *The Weekly Standard* of Raleigh, March 7, 1860, that one pre-war meeting in Warrenton placed Ridley and Jacob Faulcon Browne in company with Dr. Pitchford and other prominent, slave-owning Warren County Democrats. Dr. Pitchford served in the North Carolina Senate from 1858 through 1865, and in this particular 1860 meeting he opposed a resolution subsequently passed by his fellow citizens to ask Governor John W. Ellis, a strong advocate of secession, to convene the state legislature. At issue were an *ad valorem* tax on slaves and the looming question of preserving the Union. One leader in favor of calling a special legislative session spoke of making “the necessary preparations to enable the people to defend their families and property.” He added: “We might love the Union, but we love the honor and interest of our State more.” Governor Ellis did not call a special session despite the vote of a majority of the approximately fifty men gathered in Warrenton, eight months before the election of Abraham Lincoln. Representing the “Democracy of Warren,” they had hoped a called session would enable North Carolina to “take such measures as the present threatening aspect of affairs render necessary for the maintenance of our rights and interests.” The mounting fear of the abolition of slavery was not far below the surface of this political rhetoric.

As the social and economic impacts of the Civil War wriggled through

Reconstruction and beyond, Mary Ann Browne, Ida, and Mary Lafayette remained at *Oakley Grove*. Other people, black and white, also lived there. The 1870 census recorded Mrs. Browne's reduced worth as consisting of \$5,000 in real estate and just \$1,000 in personal property. Widowed daughter Vesuvia with her three children had moved back home. Also living and working at *Oakley Grove* were two black domestic servants and three farm laborers; two were white, the other a black man age 70. Mary Frances Evans lived nearby in reduced circumstances but not poverty.

By 1880 the US Census format had changed so that no real estate and personal property values were indicated, another official indication that the times were scornful of hope and harvest. Drought that spring was so severe that people waded across the Roanoke River; then July brought too much rain, and the river reached flood stage as crops suffered in this weather cycle. January 1881 brought the coldest weather since 1857 according to the *Warrenton Gazette*. This blight did not kill the thirteen-year locusts that shredded crops and trees in May before Warrenton's business district was destroyed by fire in June. A comet, believe it or not, streaked across the sky as pro and con arguments about prohibition spread throughout Warren County. By a 3 to 1 vote prohibition failed there. A late summer drought lingered into September; grist mills ceased operation because the streams were too low again.

President James Garfield was shot and then died of his wounds September 19, and Chester Arthur succeeded him in office. But during the remainder of that distressing year of 1881, news a little more positive surfaced. Vaughan's Station, gradually shortened to Vaughan's and then just Vaughan, became the official new name of Browne's Turnout, and merchant John F. Vaughan, already the railroad section master since 1879, became the postmaster in mid-November. Passenger fares on the trains serving the village were 3.5 cents a mile, first class, and 3 cents for second class. By 1882 the weather cycle had improved as did the harvests with bumper crops of tobacco, corn, wheat, oats, and potatoes. The good prospects for cotton backfired, however. With the best fall weather in local memory, prices for that crop fell so low that many farmers did not harvest their fields. Crop liens and property mortgages accordingly grew too numerous and burdensome for individuals and businesses to tolerate. Clearly the post-Civil War and Reconstruction preference for cotton, as being less labor intensive than tobacco, was deepening poverty, not lessening it. Notices of sales, assignments, and deeds of trusts filled the

newspapers. In northwestern Warren County and elsewhere, ironically, immigrant families from Germany and Switzerland as well as Pennsylvania were arriving as the commodity prices for cotton sank.

Throughout 1883, bankruptcies multiplied, but the weather cycle improved and immigration continued. Tobacco prices recovered to be the best since before the war. Dr. Ridley Browne's public service and his practice of community medicine also increased, but his extensive agricultural interests were harder and harder to manage. He became a magistrate, performed marriages, and delivered babies. In December 1883 he joined with the eight other physicians in the hard-pressed county to post a uniform schedule of charges for medical services. Not in this group of concerned physicians was Dr. Pitchford of *Long Branch*. He had died November 24 at age 74.

The heavy impact of three family deaths had fallen around Dr. Browne's shoulders as well during 1883. Two unrelated misfortunes beset him too. During supper at *Favonia Haunt* one day in August, someone stole \$400.00 from his trunk. This misfortune followed closely on the death by drowning of his finest blooded stallion. Crossing a swollen stream, this magnificent animal had become entangled in its gear and perished. Dr. Browne was not badly injured, but his heart was already broken. In short order sister Mary Lafayette Browne, who had been the child in the womb in 1840, and brother Jacob Faulcon Browne had died respectively of typhoid and apoplexy within several days of each other in early May. Unable to save his siblings, Dr. Browne was named his brother's sole heir as well as executor.



Dr. Ridley Browne
Courtesy Ray and Dana Killeen

In this role Dr. Browne met with honor an even more complex challenge. Since Lucinda, the slave mother of his brother's seven octoroon children, had left *Oakley Grove* with her children as soon as the Civil War ended, at *Faulconia* Brother Jacob had enjoyed the domestic and sexual services of Katherine Shearin, called Cate, an illiterate white woman from the community. With her Jacob Faulcon had fathered three viable children, all girls, to whom he gave the names of Jeffie, Bobbie, and Wallie. His effort reputedly was to

honor either Thomas Jefferson, Robert E. Lee, and Lord Cornwallis or Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson in this fashion. His will left each girl fifty acres of land and a house to share among themselves and their mother. The daughters carried the surname of Shearin, not Browne, but Dr. Browne was required as executor to defend this part of his brother's estate plan in a protracted suit brought by nephew Lafayette B. Eaton of Walker's Hill on Shocco. The good doctor prevailed, and the girls, all still minors, became land owners. Jacob Faulcon Browne had left his octoroon children, whose surname was Brown, nothing except their given names that honored English poets in most cases. Jeffie Shearin later taught school in Warren County; surely she savored the irony of her late sire's humor whenever she discussed poetry or American history.

The April 1883 will of Mary Lafayette Browne left her estate, including her as yet undecided portion of *Oakley Grove*, to her nephew Walton B. Faulcon, the only son of her late sister Vesuvia. While both Mary Ann Browne and her daughter Ida had survived this scourge of disease in May, the redoubtable old lady succumbed to time and grief on December 14, 1883. Survived by just two of her seven offspring, Ridley and Ida, at her



Faulconia

North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library at Chapel Hill

death Mrs. Browne made it possible and necessary, finally, to divide the *Oakley Grove* dower that had come to her when Dr. Lafayette Browne passed away without a will forty-three years before. This property settlement fell upon Dr. Ridley Browne too, but still it lagged. Meanwhile he was named as an alternate delegate to the NC Congressional Convention called for June 25, 1884, but he did not serve. H. A. Foote's *Warrenton Gazette* that carried this convention news in its issue for June 27 proudly announced Warren County's white support for "Jeffersonian democracy and the supremacy of the Caucasian race."

Mrs. Browne's original dower of 1,330 acres was to be divided by three commissioners approved in Warren's Superior Court November 1, 1884, but they were not officially appointed until early 1885. M. Brame, W. S. Gardner, and T. D. Rodwell finally met at *Oakley Grove* on the last day of February. Mary Ann Faulcon Browne had been dead more than a year by that time. In a document filed April 5, 1885, the commissioners gave Dr. Ridley Browne 415 acres valued at \$1,978 or \$ 4.77 per acre; Walter B. Faulcon, heir of Mary Lafayette, 166 acres including *Oakley Grove* house valued together at \$1,318.66; and Ida Browne 275.5 acres valued at \$989 or \$3.59 per acre. Lafayette B. Eaton, Lucy's litigious son, received the same acreage as Ida at the same value; and each of the other adult children of Vesuvia, Jesse Faulcon and Alice Williams, received 94-acre tracts, each one valued at \$329.66 or \$3.50 per acre. The court on November 1, 1884, had provided the formula for this dower division: two-sixths of the land to Dr. Browne, one-sixth each to his sister Ida and their nephew Mr. Eaton, two-ninths to Walter B. Faulcon, and one-eighteenth each to Jesse Faulcon and Alice Williams.

These valuations of the land in the divided dower in the mid-1880s ranged from \$4.77 to \$3.50 per acre. Such figures might be examined in reference to the estate sale values listed above for Dr. Lafayette Browne's non-land possessions in 1841 or to the annual amounts paid to lease his slaves those twenty years before the Civil War. Now twenty years after that war ended, whatever the changing values of paper currency, the Browne family's real property, despite all the value human chattel and tenants had added by farming it, was not in deep recession. Former slaves had become wage laborers, wherever they lived, whatever they did to get by; but land values were roughly the same as in the era when Mary Ann Browne first took her dower of 1,330 acres in late 1840.

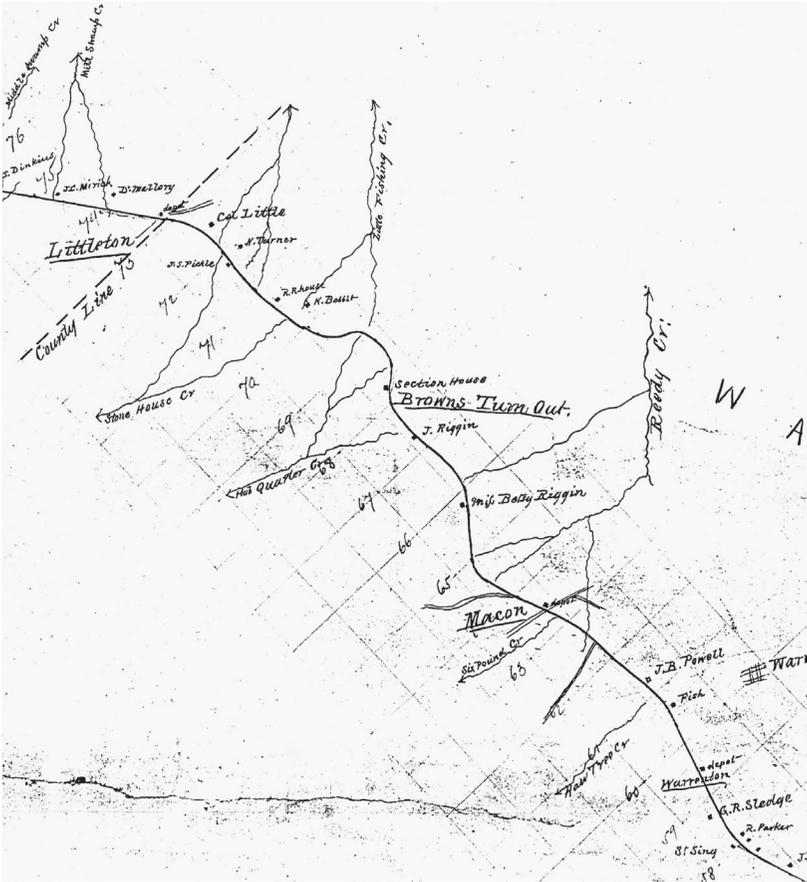
Many times in the early 1850s, for example, land prices per acre varied tremendously as her sons Ridley and Jacob purchased additional local

acreage while tobacco prices boomed. In 1851, for example, Jacob bought 303 acres of Little Fishing Creek land from William C. Clanton for \$2425 or \$8 an acre. The next year he purchased 11 acres from neighbor Blake Baker, direct descendant of the former NC Attorney General, for \$20 or \$1.82 per acre; then Jacob paid Baker \$10.00 per acre for just 3.5 acres in the same vicinity. Brother Ridley in 1854 would sell M. J. Montgomery 32 acres of great-grandfather John Faulcon's land near the Roanoke River for \$75.20 or \$2.35 per acre. According to the post-war census for 1870, in contrast, Dr. Browne listed 5,000 acres of land at a value of \$1.00 per acre. A new low. Many families of former slaves still lived and worked for wages on that Browne property. Perhaps the arrival of new white people from other parts of the country, attracted by the cheap land, would help the area recover, would cause the price of land to rise once more.

GONE WITH THE WEST WIND

Mary Ann Browne's long and mixed blessing of life provides a way to begin to understand the tumultuous impact of the end of slavery for Negroes and whites alike, north and south of Browne's Turnout. The railroad itself had been refurbished by 1868–69, but many of the large old tobacco fields were growing up in pine trees and bramble. Southwest of *Favonia Haunt*, the large F. O. Rightmyer family, net worth about \$3,000, had relocated from Catskills, New York, in 1868. They bought for \$1,000 about 500 acres from the Sledge and Clanton families and began farming across Walker's Creek, beyond the old Browne Grist Mill, due west of the Judkins Road. Even the name of Little Fishing Creek, a Faulcon and Browne property boundary for a century, was now being called Walker's Creek.

By 1872–73 the Raleigh and Gaston line was purchased by the merged Seaboard Airline and Roanoke Railroad. Travel from Raleigh to Norfolk finally became one system, and even before Browne's Turnout was renamed Vaughan in 1881, a new depot in the village welcomed people dreaming of southern prosperity. In just over a decade the Alexander T. Barneses, he a Union veteran, came into the area with their Pennsylvania kinsmen named Wise. Later Scandinavian families named Skundberg and Sandsvick arrived by train from Wisconsin as well as Norway, spurring land ownership deals and timber harvests for themselves and some local lumbermen. White farmers working and living alongside former slave families and poor whites were tenants or sharecroppers on the former Browne estates, soon to be offered at public auctions to settle debts of



Detail, W. C. Kerr's 1874 Railroad Map
 Courtesy the State Archives of North Carolina

white Browne family heirs to whom farming and logging were out of the question, even of survival.

The past was going if not already gone with the west wind for which Dr. Ridley Browne had named his once-grand plantation. He died at *Favonia Haunt* August 16, 1887. When his will was probated in early October, his 5,000-acre holding was valued at \$20,000 or \$4.00 an acre. His personal possessions were estimated to be worth \$2,500 for a total estate of \$22,500. His widow and executrix Henrietta Collins Browne survived him until December 18, 1894. Each of them was buried in the Ridley Browne Cemetery in their back yard. Neither grave was marked by anything but a fieldstone. Among their surviving children, sons Orville,

Sharp, Faulcon, and Ridley would play roles of varying importance in the future of Vaughan.

So One Morning I Shook One

A quite informative, non-economic account of the Civil War, its long aftermath, and the Brownes, white and otherwise, has survived. It is about the seven octoroon slave children fathered by Jesse Faulcon Browne with his mother's enslaved cook Lucinda. She as a young slave girl had been given to Mary Ann Browne in her brother Jacob's 1838 will. One of Lucinda's seven offspring, Flora May Lloyd, a widow living in Philadelphia, penciled an 11-page account of her earlier life in Warren County and sent it in July 1934 to Mrs. John A. Pipkin. Mr. Pipkin was a white Browne descendant who wanted his wife to write his family history. He owned and ran a jewelry store in Warrenton where they lived. This letter has not been published previously.

Dear Mrs. Pipkin,

Your letter re'd several days ago and I am afraid that this statement will not help you much. However, I did the best I could and if it is worthy of recognition I would like you to let me know and if I am still on this plain when you finish this book I would like much to see it. If this is not what you wanted, please leave me know as I am always glad to help one in any way I can and please excuse pencils as my hands are a little shaky and I don't like to write with pen and ink.

*Sincerely yours,
Flora May Lloyd*

When about 7 years old my brother Milton and I decided to dig a real well so we hauled some stones to wall it up with, then we started digging. It was about the size of a large wash tub and one morning he told me to go out and dig before breakfast. We had dug so deep that I fell in. As we only had an old axe without a helve to dig with, I . . . sat down to dig and cut my big toe nearly off. Then my brother Milton took some soot, some brooming, and some turpentine and mixed it together, tied it up, and told me not to tell Mother until it got well. So I went out in the path between Mother's house and the kitchen as I knew she was there cooking breakfast and gave a few yells. So she called to know what the trouble was and I told her. They called Dr. Ridley Browne and he

dressed it and saved my toe. So that put an end to well digging. Then one night the colored people were burning leaves in the oak grove, and I went out to see the blaze. Faulcon Browne came riding past and asked me what I was doing out there. I said I wanted to see the fire so he said you had best go to the house you might get burned up. Then he went to the house and told his mother so she sent Byron to bring me in and always after that she kept me in the house until bedtime. Then she would send Byron home with me. At meal time she would have me stand beside her, and she would eat one mouthful and give me the next. Time in the afternoon she would give me a glass of milk and some crackers and take me for a walk. One day she took me to the overseer's house and I found a haversack, a canteen and tin cup belonging to a soldier boy. I wish that I had them now. This house was vacant and some deserters were staying there. She was training Byron to be overseer. He carried the keys to all the out buildings such as corn cribs, meat houses, and stables. I never saw Dr. Lafayette Browne as he passed out either before I was born or old enough to know. Mary Ann Browne was very kind to everyone. She often said to Byron and me, You children stay clear of bad company and you will get along. Mind the company you keep and never tell a lie. A man that will tell a lie will steal. As I was young I . . . her children were grown up before I would remember as I was only about nine years old when Mother moved away from Mary Ann Browne's, the old homestead. Then she moved to Mrs. Sherwoods in Warrenton and William Burroughs, Mr. Woodson and a family of Goodloes all lived in what I would call a back street that led down to the jail. Byron lived at Burroughs. Milton lived at Woodsons, and I lived at Goodloes. The Burrows were very good to Byron. The Woodsons were good to Milton, but I had to take care of the children. The little girls would never allow me to dress them, so one morning I shook [one] and her grandfather was there and saw that. So he came over and choked me badly. I told Byron and he took me home on Saturday. My mother Lucinda Brown had moved down below Embro to Alfred Bobbits at that time. Then from there she moved out near Hawtree to live at John Tuckers. She could not stay there so she went up to Shocco and hired with Dr. Samuel Eaton. Then she took Byron and Milton home as she wanted us with her. Then Byron went to live with the Major Henry Eaton. Milton lived at Augustus Falkner's but not for long as we built a log cabin on the Mary K. Williams place. Cleared up some forty or fifty acres of land, lived there nine years. Then we bought

more than 200 acres of land from John B. Williams. Had five years in which to pay. At the end of the five years we paid the bill in full which was \$2000. There were seven of us: Byron, Milton, Flora, Shelly, Thomas More, George Herbert, and Peter P. Brown. Tom passed out when he was about 38. Milton passed out in seventy-third year. Byron passed when he was in his 80th year. Lucinda my mother was 72 when she passed out. I am the oldest living and was 77 on the 14th day of May. I lived at home with my mother until I was 26 years and three months old. Then I came to Pa to live. I was still at home when Faulcon, his sister, and his mother Mary Ann passed out. They were buried at Oakley Grove. They passed out very close together. I think that Dr. Ridley and Ida lived longer than any of the rest. We never had much time for play as we had to work and make our way in life. Byron and Milton would not go to school so I taught them arithmetic, taking them through addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and fractions. I also taught them to write their own names. I had not much chance at school but as I was and am still a book worm it was easy work for me. I at one time knew one hundred and fifty rime poems and 18 dialogs. Was a lover of history, especially reading the lives of great men. Was and still am a lover of nature and at this season of the year could live in the woods among birds and flowers, but am awfully afraid of snakes. My mother was a member of the Baptist Church and not cruel to her children, but her motto was that all play and no work make Jack a lazy boy and to work while you worked and play after work was done. She taught us to obey when spoken to and I am thankful she was strict with us. She kept us all together. I am the only one that ever left home but my desire for seeing some of the world caused me to come to Pa where I could see some of the wonderful things I had read about and I liked it so much that I have never had any desire to leave. I still love the home of my childhood days and once in a while I take a trip home to NC. I married a Pennsylvanian by birth shortly after coming here. He passed out in 1906, and I am still a widow. As I always loved farm life I married a farmer and lived in the country until about twenty years ago. My single daughter and I own our house which is nice and comfortable. She still works as she has made her own way in life and I take care of the house. Should you ever come to Phila would be glad to have you drop in to see us. Brother Peter lives at Embro and he might be able to tell you about the sales of the Brown property. No, Faulcon Brown never gave Byron one foot of ground in his life. Byron never made but one trip

there after we left. Then he gave Byron 15 dollars and told him to divide it between us all. At the time Byron was about 16 years old so he (Faulcon Brown) told Byron to tell Mother he would give each one of us fifty acres of land and horses and cows to farm with. He would give each a deed but we could never sell. Mother would not accept as she said God would take care of us all and so he did life was hard at times but gay since we were our own boss. Needing no one to give us orders we were too anxious to make good. I shouldered my hoe to the field with the boys. At all times doing everything the boys did but plow. That I could not do. The happiest days I ever spent. Sometimes I would get tired but that was all as I was never sick. Only we all had chills at times. My brother Milton and I would burn tar in winter on a small scale and sell it to whoever wanted a quart. One day I kicked a quart over. For that he tried to hang me but I kicked him so hard he was glad to leave me down. We rented a mule the first year we farmed. The second year we bought a horse and an ox and imagine my troubles leading the ox for the boys to plow down in the low lands on Shocco Creek. Sometimes he would make a plunge for the creek on hot days which would cause me to shed tears as he would run and jerk me down. So the next year we did away with the ox and bought another horse. Then things changed for better and we got along swimmingly. As to the boys and their families, they all had large families. Byron was the father of 12 children; Milton had 10; Shelley, I think, 13 or 14, Tom Moore 10, Herbert 8, and Peter 5. I had 6. All of my brothers owned their homes and I think all of their children stayed at home until after they were 21. Faulcon is Byron's son and Henry Brown—kept post office several years—he is Milton's son. My brother Shelley lives in Franklin County. Brother Herbert lives in Chesterfield Co. Virginia. Peter lives at Embro. There is not much more that I can [tell] and perhaps this but little help to you. When the war closed my brother Byron was in the pines not far from the house cutting bean poles. He had his ox cart with him. Some soldiers came along and said little boy, where is your pass. Byron said I have no pass. I am a colored boy. They said well if you are a colored boy you are free now. So Byron took the ox out, left ox cart, and all in the pines. Came to the house and said Mother some soldiers came along and told him if he is colored he is free. Mother sent him back to get the ox and cart. Then in a day or so Byron ran away. Mother was worried sick. He stayed a week or more at camp with the soldiers. Then Mary Ann Browne blamed Mother and told her she could go too. So she moved to Warrenton.

Byron and I were talking about that in 1930 and he said he was glad he ran away. If he hadn't run away he might have stayed on there depending on her for everything and never have started out to make a living. We are called Negroes but there is but one-eighth of colored blood in us. This I forgot to mention before. I hope that you will be able to read this. F. May Lloyd. So this belongs almost at the beginning of my story."

From context alone the reader understands almost all of this amazing memoir by Mrs. Lloyd, but especially two aspects of her letter invite extrapolations, one brief, the other considerably longer.

Lucinda Brown's Children

They were Mary Ann Browne's octoroon grandchildren, fathered by her son Jacob, also known as Jacob Faulcon Browne, who was two years older than Lucinda. Born in 1832, her surname was sometimes said to be Fain, but she grew up as a domestic slave at *Oakley Grove* and took the name Brown. Her first son to live, Byron, was born when she was eighteen in 1850. Between then and 1865, her last year at the home place, Lucinda, still single, had given birth to six more of Jacob's offspring. Flora May, the letter writer, was born in 1856. Nine years old when thirty-three-year-old Lucinda took her and her six brothers to Warrenton, Flora would live with or near her mother until age 26 when, with a son named Willie, she left North Carolina and moved to Pennsylvania. There she married a farmer and lived and worked in the countryside near Philadelphia. Meanwhile, Lucinda herself, a farmer and eventually a landowner, had married Daniel Williams and had one son with him. They prospered in the Shocco community among the descendants of slaves from *Montmorenci* and the nearby home of Lafayette Browne Eaton, one of Mary Ann Browne's white grandchildren. Lucinda B. Williams died April 6, 1901, and was buried in that area just off Hidden Creek Road in a family cemetery then maintained by her devoted son Byron.

The Goodloe Girl Flora May Brown Shook

Her name was Cornelia Goodloe, daughter of Henry Garrett Goodloe. As a young man he had come to the sale of Dr. Lafayette Browne's personal property at *Oakley Grove* in late 1841. Known as Garrett, he had married Indiana Duke in 1836, and they already had a son by the time of the sale.

According to the Raleigh *Register*, Indiana D. Goodloe died December 3, 1852, having had two other children, both girls. Her widower did not remarry until 1856. Then his immediate family included his second wife, nearly twenty years his junior, the former Cornelia R. Browne of Nansemond County, Virginia, plus the three children from his first marriage. They were Lewis, Mary, and Ann, called Annie. His second marriage produced another son Kemp and a daughter. Named Cornelia for her mother, she was born in 1863. By that time, Mary had left home and Lewis had been serving in the Confederacy for two years. When Garrett, age fifty-three, died without a will in June 1866, ten-year old Flora May Brown, young Cornelia's maid, had already been removed by her brother Byron from the Goodloe family. Little Cornelia was about three years old. Her half-sister Annie was still living in the Goodloe home.

Dr. James Kemp Strother Goodloe, young Kemp and Cornelia's paternal grandfather who had choked Flora May, was living in Warrenton, sometimes with Garrett and Cornelia during 1865–66. As a young man Dr. Goodloe had studied medicine but later actually devoted himself to teaching school in and around Louisburg, his native place. There his two older children had been born; Garrett came first, in 1813. His mother Mary Reaves Jones Goodloe died the next year, 1814, when Daniel Reaves Goodloe was born. Dr. Goodloe's own mother Ann raised these two boys. In 1820 Dr. Goodloe, still a schoolmaster, married Ann Hill by whom he had two more children, a son Harvey Harvell and a daughter Camilla. Their intelligent but unambitious father would remain a dependent relative for the remainder of his life, living here and there with kinfolks.

His eldest son Garrett Goodloe found himself not penniless but with a net worth under \$300.00 after the Civil War. He had had a reversal of fortune. His work during the early 1850's when his first wife died had been as Warrenton's jailor. Next he worked as manager of *The Bellamy*, the town's largest hotel. Throughout much of 1856, the year he married again, he served as postmaster for Almeria outside of town. In that work and elsewhere he prospered, for the 1860 census listed him as a farmer with real assets and personal possessions valued at \$11,000. Yet all of it was insufficient to cover his debts to other businesses and individuals according to an indenture signed by him and registered February 27, 1860, by William A. White, Warren County Clerk of Court.

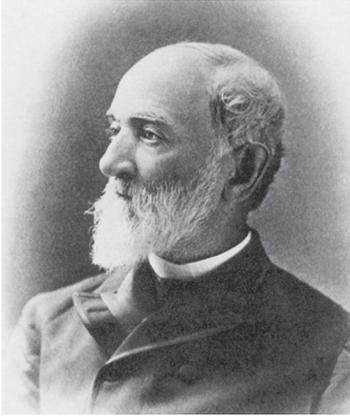
Unfolding calamities, even before secession, had hit his family hard, especially his wife Cornelia who had always known the finer things of life. As the younger daughter of Dr. Albrighton Browne of Suffolk, Vir-

ginia, she had been a boarding student in Warrenton in 1850 at the Warrenton Collegiate Academy where she became better acquainted with her cousin Vesuvia Browne of *Oakley Grove*. Henrietta Collins Browne who would marry Dr. Ridley Browne in 1851 had also grown up in the same affluent Virginia Tidewater milieu. She was Cornelia's older sister. Adjusting to genteel poverty and then to Garrett's death in 1866 with her now vastly reduced circumstances was more than Cornelia could endure. Circumstantial evidence suggests that Cornelia Goodloe died before 1870 despite the support she received from her stepson Lewis and other relatives. No census data for 1870 or later mention her. Moreover, Kemp and young Cornelia required guardianships according to court records.

H. Garrett Goodloe's death eventually motivated his younger brother Daniel to apply and qualify as guardian for his young nephew Kemp and niece Cornelia, but this process took several years to go through probate in Warren County. The official documents were finally signed in stages between September 16 and December 24, 1874, eight long years after Garrett's death. By that time the little girl whom Flora had shaken because she would not get dressed was eleven years old, and perky Flora May had been growing up with her mother Lucinda and younger brothers in nearby Shocco.

Cornelia Riddick Goodloe, as Daniel R. Goodloe's ward in Warrenton, survived her chaotic childhood and on April 9, 1891, in Suffolk, was married to her first cousin Granville Sharp Patterson Browne of Vaughan. He had been named for an uncle of the bride's mother and was also Dr. Ridley Browne's next to youngest son. Moreover, his mother Henrietta was his bride's aunt. Flora May, the octoroon girl who had shaken his bride as a little girl in Warrenton, was his first cousin as well, as were her brothers. A widow since 1887, the groom's mother had married her Cousin Ridley in Nansemond County, Virginia, forty years before. This old lady of *Favonia Haunt*, one hopes, caught the train in Vaughan in April 1891 to attend her son's wedding to her niece "up home." To be sure Lucinda and her children were not invited. The bride's guardian Uncle Daniel may not have been invited either. If he had been, he might not have attended.

This busy, accomplished man who had been slow in stepping forward as guardian for his dead brother's two younger children had consistently been an avowed antislavery Whig since the early 1840s. He was at once famous and infamous. Admired and hated. One detractor in Raleigh called this progressive Unitarian a "God-forsaken, soulless, honorless abortion of North Carolina." His efforts as a printer, editor, able journal-



Daniel Reaves Goodloe
From Internet Archive

ist, failed lawyer, and itinerant government official nonetheless produced a well-known, consistent detailing of the false economy of slavery in a series of pamphlets and editorials in national newspapers, including the *New York Times* and the *New York Tribune*. From young manhood Mr. Goodloe had viewed the South he loved as a region blighted by slavery. He championed Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; she praised his writings as well. His tone was always moderate, not radical; and his supporters even included President Lincoln who

in 1862 appointed this North Carolina native to oversee the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Loyal slave owners, not the slaves, were compensated in this process; the average price an owner was paid to free a slave did not exceed \$300. The President in his annual message to Congress during that same period offered a detailed compensated emancipation constitutional amendment to the war-torn South. He had been convinced by Goodloe and others that the cost of paying masters and mistresses to free their chattel throughout the Confederacy would be less ruinous in every way than continuing the costly war. Yet the war rolled on. No compensation for emancipation was paid any southern slave owners, and compensating slaves who were freed did not happen either.

After Lincoln's assassination in April 1865, President Andrew Johnson that September appointed Daniel Reaves Goodloe as United States Marshal for North Carolina, a position he held until 1869. Living mostly in his native state again, he had been preoccupied with this work during the first year of his brother's physical and financial demise and death. As federal marshal, meanwhile, Daniel carefully fostered a moderate Republican Party approach toward Reconstruction, whether military or legislative. He soon fell out of favor with the more radical North Carolina Governor, William Woods Holden, whom he briefly opposed by seeking that office himself. Reconstruction, like slavery, also troubled Marshal Goodloe. After 1876 he continued his critique of the years since the war in articles and other publications about this state and the nation. The 1880 census identifies him and his ward Kemp living and working in Washing-

ton, D.C. With them half-brother Harvell Goodloe also lived and worked as a government clerk. Young Kemp was a printer. Then in 1882 the former federal marshal purchased the historic William Alston home place in Warrenton. Harvell's immediate family already lived there along with Garrett's two single daughters Annie and Cornelia. Kemp remained in Washington. Confederate veteran Lewis Goodloe died in Raleigh in October 1883. Their Uncle Harvell died a year later in Nashville, Tennessee.

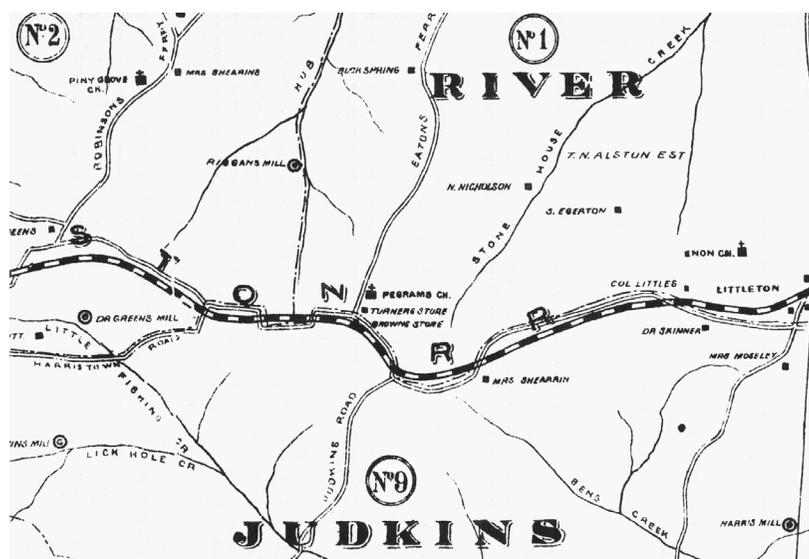
By the time of Cornelia's 1891 marriage to Cousin Granville, Daniel Reaves Goodloe's life had become a little simpler and his personal circumstances much reduced in influence and ready cash. In 1894 he was Washington correspondent for the *Raleigh News and Observer* and submitted mostly reminiscences about his busy public life. During the spring of 1896 he came home to North Carolina and Warrenton, but continued to write and occasionally to publish. After suffering a stroke four years later, he died there in 1902 at age 88 and was buried at Fairview Cemetery. If his former ward Cornelia helped take care of him during these years or at some point welcomed Uncle Daniel into her home in Vaughan, no record has surfaced. This moderate, perplexed abolitionist and hesitant guardian was not memorialized in the naming of Cornelia Goodloe Browne's sons either. She did, however, name one son for her deceased brother Kemp and another for William G. Randall, the respected artist who married her half-sister Annie. Of Cornelia's two daughters, one was named for Annie and the other for Cornelia herself.

If and how Cornelia ever thought of Flora May, her husband's octoroon cousin who once was choked for shaking her, history guards such facts with silence. Yet without the survival of Flora May and her 1934 letter to Mrs. J. A. Pipkin, very little if any of this tortured social history of post-Civil War Warren County, including the Brownes, Goodloes, and Browns, would have come to intelligible light.

VAUGHAN AND THE VAUGHAN FAMILY: 1879–1924

The northwestern Halifax County village once called South Gaston, now Thelma, occupied the south bank of the Roanoke River. After 1838, a ferry landing there received all Raleigh and Gaston Railroad passengers in both directions until a railroad trestle was built. Sallie S. Freeman, born in this village in 1862, could recall the burning of that trestle by Confederate forces as the Civil War ended. Sallie's father H. L. Freeman was master of the original section of the historic railroad from the river southwestward to Littleton, the town that straddled the boundary of Halifax and Warren counties. Western Warren native John Frederick Vaughan married Sallie Freeman on March 26, 1879, in the old town of Halifax. The Rev. Charles Cook officiated. Born in 1852 at Bearpond, the oldest son of Robert Starke and Mary Elizabeth Clark Vaughan, John had been a farmer and store clerk before being hired just prior to his marriage as the new railroad section master between Littleton and Macon. He, twenty-seven, and his bride, seventeen, arrived in the old village of Browne's Turnout by train to establish their residence more than a year before the 1880 census was taken in June. In it they listed a daughter named Dora, born the previous March. Dr. Ridley Browne, a neighbor, probably attended her birth.

Probably, too, the John Vaughans had seen a published copy of the 1874 map of Warren County prepared by Robert Daniel Paschall, a surveyor from Ridgeway. His map did not pinpoint Browne's Turnout to show where the 1851 depot stood north of the railroad. The three still large but less influential plantations of the Browne Family were left off this map as well. Pegram's Church was shown on Eaton's Ferry Road near its intersec-



Detail, 1874 Paschal Map

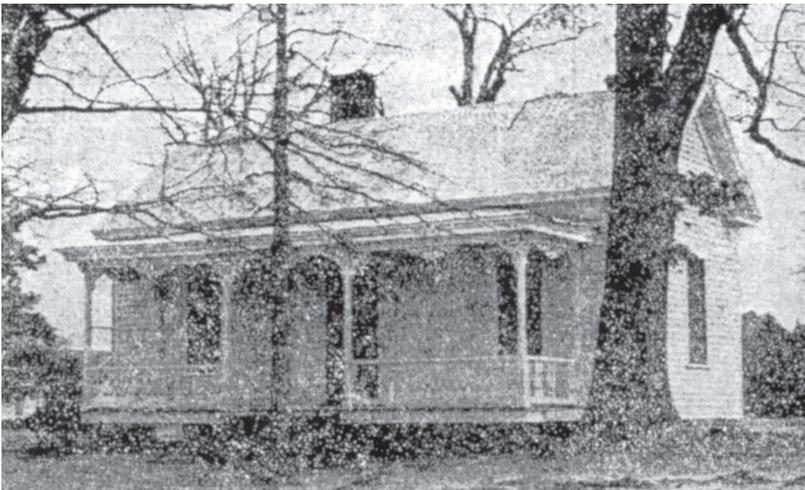
tion with the Hillsborough or Warrenton-Halifax Road. Two local stores were indicated nearby, one called Turner’s and the other Brown’s—minus the final “e.”

In the right-hand bottom corner of this spare map, promotional language approved by the Warren County commissioners boldly declared: “Foreign grapes have been introduced and flourish well; while all kinds of fruits are raised in great abundance. Being within three hours ride of Raleigh, the Capital of the State; twelve of Wilmington, our chief seaport city; eight of Petersburg, Richmond, and Norfolk; eighteen of Baltimore, and twenty-four of New York; and possessing a salubrious climate free from malaria, and being abundantly supplied with pure water, Warren County presents many inducements to those seeking permanent homes or temporary relief from the rigors of Northern winters or the unwholesome influences of malarial regions.” It is not likely that John and Sallie would have thought this exclamatory advertisement applied to them, for they had not moved very far to start a new life in their new community.

Exactly where or with whom the young couple initially lived for two or more years is also subject to speculation. Using the route of the Judkins Township 1880 census taker John W. Riggan for guidance, the order of listed families suggests that the Vaughans occupied a former plantation overseer’s house near the home of Dr. Ridley and Henrietta Collins

Browne. The Turner-Squire merchant family lived nearby, just south of the intersection where their store and the other one stood. In addition to Norman Bobbitt, a white railroad laborer and his family, John and Sallie's other neighbors were the families of Willis Edwards, Solon Browne, John Browne, and Harvey Browne. These four men, born as slaves of Dr. Browne, now worked on John's railroad section crew. In the dwelling occupied by the section master and his wife and daughter also lived a black servant with her own daughter plus two white farm workers, John Stallings age sixteen and Baker Brack twenty. Late that August, a revival or protracted meeting brought five new converts to Christ at Pegram's Chapel. The adult Vaughans were already Methodists, but not Methodist Protestants.

Whether the Vaughans' rented house stood north or south of the railroad itself is uncertain, but the young family and their help lived about half a mile west of where the railroad yard or siding of Browne's Turnout had been established since the early 1850s. By the early 1870s the reconditioned Raleigh and Gaston line had been purchased by the Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad, and that new system was operating successfully through the village along the fall line from Norfolk, Virginia, to Augusta, Georgia. With his income as section master on August 28, 1881, John made his first move toward building his own dwelling beside a new depot erected on the site of the old one from the early 1850s. For \$20.00 Jacob



John Vaughan House with Fancy Victorian Millwork
Clifton Alston Image

Falcon Browne sold John two opposing pieces of land, one plot three-quarters of an acre north of the railroad and the other one containing an acre and a quarter south of the tracks. John's residence and its dependencies were built on the smaller portion between the old road from Hillsborough to Halifax and the Raleigh and Gaston line. His general store and its yard occupied the larger plot across the tracks from his residence. A wagon path ran west of the dwelling and crossed the railroad. Eventually another store building, even today mistakenly believed to have housed the original John Vaughan business, went up just north and immediately west of that intersection. The official documents in Book 47 pages 472–73 in the Warren County courthouse do not support that tradition.

For John the year 1881 was taking shape as in a dream. Or was he beginning a nightmare? Ambiguous trends were evident. In April a new Sunday School was organized at Pegram's. It flourished as a fierce prohibition campaign inflamed Judkins citizens and statewide. Liquor won hands down, 3 to 1, locally. John and Sallie welcomed a second child, a daughter named Eugenia, on October 18. Within the month Browne's Turnout officially became Vaughan, and on November 15, 1881, John had been named its first postmaster.

The post office would be in his new store south of the railroad. His new house soon stood directly across the tracks, thanks mainly to his skills and those of his railroad section crew. John was also planning to rent cotton farmland for the coming year even though drought gripped the Roanoke Valley hard. Local, experienced farmers were feeling debt ridden under the crop liens so typical in that era of scarce money. At least cotton was a less thirsty crop than tobacco.

John Vaughan himself was atypical of his neighboring farmers in having responsibilities as husband, father, railroad section master, and postmaster in addition to dreams of cultivating cotton. Yet he and his wife were part of a huge relocation of people, foreign, domestic, and of various races, that had begun after the Civil War and lasted beyond Reconstruction. For his part, he had simply moved across Warren County from west to east. Sallie had moved southwest into Warren from Halifax County. The state of North Carolina was changing boundaries too, with Vance County being newly created out of Warren, Granville, and Franklin during the 1881 legislative session.

The official post office documents John Vaughan filled out and filed in October–November 1881 had, in fact, suggested Alton as the new name of this old train siding. An official in Washington crossed that suggestion out

because it was already in service elsewhere. So Vaughan, often referred to as Vaughans or Vaughan's Station, became the official second choice in early November, and Browne's Turnout became history. Of the 300 people including the Brownes/Browns, white and black, to be served by the new post office, only about twenty-five were actual villagers. Among them, the white and mixed race Brownes predominated.

These official documents also indicated that the route of the trains to serve Vaughan was defined as primarily Raleigh to Norfolk. The Judkins Township office and station would be eight miles south of the Roanoke River and three miles north of Walker's Creek. That's the body of water the Faulcon and Browne deeds had consistently called Little Fishing Creek since before the American Revolution. Furthermore, the documents stated that the new Vaughan post office was six miles north of Mountain View, five miles west of Littleton, and five miles east of Macon. William G. Egerton, the postmaster at Macon Depot since May 1872, had served as John Vaughan's liaison in negotiations with the Post Office Department in Washington. As recently as February 1, 1881, Macon Depot had officially become Macon, another indication that new names for old villages, historic waterways, and county boundaries were in vogue.

AMBITIONS AND TRAGEDY

Whereas John's next younger brother Charles had been living with their parents near Henderson in 1880, he soon left the future seat of Vance County and moved to live with John and Sallie and their growing family, probably before Vaughan officially became Vaughan in November 1881. With Charlie arrived his entrepreneurial spunk equal to his older brother's gumption. He was single but not single-minded. Charlie too had been raised a Methodist, and the local trustees of Pegram's Church, of the Methodist Protestant persuasion, had decided to move their church building, intact, into the village. These two Vaughan brothers became this project's engineers. John had access to railroad jacks capable of lifting mighty burdens; Charlie had always had an eye for tall pine trees that could be cut into straight logs suitable for rolling and skidding the 1847 house of worship to its new site on the south side of the Warrenton-Halifax Road. Soon a local crew of strong men with draft animals regularly gathered at the Eaton's Ferry Road location; day after day they slowly moved the thirty-five-year-old building about a mile to the east. Then the jacks were returned to the depot, and the logs could be turned into fuel, as needed, or cross-ties for railroad maintenance. The price of



Vaughan Methodist Church, Earlier Pegram's Chapel on Eaton's Ferry Road
Courtesy Pierce Family

new railroad sills or crossties had fallen during the relocation project to just 20 cents each.

Concerning the old church building's new location, on November 22, 1882, a year after the village officially became Vaughan, Jacob Faulcon Browne had sold the Methodist Protestant trustees for \$10.00 half an acre of his land about 200 yards west of John and Sallie Vaughan's new house. By the spring of 1883 the old church became the first Christian sanctuary for white worshippers in Vaughan proper. In time Pegram's name would change to Calvary Methodist Protestant Church in this new setting. Baker Brack, who had recently boarded with John Vaughan's family, was a church trustee. Others were Newell Carter, R. C. Riggan, and W. T. Carter. Assigned to eight Methodist Protestant congregations in Warren County, the Rev. L. J. Holden was the first minister to serve the relocated white church. Completed before the building was moved, the 1882 Kerr-Cain state map did not mention the new village of Vaughan.

Area Negroes had been gathering to worship since July 28, 1878, on Ash Hill, a site just west of Dr. Ridley Browne's *Favonia Haunt* and less

than a mile south of the original location of Pegram's Church. At age 64 Elizabeth "Lizzie" Ash had gathered this congregation in her home. Soon members threw up a brush arbor. In the 1880 census Mrs. Ash was living with her son Charles's family south of the railroad. Eventually worshippers erected a log structure on a nearby acre of land donated by Louis Ash, the village tailor. It was the first Ashley Grove Baptist Church.

The public service and dedication of John and Charlie Vaughan in engineering the relocation of the old Methodist sanctuary in 1882-83 was personally very costly. The brothers' joint store venture known as Vaughan Brothers was already going bankrupt as the clapboard church building was inched into the village. Never again would the founder of Vaughan achieve anything like his satisfaction of seeing that old structure in a new place. Even today to summarize the tragedy of his remaining life seems cruel. Yet history needs to speak, if ever so briefly, about what happened to John Vaughan between the spring of 1883 and the summer of 1890 when he died of malaria without a will in the place that the US Postal Service had named for him. His young wife Sallie had died not long after giving birth in July 1884 to their third child, a son also named John, who survived. During these same years, the old Browne family also dwindled as both Jacob Faulcon and his youngest sister Mary died in May 1883; their revered mother succumbed to old age that December. In August 1887 death claimed also Dr. Ridley Browne who may have attended the births of all three Vaughan children and the death of their mother Sallie.

With her death John Vaughan, section master, bankrupt merchant, would-be farmer, and postmaster had become a single parent with three young children. His Vance County parents Robert Starke and Mary Eliza Vaughan supported him and came to help. His brother and business partner Charles, age twenty-five, lived with him, clerked in their store, and was seriously courting a prominent local girl, Martha Olivia Nicholson, whom he married October 22, 1884. Everyone called her Mollie. Her parents, Nathaniel and Jane Pope Nicholson, sustained their large family by farming near Stone House Creek north of the village. The youngest of the three Vaughan brothers, Walter, born in 1871, still lived in Henderson but made occasional visits by train to Vaughan. Despite being warmly surrounded, especially with Charlie and his new bride available to help, John finally decided to allow Sallie's parents to raise their three grandchildren in South Gaston on the Roanoke in Halifax County. Section master H. L.

Freeman and wife Betty travelled back and forth, also by train, to make these arrangements. Dora was four, Eugenia was three, but John was still a baby.

In the troubled year before this boy was born, both of his parents and sometimes Uncle Charlie had been parties to deeds of trusts and other property or crop liens and mortgages. Then and later after Sallie's unexpected death, the identical personal and real property was collateralized simultaneously more than once. At one point, just two months before the birth of young John, his future father handed his mother to be \$75.00 which Sallie then gave back to John as payment for the three-quarter acre lot on which their home stood. It was a move to protect the land from foreclosure. John Vaughan, his self-image bold as ever, insisted to H. A. Foote, *Warrenton Gazette* editor and witness of this transaction, that he had clear title to the place. But since the previous June this property had been listed as collateral in the first of many legal instruments to be negotiated.

These business failures of the Vaughans were not secrets. June 15, 1883, Foote's *Warrenton Gazette* had posted the following item as news: "We regret to hear that Vaughan Brothers of Vaughan's Station have been forced to make an assignment for the benefit of their creditors. They are clever, hard-working men, and we trust their difficulties are only temporary." Then in mid-October, in Warrenton for another negotiation, imprudent John Vaughan actually lost a pair of fine shoes. That news made the paper too: "I lost or misplaced . . . a pair of calf skin shoes, J. R. Johnson's make, for which a reward will be paid if left at Mr. Foote's office or sent to me in Vaughan's." If the calf skin shoes ever showed up is unknown. In another business move John Vaughan made during these troubled years, he added liquor to the stock in his store in early December 1883. Other Vaughan merchants were in this trade ahead of him.

Already six months earlier, open accounts or debts totaled over \$3,100 in the local store John and Charlie operated jointly and in John's separate fertilizer business. Sixty acres of cotton had been under John's cultivation on borrowed money as well. Creditors from Norfolk, Baltimore, Richmond, Petersburg, Raleigh, and across Warren County wanted to arrange settlements of these accounts. Nothing drastic happened immediately. In *Branson's 1884 North Carolina Business Directory*, as a matter of fact, both the bankrupt partnership business and John F. Vaughan's separate fertilizer store were listed alongside three other village stores as being in full

operation. The other stores were operated by J. D. Dowling, C. D. Squire, and R. B. Pearson, the latter a fish dealer. Also in operation in Vaughan in 1884 were the law practice of J. W. J. House, P. W. Harris's blacksmithing and wheelwright shop, the distillery of W. T. Carter, two lumber and shingles yards belonging to G. W. and J. Y. Harris, and a building and contracting firm belonging to a member of that same family. Dr. Ridley Browne was the sole physician. Local white farmers included him along with R. L. Harris, J. W. Robertson, C. D. Squire, Peter and H. S. Shearin, N. H. and W. T. Carter, J. F. Riggan, Rev. D. A. Fishel, three members of the Pegram family, W. B. Faulcon at Oakley Grove, Nat Nicholson, and John F. Vaughan. The population of Warren County in 1884 was 22,619; the white population totaled 6,387; colored people numbered 16,232. Acres of unimproved land were twice as numerous as improved acres. Judging from official records and county newspaper accounts, no one else was so mired in financial troubles as John Vaughan.

The Warren County *Deed Books* numbered 47 through 54 expose this local leader's constant wheeling and dealing in negotiations, shady however legal. His stores never closed, no estate sale ever took place, and if debts were settled, the details were not disclosed as new deals took shape. There is no indication that any action ever ended up in open court. No lawyer's name appears in the official record either. Moreover, John made significant purchases of land while he remained in debt. Two of these transactions illustrate the pull farming and store operations continued to have on the imagination of this widower. In June 1887, for example, for \$250.00 he bought 125 acres of land east of Little Hubquarter Creek from Davidson A. Fishel and his wife Emma. An earlier owner of this farmland had been James G. Robinson, the man who sold Methodist trustees the acre on which Pegram's Church had been built before 1850. In October 1888 John Vaughan also paid \$15.00 for an acre of land at Harris Crossroads fronting the road from Warrenton to Grove Hill.

Come what may, the most persistent of John Vaughan's creditors during these years was W. H. Holmes, a cotton and fertilizer broker in Norfolk. Both men had a huge tolerance for market forces and human foibles. Risk was their tonic. They knew that to make money meant the risk of losing money. The widower's new scheme beginning in 1888 was to establish yet another general store with credit from, of all people, Mr. Holmes. Early rumors of lumber railroad companies building spur lines running south out of Vaughan may have intensified John's interest as well as his selection

of the site of this new venture. This Harris Crossroads partnership was not with Brother Charlie who, with a family of his own underway, could run their beleaguered store and fertilizer-feed businesses in Vaughan. Another Judkins Township acquaintance named Anthony D. Stallings, a Civil War veteran and widower a generation older than John, became his new partner. Stallings's late wife had been a widowed daughter of the distinguished builder Albert Gamaliel Jones. Alice, another of the Jones daughters, was married to Sol Shearin of Vaughan.

Charlie and Mollie Vaughan's first son Willie had been born in September 1885; a second named Roy arrived in June 1887. Eventually the couple had five children in all, four sons and a daughter. Long before Charlie Morton, the third son, arrived in March 1889, Charlie and Mollie moved into a new house built between John's place and the Methodist church, but across the road in River Township. East of their residence Charlie operated a livery stable, his first solo venture. A persisting oral tradition suggests that on this same site or nearby he and John had established an ill-fated cotton gin, the village's first. Material evidence supporting this account is the collateral listed by John and Sallie as well as John alone in two 1883 deeds of trust, one in June and another in October: a 6-horse-power Eclipse engine, a gin house, a cotton press, and a 50-saw Brown cotton gin.

Gradually, without cutting his ties to Charlie as merchant or storekeeper, John had teamed up with Mr. Stallings who lived not far from the new store lot south of Macon. In addition to a general stock of goods, their special product would be cordwood and crossties harvested from the old-field or scrub forests that had grown up since the end of slavery in 1865. Their targeted customer would be the railroad, for debt-ridden John Vaughan's reliable employer had steam engines to fuel and tracts to maintain if the mail and commodities like cotton as well as people were to come and go regularly. It all sounded so sensible, until John Vaughan suddenly died of malarial fever at home in Vaughan June 21, 1890, at age thirty-eight.

A RECKONING

His three minor children had been living with his late wife's parents in South Gaston for up to five years. How often the kids spent time with their busy father is unclear. H. L. Freeman, who with his wife Betty had been loving grandparents, now became the executor of the messy busi-

ness dealings of his son-in-law, who, somehow, had added the title Warren County commissioner to his responsibilities, notwithstanding his inability to manage his own personal affairs. Equally puzzling was the fact that John had kept his public employment with the post office and the railroad throughout his decade of family tragedy and business turmoil. What little financial security he had, had come from being paid to be section master or agent and postmaster. Of course, how he fulfilled these obligations, if he truly did, and did everything else remains a mystery.

John Vaughan, in all fairness, might have simply been overwhelmed by social forces, for depressed commodity prices, widespread white and black illiteracy, the persisting need of white as well as black men for gainful employment beyond farming, and white supremacy prevailed across North Carolina during his tragic decade that included the administrations of Democratic governors Thomas Jarvis, Alfred Scales, and Daniel Fowle. Making matters worse, the population of the state increased between 1880 and 1890 from 1,399,750 to 1,617,947. Ill-fated Republican President Garfield was assassinated and succeeded by Republican Chester Arthur. Democrat Grover Cleveland served a term and then lost to Republican Benjamin Harrison. Throughout this tumultuous period John had been a railroad and post office employee who continued his unstable, personal business deals. If an internal improvement project, a new bridge across a Judkins creek, for example, needed a committee to examine the question, John F. Vaughan was still likely to be called upon. He always accepted.

In H. A. Foote's *Warrenton Gazette* for June 27, 1890, the death notice identified Mr. Vaughan as a merchant, farmer, postmaster, railroad agent, and county commissioner. "He was a gentleman of excellent character and much personal popularity and will be greatly missed by the poor of his community." These words suggesting the death of a local Robin Hood, not a tragic character like Job, were echoed in the issue of the same paper dated July 11. The "inscrutable will of Divine Providence" had "overtaken" John F. Vaughan, "a gentleman, a patriot and a citizen worthy of the highest esteem and regard" of his fellow commissioners W. G. Coleman, W. B. Fleming, Walter Allen, and Hugh J. White. Malaria, the deadly fever that the region was supposed to be free of according to promotional language on the 1874 Paschall map, had killed this "tender and loving father, steadfast and unswerving friend, this neighbor good and kind." May the county's loss, the resolution hoped, be his eternal gain. Had John "Robin Hood" Vaughan, in fact, habitually given to his desper-

ate local debtors what he owed to or had stolen from his more distant business creditors?

In June 1890 such matters as this became the concern of H. L. Freeman. No evidence suggests that he had ever looked deeply into the deeds of trust that consumed the last years of his daughter's life with John Vaughan. Neither is it clear that John Vaughan, as he went through his numerous negotiations with trustees and creditors, ever exercised the skill with which the Browne family, Dr. Ridley Browne, in particular, had settled its family property disputes and distributions. In open court for all to see, the most serious private battles among the Brownes had been going on simultaneously after 1884 as John Vaughan's business challenges mounted. One difference mattered: Dr. Browne was educated; John Vaughan could read, write . . . and figure only. John Vaughan was a finagler, as driven as he was hopeful.

But by the fall of 1890, John's father-in-law was drawn directly into the court system. If Mr. Freeman had reviewed his son-in-law's records in selected Register of Deeds books, he would have seen that many of the things used as collateral during the previous decade were still in the estate in 1890. They would linger there for years. The record was so tangled and money to spend at estate sales so scarce that very little progress could be made, however hard Mr. Freeman tried. In a poignant moment in his appearance before a notary on October 27, 1890, he observed that "about all the salient claims due to said estate are collateralized (*sic*) with creditors of said estate and by reason of this fact and the fact that the books are very inaccurate, it is believed by this administrator that very little can be collected on any claims due said Estate, which claims aggregate about \$10,000. This administrator does not believe more than 5 to 10%, if so much, of said claims can be collected."

Perhaps these dire financial circumstances explain why a marker other than a field stone has never been found where the first citizen of Vaughan was probably buried. No record of a late June 1890 religious service for him has survived either. There being no known evidence, speculation has come down to the present day that John, like his wife Sallie a few years before, was buried in the northwest corner of their house lot on the Warrenton-Halifax Road.

Two existing paper records may serve by default as John Vaughan's headstone. First, his itemized estate inventory, almost all of it collateralized, filed in Warrenton on October 15, 1890, by his father-in-law:

| | |
|---|------------|
| Stock of goods in store at Vaughan valued at | \$765.00 |
| Money on hand | none |
| 2 horses | 150.00 |
| 1 cow | 15.00 |
| About 3 acres of tobacco | 75.00 |
| About 30 acres in cotton, corn, and other crops | 700.00 |
| Buggy | 10.00 |
| Household and kitchen furniture | 150.00 |
| About 350 cords of wood @ 1.50 each | 525.00 |
| About 1,000 railroad ties | 300.00 |
| Harness | 15.00 |
| Railroad money received | 501.00 |
| Check in hand | 2.55 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$2,783.55 |

Not included in this inventory were records of recent loans, like the one for \$50.00 John Vaughan had made to William B. Pierce back in February. It would not come due until a year later. Fully collateralized with livestock, equipment, and Mr. Pierce's 1890 crops, it became another worthless legal paper in Mr. Freeman's files.

The second default grave marker for John Vaughan, this complicated Job or Robin Hood, concerns the land he held title to at the time of his death. It totaled about 128.5 acres. *The Record* of Warrenton in February and March 1900 listed this land for unpaid 1899 property taxes—\$2.04 in River Township and \$8.57 in Judkins. Victim or hero, this landlord of record had been dead and gone almost a decade.

Mr. Vaughan's Judkins property on which \$1.03 of the \$8.57 due for taxes had not been paid included the store lot at Harris Crossroads where he and A. D. Stallings, both single with children, had become partners in early 1889. Their joint venture was not Mr. Stallings' first. In the early 1870s he and Robert K. Clanton had operated a general store in Macon. It was later closed mysteriously. Even with court appointed arbitration by W. G. Plummer beginning in 1891, understanding the Vaughan-Stallings store's account books proved impossible for Mr. Freeman, the executor. Long before Mr. Stallings died in 1904 while serving Judkins as a Justice of the Peace and election judge, he had artfully claimed insolvency and cleverly avoided any payment due the John Vaughan heirs. Other evidence shows, by the way, that later, in 1896, Stallings had been in business as a



Charlie and Lena Tucker
Courtesy Moseley Family

tradesman in Odell; he also served as a magistrate in Judkins that same year.

Regarding the bankrupt and collateralized store John and Charlie Vaughan had continued to operate in Vaughan, Mr. Freeman was ordered by the court to pay one debt out of the John Vaughan estate, that to their clerk Charlie J. Tucker. He and Charlie Vaughan's sister-in-law Lena Nicholson had been married in mid-March before John Vaughan died. Mr. Tucker finally was awarded his delayed payment of \$172.93, including interest, on August 18. He and his bride were solvent, but when later Mr. Freeman tried to conduct a John Vaughan estate sale, he found that the people who came to bid on the items and animals were mostly poor colored people who wanted to bid on credit, not cash. He called off the sale and asked the court to allow a sale to go forward at a future date with all parties dealing in cash only. The request was allowed. No record of that eventual sale has survived in the John F. Vaughan Estate files available online from the North Carolina Division of Archives and History. Likely, the sale was never conducted due to economic conditions as bad locally as they were nationwide in 1891–93. Also missing is any account of money from the sale of tobacco, corn, and cotton crops for 1890.

The agricultural and railroad business cycle had begun to slow down beginning in 1887. Consumer purchasing power was diminished, and rail lines like the Seaboard saw revenues decline. During the end of Grover Cleveland's first term, throughout the administration of Benjamin Harrison, and well into Cleveland's second term, 1892–96, the economic downturn deepened as over-speculation associated with the organization

of trusts and other business combinations pushed widespread instability to the fore. Major strikes cut further into both profits and purchasing power while silver and gold manipulations eroded confidence across the land and abroad. John Vaughan had fought against these major financial challenges most of his adult life. They outlasted and, in part, ruined him. The dismaying accounting mess his father-in-law found as his administrator mirrored the economic conditions of the era. By 1892–93, Mr. Freeman had done what he could under panicky economic circumstances for the welfare of his three Vaughan grandchildren. Perhaps John Vaughan had had a similar objective, to try to make his children secure, even as he started out disadvantaged by open accounts he had incurred even before their young mother died.

JOHN'S TWO BROTHERS

When Walter R. Vaughan, John's younger brother, turned twenty-one December 7, 1892, he was already Seaboard agent for Vaughan at a monthly salary of \$10.00. Whether he lived in the depot, in the John Vaughan house, or with Charlie, Mollie, and their family is unclear. When Robert S. Vaughan, the brothers' father, died intestate in Henderson within the week of Walter's birthday, Charlie and he buried the elderly cobbler and farmer in the Vaughan Community Cemetery even though Robert and his wife Mary Eliza, who survived him, had never actually lived in the village bearing their family name. This cemetery was located just east of the site from which John, Charlie, and other men had moved the Methodist Protestant sanctuary into the village about a decade earlier. In the second year of Walter's depot agency, the former Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, officially renamed two decades earlier, was consolidated with the Seaboard Airline.

In March 1893 Charlie's wife Mollie gave birth to their fourth son, and they named him John Pope Vaughan. Whenever this young John's proud father Charlie Vaughan went to Warrenton to shop wholesale for his retail businesses, he stopped by the office of H. A. Foote, editor of the *Warrenton Gazette*. Almost certainly Charlie's name and his transactions in the county seat would appear in newsprint that week or the next. During one such visit he boasted of having spent \$1,400 to buy goods for resale in Vaughan. He had had the village incorporated in 1893. Now all the local store owners were eligible to apply for or renew a liquor license. Yet the massive economic panic that had begun in a Pennsylvania railroad system and spread across the entire country, indeed the world, brought to

local business minds more important challenges than selling whiskey as the year unwound.

January had been literally snowed under. Through March blizzards and extremely cold weather prevailed. Diarist Christopher Riggan memorialized April 1 in Judkins and the surrounding townships to the west for the massive and destructive fire that swept north from Big Fishing Creek to the Seaboard railroad. In its wake the flames, whipped by winds, consumed school houses, barns, houses, and many surrounding woodlots and fields. Vaughan appears to have been spared, blessed by windy chance, as it were. Following this chaotic, destructive spring weather, Seaboard agent Walter Vaughan was busy administering his late father's estate. It involved selling twenty acres of Vance County land to the highest bidder at the courthouse door in Henderson on December 4, 1893.

Charlie Vaughan was devoted to a new project himself. Having become a Baptist, the denomination in which Mollie had been brought up, together he and she had invited white Baptists to conduct their Sunday worship services in the store Brother John had built in the early 1880s. This group soon grew in both size and prospects. During 1894 Charlie also felt expansive again as local economic conditions gradually improved. Area baseball competition revived with the economy, and Walter managed Vaughan's very successful 1895 team in his free time from his railroad job and a budding courtship. After the sports season and before Thanksgiving 1895, he and Brother Charlie even found time to travel by train to the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta. They came home refreshed and, for Charlie, more ambitious than ever.

Walter married Valeria James Floyd of Vance County July 12, 1896. The Rev. E. H. Davis of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Littleton performed their ceremony. Walter added his bride to Vaughan's population then approaching 90. Although he and Valeria were not Methodist Protestants, they worshipped in that local congregation, where the depot agent became the Sunday School superintendent. His professional work was also sometimes basically ministerial. For example, in April 1897 Ridley Browne, Jr., a capable son of the late Dr. Browne, travelling at night from Littleton to Vaughan, had jumped from the train when it failed to stop at the station. Found in the right-of-way the next morning by Section Master John Turner, the 39-year old drug salesman died of his injuries the following day at *Favonia Haunt*. To Walter had fallen the job of safely moving the respected dying man home.

Meanwhile Vaughan Baptist members had been successful in raising



Alice Virginia Jones Shearin and Daughter, Sallie Pat Shearin Harriss,
 Leaders in Founding and Funding Vaughan Baptist Church
 Courtesy Pierce Family

money for a building of their own. By mid-June 1897 their new weather-board sanctuary stood about a hundred yards west of the Methodist church but across the road in River Township. Quoted in Littleton's *News Recorder* on June 18, Charlie Vaughan, as the Baptist spokesman, expressed thanks to the large number of worshippers and visitors who had generously donated money during the first service held in the impressive new building. It was a white house of worship with a bell-tower and steeple designed by T. R. Thrower. Still today the recorded history of Vaughan Baptist Church refers to Charlie Vaughan's personal loan to the building fund as follows: "The only recorded time the church ever borrowed money was when Mr. Charlie Vaughan loaned the money on a 'pay back as you can' arrangement for the construction. There is no *known* documentation as to when, how, or if this loan was ever repaid."

Mr. Vaughan knew that with two other general merchants in the village, Mrs. Don Morris and Mr. R. H. Tucker, his public, financial support of the Baptist church would pay dividends across his general store and farm supply market counters, even as his public relations activities increased. The next month, July 1897, *The Record* of Warrenton reported that C. B. Vaughan would be the Education Committeeman for River

Township. In November that year he served as an election judge and was paid \$6.00 for his service. Promoting his businesses by keeping his name in the public press in Littleton and Warrenton as well as in Raleigh was becoming second nature to him. Walter, now a father himself, began to advertise as well. In the November 26, 1897, *News Reporter* of Littleton, his sideline business ad for cheap clothing ran twice. He offered “good second-hand pants, overcoats, vests, and dress coats.” John Vaughan’s three children also needed money as they grew older, and some of it came from land sales overseen or instigated by their enterprising uncles Charlie and Walter.

Of the official roles or positions John Vaughan’s sudden death had left vacant in June 1890, all of them important, a new postmaster for Vaughan would have been rather urgent. Who filled that void for the first seven months remains unclear, but January 21, 1891, Vesuvia Evans Neal became Vaughan’s first postmistress. The daughter of the late Mary Frances Shearin Myrick and John L. Evans, she was known as Subie. Her husband was William R. “Tink” Neal. She earned \$104.60 in salary in 1891. Her income would go up to \$149.33 in 1895, down to \$119.55 two years later, and up to \$185.99 in 1899. John Turner still occupied the important station master position, and Walter had been depot agent in John’s old place since late 1892. Because the post office was in the Vaughan General Store, which was close to the depot, it may have been Charlie or Mr. Tucker, his clerk, who sorted the mail or handled passengers and freight at the depot until Subie Neal and Walter were all aboard.

The 1900 census taker found Walter Vaughan, his wife, and their two older daughters Lucille age 3 and Myra just 1, living in or near the John Vaughan house as Judkins residents. Nearby Mollie and Charlie had welcomed their only daughter Myrtis to the village in time for the River Township census. She had been born in August 1899. Three of her four brothers were already in school. Occasionally their enterprising father acted like a banker or land agent. In March and December 1900, for example, he had signed as mortgagee for two mortgages executed with Faulcon and Ada Browne. Ultimately this couple defaulted, and Charlie Vaughan sold the two lots to satisfy the debt. These financial struggles of Faulcon Browne, the most capable of the Ridley Browne heirs, was an ill omen. As early as 1895 his relatives sometimes had seen parcels of their land as large as seven hundred fifty acres auctioned by administrator Thomas Hawkins at the courthouse in Warrenton in a single sale. The Davis Brothers of Vance County were among the successful local bidders.

They had also been among Dr. Browne's creditors while he was alive. Also in 1895 the Southern Farms Land Company of Portsmouth, Virginia, had been selected by the court-appointed commissioners Hawkins and Day to map the remainder of the huge Browne estate for sale at auction. Ads appeared far and wide. In distant places such as Norway and Wisconsin, lumbermen took note of the thousands of acres of pine and hardwood forests growing in succession to the vast tobacco, grain, and cotton acreage formerly cultivated and harvested by Browne slaves. Their descendants, plus white tenants, now tilled small subsistence plots of cotton and other crops on shares south of the railroad at Vaughan.

SPECULATIONS NEAR AND FAR

Brothers Walter and Charlie had always seen the economic opportunities the fallow Browne land offered. Their 1895 trip to the exposition in Atlanta had opened their eyes further. What could be done with this truly huge acreage of farmland still left so poorly managed after emancipation in 1865? This question or opportunity had grown more urgent since the deaths in 1887 and 1894, respectively, of Dr. Ridley and his widow Henrietta Collins Browne. Their wills had been legal, but a majority of their heirs, as suggested by the example of Faulcon and Ada in default, were insufficiently experienced in agriculture and land management to be successful farmers. Where were the capable owners and laborers needed to harvest the encroaching forests or produce cotton and other crops on reclaimed arable land? Actually this challenge and the general awareness of it, nearby and far off, were almost as old as the village itself.

Since the early 1880s, when Vaughan itself was a fledgling, a statewide effort had touted North Carolina's natural appeal, land availability, and labor shortage. Paschall's 1874 map had been a harbinger. A major new source of promotional information about Warren County, among numerous other places in the state, was John Tyrant Patrick of Anson County. Governor Thomas Jarvis had appointed him in May 1883 as the first head of the Department of Immigration in the NC Department of Agriculture. In December of that year Mr. Patrick wrote to Mrs. A. L. Coble of Chapel Hill: "My first work was to visit near every county in N.C. and secure as many as I could to engage in the real estate business. This I did so as to have men interested in showing the people land when they come to the State. This work took up May and June into July. Then I went to Pennsylvania, establishing a general agency at York." With the cooperation of Capt. F. W. Clark, general ticket agent for Seaboard Air Line Rail-

road, Mr. Patrick arranged a special rate for groups from Pennsylvania's Cumberland Valley to visit North Carolina. The first large group from in and around Harrisburg arrived in Weldon, N.C., the first week in August. With them were three newspaper reporters keen to spread the real estate word back in Pennsylvania.

During 1884 the Cumberland Valley's Alexander and Adaline Barnes family moved to River Township. Relatives named Wise, brothers John and Alfred and their wives, soon joined the Barnes family on farm land at Epworth, later known as Enterprise, east of Vaughan. The Wises continued farming in River Township at Epworth, but by 1892 Alexander T. Barnes, who occasionally taught school, had begun working in Vaughan where he was employed as a licensed gauger in the agricultural supply store operated by Charlie Vaughan.

Several years later, following the death of his Prussian-born wife in February 1895, Christopher Yenney, a Swiss native by way of Minnesota and then Berks County, Pennsylvania, eventually made his way to Vaughan. He was a very skillful carpenter; Mr. Barnes had been a cigar maker in the Keystone State. Both men were Union Army veterans, Mr. Barnes a second lieutenant and survivor of the Gettysburg campaign. Whether these men had met on the train to Weldon in August 1883, on the battlefield, or in Vaughan itself is unclear.

Ambitious Mr. Patrick had not been idle during the last decade either. He had, for example, convened a Northern-Born Settlers' Convention in Raleigh in 1886. Whether the Pennsylvanians already settled in Warren County attended is unknown, but before that event Mr. Patrick had thirty subagents working throughout the North, including New York and Massachusetts as well as Pennsylvania. Engaged in this massive campaign to lure and match potential immigrants with opportunities to purchase farmland in this state were over 125 northern newspapers. Long associated professionally with Seaboard Railroad, by 1896 Mr. Patrick had become one of that line's industrial agents. That same year Christopher Yenney's adult son Ebenezer posted an elaborate ad for *Belle Alto House* at Vaughan in the SAL magazine, guided by Mr. Patrick in this astonishing effort to establish at Vaughan a health resort on the order of Vineland, the original name of Moore County's Southern Pines, another of Patrick's projects since the mid-1880s. It seems likely Christopher Yenney had been involved in this promotion, perhaps even before he relocated to Vaughan.

In January 1898 *The Warren Record* editorialized as follows: "Not until Warren County has a population of some forty to fifty thousands can we

hope to be up to what by nature we should be. Already has there been some settlers brought into our county by the efforts of the SAL management, and we look for good results from the establishment of a Pennsylvania colony at Vaughan. The cotton manufacturing interests of the U.S. are looking Southward for all future progress and developments along that line. The mills are surely coming nearer to the cotton fields—they must come, and it behooves the public-spirited citizens of Warren to have an eye to these things or we may be left in the background.”

The editorialist might have added a cautionary note: “Buyer and seller beware!”

For Ebenezer Yenney had failed in managing the pleasure and health resort named *Belle Alto* in Pennsylvania’s Lebanon Valley at Wernersville at about the same time his mother died there in early 1895. In the 1896 magazine article sanctioned by Seaboard, Eben had renamed and described the Browne family’s aging *Favonia Haunt* as a new railroad colony hotel: “*Belle Alto House* in Vaughan, North Carolina, in Warren County, on the Seaboard Airline, seventy miles north of Raleigh, is one of the most genial climates in the US—water soft, air pure, and soil dry—hence it is one of the most healthful districts in North Carolina. The surrounding country is covered with forests of oak, pine, cedar, poplar, dogwood, and other forest growth; malaria, sunstrokes, and consumption are unknown in the area. The house is located one-fourth mile from the railroad station. It is known as the Old Browne Plantation Mansion. It was the property of Dr. Browne, wealthy planter, before the war, lying in the line of Sherman’s March to the Sea.” This language was the boldest real estate propaganda anyone had made up to describe any part of Warren County since the Paschall map of



Purported Front View of *Favonia Haunt*,
the Railroad Hotel
Courtesy Wyatt Pegram

1874 appeared. Writing at a distance, perhaps Ebenezer Yenney as a born promoter the equal of John T. Patrick only meant to suggest that some Union and Confederate soldiers had passed through Dr. Browne’s yard after hearing that the Civil War was finally over. They were then free, like former slaves, to walk homeward, north or south, foraging

along the way. The sea Ebenezer mentioned in reference to Sherman's march was approximately two hundred miles to the east.

A year or two later Ebenezer and his wife and daughter actually made their way south to Vaughan where they lived with his father in the house Christopher had begun but never completed plastering inside on lot 84, his four-acre parcel of the Browne estate. In early June 1899 after transferring ownership to his son, Christopher died June 6 and was buried at Sunset Hill Cemetery in Littleton. Not a paradise after all, Vaughan could not satisfy ambitious Ebenezer permanently. On January 24, 1902, in the *Littleton News Reporter* appeared this brief notice: "For sale on easy terms with small first cash payment, property one [quarter mile] from Vaughan depot. Address E. Yenney owner, Holly Beach, N.J., or call on W. R. Vaughan. Agent, Vaughan, N.C. Clear title." Ebenezer, his wife Emma, and their daughter Esther plus son Warren, who had been born in Vaughan in 1898, had already moved north to Cape May where he was still dreaming of a resort, but his ad linking his inherited residential real estate and Seaboard Depot Agent W. R. Vaughan was on the level.

This Yenney property included Christopher's masterfully designed and constructed two-story frame house with a cellar, a wrap-around porch at the rear, another porch across the front, and four dormer windows. Tradition says he had had a hotel in mind; his more than ample residence, despite some rooms that were never plastered, still stands today not far east of Dr. Browne's old plantation house place. Mr. A. T. Barnes and his family later lived in and then owned the Yenney house by 1908. Walter Vaughan bought the next lot to the west and built his house on it. The A. T. Barnes and W. R. Vaughan families became close Judkins neighbors. A lifelong friendship formed by two of the children of these two households has richly informed this local history project. Mabel Vaughan Riggan and Ruby Phelps Chewning, a Barnes granddaughter, spent hours sharing documents and reliving their growing up years for this record.

Neither of these adult women, however, ever explored the paradoxes of opportunity that faced their families and others in the village. Mable had been born in 1901, Ruby in 1913. Neighboring girls of different generations, both were too young to have understood the plight of all residents. Vaughan was fated for years to become a boomtown following fits and starts of growth during its early history. When Ruby gave birth to her own daughter, the proud father and husband added a small porch on the west side of the Yenney house as a safe playpen. The whole community was a work in progress.



The Yenney / A. T. Barnes House
 Courtesy Ed and Ruby Thompson

Personal ambitions and family needs aside, in and around Vaughan as the twentieth century searched for sure footing, several options associated with increasing railroad commerce motivated white adult men especially. While Mabel's father was depot agent, Ruby's daddy Lee Phelps was an experienced trainman or switchman. Neither man was a Vaughan native, but they joined the local dreamers. There was skeptics as well. Did Seaboard Railroad's active promotion of a local health resort stand a chance of succeeding, exaggerated and false as the story seemed to most village residents? How on earth could *Favonia Haunt* withstand much scrutiny as a southern *Belle Alto*? How could this suspect promotion of healthy living conditions compete with the eventual, opposing notion of clear-cutting the forests for miles around, thus turning the surrounding countryside into a veritable ecological wasteland of stumps and laps instead of cool, restorative breezes and singing birds? How long before such ravaged acreage could be sold or even farmed successfully, if farming rather than better health had motivated the resettled Pennsylvanians and other immigrants? Of course, exercising the clear-cut timber option would enrich the railroad as well as some local landowners, principally Browne heirs. Finally, what about the local laborers, white and black?

How could Vaughan's conflicted futures benefit these men, women, and their families.

For instance, to get the harvested timber to the Seaboard railhead in Vaughan, spur lines running south from the village would be needed. Ruby's daddy had come to Vaughan to engineer log trains on one of these lines. He married Carrie, one of the Barnes daughters. She and her siblings had been born in central Pennsylvania. Local men and newcomers were hired to do the hard and dangerous work of laying the spur lines beginning in 1904. Other men would then cut and size the harvested trees for milling and shipping. Could traditionally segregated black and white laborers compete for jobs and work side by side in these nonfarm, low-wage operations? Moreover, would their local wives and children continue subsistence farming to supply food and fiber for their families?

Looked back upon, these opportunities for the villagers seem to be oddly at cross purposes, even as the railroad gave harvesting timber precedence over health resort promotion and land auctions. Few older Vaughan residents had imagined replacing the exploitative economy of slavery with the rank materialism of a Jim Crow era of separate and unequal opportunities. For the sectionalism lingering from the Civil War had delivered to Vaughan, North Carolina, a train of contradictions. Who, moreover, especially those targeted Pennsylvanians, would choose to come there as "Yankees" once the surrounding forests looked like the farms at Gettysburg had looked following the infamous 1863 battle there?

In addition to the complicated and failed *Belle Alto* scheme, in late April 1899, a Raleigh banker acting as trustee for himself and his two sisters paid \$2000 to the commissioners of the Ridley Browne estate for 462 acres east and west of *Favonia Haunt*. He was William Worrell Vass, Jr., the son of a perennial official of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad before and after its consolidation with Seaboard. On December 1, 1902, Trustee Vass sold the same acreage to R. M. Paschall of Warren County and R. W. Roberts of Richmond. The sale price was the original \$2000. By the time of this transaction, the Southern Farm Lands Company of Tidewater Virginia had become the agent for much of the remainder of the Browne estate and aimed its sales pitch primarily at so-called Pennsylvania Colonists. This promotion of cheap land rather than good health, despite Seaboard's active publicity, failed just as the recent *Belle Alto* effort had.

Sometime after 1903, a portion of the Vass land now owned by Paschall and Roberts came into the joint possession of Peter and Elizabeth

Skundberg, of Wisconsin, and J. J. Little and his wife. June 5, 1909, Robert Maynard "R. M." Dunn, Esq. paid these joint owners \$775.00 for fifteen acres of that land. This young Wake Forest College lawyer who grew up in nearby Wise subdivided this land into 77 lots and promoted the area as *Glen Echo*, right in the middle of Vaughan. Street names appeared on the promotional map as Main Street, Vaughn Avenue, Dunn Avenue, Fishel Street, and Skundberg Avenue. (*Vaughan* was misspelled each time it appeared on the map.) During these months of prospecting—Mr. Dunn had just received his law degree in May—he became active in several real estate ventures that went nowhere.

The Skundbergs would be among the most successful of the white outsiders who were drawn to Vaughan after 1900. They became community leaders and worked hard as hoteliers, timber harvesters as well as millers, and land agents. December 12, 1912, they filed a new map for the sale at auction, once again, of the Ridley Browne estate. Their map had been drawn by B. B. Egerton of Louisburg the previous month and offered a total acreage of 323.94, including the *Favonia Haunt* house lot of 76.4 acres. Both this sale and the promotion of a portion of Vaughan as *Glen Echo* aimed to take advantage of men with families who were being drawn to Vaughan by the timber harvest and the sense of an imminent boom. What would John Vaughan have thought of this new era? Certainly basic management skills he had lacked in the 1880s would be in high demand now.

In contrast to the Skundbergs, E. C. Robinson of Wadesboro in Anson County, N.C., never lived in Vaughan; but he twice purchased parcels of the Browne Family Estate from the Southern Farms Land Company of eastern Virginia. First in 1898 he paid \$950.00 for 160 acres. These sixteen contiguous ten-acre lots were south of the village on the Judkins Road. This track had once been part of Faulcon Browne's *Faulconia*. Then in 1902 for the sum of just \$1.00, Mr. Robinson took possession of another 145 acres of adjacent land. Until his death he settled this property with white as well as black tenants, some of them local and others natives of Anson. Colonel John Robinson, E. C.'s father, had been North Carolina's Commissioner of Agriculture from 1887 until 1895. Growing cotton and timber were second nature to the Robinson men, and the old Browne lands led them to invest both money and energy in Warren County.

A. T. and Adaline Barnes's only son Dan did not very clearly remember Pennsylvania where he had been born. Growing up farming in eastern Warren County, he decided at age twenty-three to seek his fortune in east-

ern Virginia, that magic place at the eastern terminus of the SAL railroad. His neighboring relatives Alfred and Helena Wise had relocated in Portsmouth to operate a boarding house. There Dan lived with them beginning in 1904 and worked initially in a machine shop. Soon he switched to a job in a large factory in Norfolk that built tables out of wood. He mastered carpentry skills in that place. Returning to Vaughan when his father A. T. died in 1910, Dan brought home with him his lifelong passion and knack for constructing things large and small out of lumber.

HOPE AND VIOLENCE

Between 1900 and late 1909 Charlie Vaughan tended to his family and served the village during several years as Justice of the Peace. He and his family lived on the old road just then beginning to be called Church Street. South of the railroad in Judkins Township his businesses and the careers of others expanded along with the new century. Walter Bobbitt became section master in place of John Turner. Mrs. Subie Evans Neal stepped down as postmistress, and in April 1901 Mrs. Jonnie Squire Rogerson, another native, assumed the position. Whether there was still space in Vaughan's Department Store for this operation is not clear. In March 1902, according to an ad in the *News Recorder* of Littleton, Charlie had added undertaker's goods to his stock, including coffins from the cheapest to the finest. That September he also advertised for sale a good feather bed that weighed forty pounds. When this ad appeared, he had already taken to a sickbed himself with typhoid fever. He could not return to work until the first week of October.

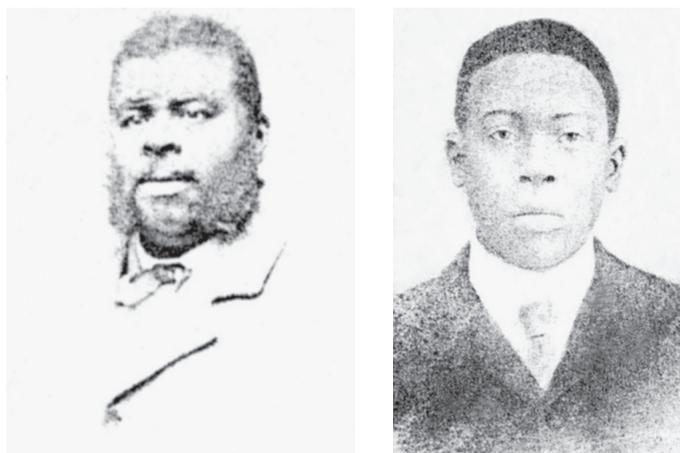
The next alarm in the village for the Vaughan family came on March 20, 1903. Between midnight and day Walter looked on bewildered as the freight and passenger depot for which he was responsible burned to the ground from an unknown cause. He wondered whether a passing locomotive or a local robber were the culprit. Cleanup and rebuilding began immediately, for Vaughan was on the cusp of becoming a bustling lumber hub on the Seaboard Air Line. About this time Walter's name replaced Charlie's on the ledgers and statements of the Vaughan Feed Company Charlie had taken over after John Vaughan's death in 1890. Brother Walter's partner in this venture was Jim Butts.

Charlie calmly balanced his own commercial speculations with the news of the depot platform fire by announcing in the same issue of the March 1903 *News Reporter* that he had for sale one fine English setter puppy just three months old! His promotional life continued as well,

and two months later he and his experienced clerk Charlie Tucker publicized their donations totaling \$6.00 to the education fund of the *Biblical Recorder*. In August 1904 he paid \$50.00 to the three John Vaughan heirs for a quarter acre of land in his brother's still unsettled estate. A separate quarter acre and another acre of land John had bought in 1881 and 1888 respectively also changed hands through Charlie's agency. This additional income to be shared by Dora, Eugenia, and John Vaughan, Jr. came in two payments that totaled \$125.00 in January and July 1905. At Christmas that year Dora became Mrs. Grady Stephenson during a ceremony in the town of Halifax.

In the new year Warren County purchased several coffins for deceased paupers from Vaughan's Department Store. These sales added to Charlie's bottom line for another good purpose. His son Roy would be furthering his Hampden-Sydney College studies at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond in May 1906. Then in late October of that year came the news that seventy-three-year old H. L. Freeman, the generous grandfather of Brother John's children, had died. He was buried behind Calvary United Methodist Church in Halifax County. His widow Betty would survive him by over a decade.

Needing additional money for Roy's medical education and his deceased brother's two still single offspring, Charlie soon also noted that his local mercantile competition was growing as Vaughan evolved into a town. In business since 1905 as its first Negro merchant, Paul Watson by 1907 saw Coleman and Bell as well as Joseph King open stores. Two, sometimes three teachers were now employed to instruct the local white children, and on the lot east of Charlie and Mollie Vaughan's residence, J. A. Nicholson of Macon had put the Vaughan Cotton Gin back in operation. Two lumber yards and a sawmill were also adding to the hum of the place. D. F. Morris owned the sawmill, and the lumber men were the Rev. D. A. Fishel and James H. Harriss. Gradually the separate spur lines of Fosburgh and Greenleaf Johnson progressed into the woods to the south. Christopher Riggan's diary recorded that by the end of May 1905 Greenleaf Johnson's log trains were crossing Walker's Creek on a trestle. By July 1906 the company's surveyors were in the vicinity of Mountain View where the Riggan family lived and ran the post office and a grist mill. By that November some of the Riggan neighbors had joined the railroad work force as farming chores for the year diminished. From Pitt County to Vaughan had come young George Washington Teele, a single Negro



Paul Watson and George Washington “Wash” Teele
Courtesy Ashley Grove History

man who had been a foreman for Greenleaf Johnson there and made that work his first position in his new home.

Charlie Vaughan wanted the extra cash these men earned. So he reminded them of his public service. In February 1907 the *Warren Record* had announced, for example, that he was bondsman for D. W. Pegram who would again be a candidate for Judkins constable, a position he had already held for ten years. In May the paper reported in an audit that Warren County had purchased almost \$100.00 worth of groceries from the department store in Vaughan. From time to time local men were injured or killed by one or the other lumber company's trains. Fosburgh's had killed Bennie Aycock in March 1907, and the same fate later met J. W. Robinson on the Greenleaf Johnson line. Charlie's establishment still offered caskets for sale.

As railroad crews laid new tracks and sawmill laborers clear-cut the standing timber, Vaughan flourished. Landowners along the lines, while valuing their income from timber sales, fought fires started by sparks and cinders from the log trains and even lodged damage suits against the railroad companies. Local owners and operators of sawmills and lumber yards advertised for crews too. Bustling Vaughan would never be the same again, it seemed, as hundreds of new residents or temporary workers moved in. Anything to keep Charlie Vaughan's name before the buying public interested this indefatigable go-getter. During these years, old



Vaughan School Photograph, 1908
 Courtesy Pierce Family

Favonia Haunt was operated as a hotel to ease the housing crunch until a proper hotel could be built in the town by James H. Harriss. Diligent Elizabeth Skundberg was the proprietor of first one and then the other of these temporary or long-term housing businesses.

Meanwhile death claimed its own regardless of age or condition. Farmer and lumberman Charles R. Pierce died of typhoid fever just before New Year's Day 1908. His wife Helen, oldest daughter of A. T. and Adaline Barnes, gave birth to a daughter named Addie just two hours before her thirty-eight-year old husband succumbed. Charlie Vaughan, Mr. Pierce's friend and Mr. Barnes's boss, expected better news within his own family; his niece Dora Stephenson was pregnant. Tragically, she died in childbirth on January 1, 1908, in Halifax County at age twenty-nine. Her husband Grady, a respected railroad engineer, came to Vaughan and prepared a grave for her and their child. That cold January day Grandmother Freeman, among others, grieved beside the joint grave. On it the widower later placed a white marble marker in the same corner of the backyard where Sallie and John Vaughan had been buried with field stones as markers. Beneath Dora's name and life dates, the epitaph pro-

claimed: "Wife of L. G. Stephenson Her life was beauty with goodness and love." The baby was not mentioned; perhaps it had had no name.

The sobering tribulations of the Pierce / Barnes family and of Charlie, Walter, and their extended Vaughan / Freeman family rivaled a local story that ran in *The News and Observer* March 6, 1908. The Vaughan community had "pounded" the widow and children of C. D. Squire. This brother of postmistress Jonnie Rogerson, formerly a merchant who also farmed, had died of debauchery, specifically drinking bottles of various extracts—strawberry, lemon, pineapple, and vanilla—to get high. Seventy-five men, women, and boys walked west from Vaughan's Department Store, past Dora Stephenson's fresh grave, to bring provisions of all sorts to the Squire home. W. T. Carter, their spokesman, assured Mrs. Nellie Rightmyer Squire that the community would look after her and her family. Mr. Carter had formerly operated a legal distillery in Vaughan himself but was now serving as a Justice of the Peace. *The N&O* editor in Raleigh featured this story because he saw it as another opportunity to campaign for prohibition. "Let the governor come speak," he implored, and added that Vaughan "is one of the liquor men's strongholds, and it will take a long pull, a hard pull, and a pull together to beat them in the coming election." Indeed, it was well known that Vaughan was a place where "hangers on" congregated daily at stores with bars and got tanked up on "mean corn whiskey." What was the evidence?

About a year before, *The Reporter* of Warrenton on February 8, 1907, had run an unsigned story written in response to Jim Harris's shooting to death drunk and abusive Henry Dickerson on the Main Street of Vaughan. Arrested and locked up, Harris, sometimes called Jim Pierce—a relative of Charles Pierce—was soon tried and found not guilty in Warrenton. He had been cruelly bullied, the court decided; the Vaughan community was described as a besotted, violent place. In the May 1908 referendum on whiskey, North Carolina, by a margin of nearly 5 to 3, became the first US state to control the liquor traffic by popular vote. The Democratic Party, including prominent businessmen and educators as well as members of the clergy, carried the day; but not in Judkins where the votes were 34 dry and 56 wet. On May 25 of that same week, W. T. Carter's third wife Octavia died after a labored birth. Their infant survived. Mrs. Carter was buried behind the Methodist Protestant Church in Vaughan according to the May 29, 1908, *News Recorder*. The years 1907 and 1908 were disturbing in and around Vaughan.

The local moonshiners might have felt motivated by more than pro-

hibition's victory at the statewide polls. Since harvesting timber was fast becoming the chief occupation in the vicinity, concealing illegal stills would be more difficult as the forests that had grown up since the end of the Civil War were cut down and hauled to loading decks owned by Fosburgh and Greenleaf Johnson at Vaughan. Commercial shrewdness heightened night and day. Charlie Vaughan (now often identifying himself in newspapers as CBV) was in his element. He had placed an ad in *The Warren Record* in late March 1908 beseeching local builders to order kiln dried flooring, ceiling, bedding, and fancy molding from his store. The area's housing stock obviously was expanding as the timber business progressed. Likewise, aches and pains developed from the hard, physical labor done by white and black men and boys in the woods, on the log trains, and in the rail yards and sidings. So in a number of newspapers Charlie promoted his supply of Mrs. Joe Parson's remedy for rheumatism. Of course, local moonshiners would need supplies too, but off the record. Word of mouth, not a printed ad, would keep these local ventures supplied with glass jars, crocks, sugar, and meal. Maybe even new parts for the stills themselves, for new blacksmiths who repaired sawmills, spinning machines, and trains had also found their way to Vaughan.

Not all problems could be solved with whiskey, molding, liniments, and an anvil. In January 1908 someone had broken into the store operated southwest of the railroad by Bell Brothers and taken several dollars and a few pairs of shoes. Just to the east that same night someone made a key to fit the Seaboard Depot office door, but a latch kept the thief out. The next night by breaking a window pane, the determined person was successful. Once inside he took a jug of whiskey. *The Warren Record* writer opined in the issue for January 31: "This tough element may be Negroes working on the lumber roads here. Some deprecation happens about once a week." Deprecation and much worse! A white man from Windsor named Hugh L. Sutton, a laudanum addict, shot himself in the temple with his pistol and died on the spot. Prior to running a steam engine for one of CBV's enterprises, he had worked for Greenleaf Johnson as a log scaler, a person smart enough to estimate board feet in cut timber. The self-destruction of Mr. Sutton was tragic.

In their newspaper ad that week, D. A. Fishel and Sons took a much more positive view of Vaughan. Their new stave mill machinery would be top notch, just the innovation to keep the town "coming to the front." Nearly every week, the ad claimed, some new business would be opening. The town's clear needs included a doctor, a drug store, constables, and a

lawyer. Bragging that local payrolls amounted to over \$20,000 annually, the piece concluded by saying that “We have no boom but a steady growth and our businessmen are all on solid footing.”

BOOM OR BUST: URGENCY AND RESTRAINT

Then, in October 1909, CBV suddenly began offering to sell, not grow, his businesses, especially in ads in *The News and Observer*: “Good paying general merchandise business, valuable property, residences and store house, cotton gin, planing mill, and hosiery mill, in progressive town of Vaughan. Come and See.” “I have the best business and valuable property in town for sale; business enough for two men. \$7,000 cash, balance on time. Don’t write; come see.” *The Warren Record* on November 26, 1909, ran a related ad: “I offer for sale the entire estate of C. B. Vaughan. Reason for selling, desire to move to Western Carolina. Now is your chance if you want a bargain. Write or call on R. M. Dunn.” He is the same Lawyer Dunn from Wise and Warrenton who had offered the heart of Vaughan for sale the previous June as the 77 lots comprising *Glen Echo*. Apparently, no one took this bait.

In two weeks, as if heading west had never even crossed his mind, CBV urged his wife Mollie into the local public’s eye. She became township vice president when the Warren County Historical Society was organized in December 1909. Three months later it appeared that Charlie would, in fact, not leave the area but planned to go more deeply into local business himself. March 11, 1910, the *Warren Record* reported that he and M. F. Parker had joined forces on the steps of the county courthouse to purchase the local hosiery mill for \$4,000. Its 92 machines had previously been the business of R. S. Spiers for several years. Before Christmas of 1910, however, a certificate of dissolution for this knitting operation had been filed with the NC Secretary of State with CBV as agent.

Within the same month that CBV and Mr. Parker closed the hosiery mill, Seaboard Agent Walter Vaughan faced an even hotter challenge. Fire broke out on his depot platform. Of 43 bales of cotton awaiting shipment, only 19 were spared, the remainder damaged or consumed by the flames. This serious threat to the business district, moreover, was diagonally across the Seaboard tracks and Main Street from the nearly complete new hotel being built to accommodate the increasing human traffic of village enterprises. No harm was done to this grand new clapboard building or to the brick hosiery mill northeast of the depot. In that same general area Rev. Fishel and Sons’ planing mill remained in full operation

as well. It had a deep, deep well to supply water to its steam engines and the one in the hosiery mill across the Warrenton-Halifax Road. Whether that same water supply was used to try to contain the platform fire at the depot, no one reported.

Among the white residents working at the Fishel and Sons Planing Mill in 1910 were Newsom Pittman and his step-son John Robert "Rob" Johnson, just fifteen. Mrs. Pittman was the former Florence Riggan of Mountain View and the mother of Blanche Nicholson of Vaughan. Married three times, Mrs. Pittman's first two husbands had been Francis Marion Johnston, father of Blanche, and Edward Alston Johnson, Rob's father. She married Mr. Pittman of Grove Hill in August 1900. The couple and Rob first lived at Mountain View among the Riggans but eventually moved south of Vaughan to the remains of *Faulconia*. Then they moved just east of the village where they remained throughout the boom times. Rob eventually became a railroad man in Vaughan and elsewhere. His first wife was Elizabeth Duke, a local Sunday school teacher.

During 1910, the year the Pittmans arrived, Vaughan's population had reached 400, and CBV, having gone nowhere, became mayor, succeeding E. J. Barnes, a UNC law graduate, class of 1898–99. Living in the John Vaughan house when the 1910 census was taken were Eugenia Vaughan Pearson, her husband C. S., and their young daughter Pattie along with Mary Eliza, the elderly mother of John, Charlie, and Walter. Mr. Pearson was farming. Local merchants competing with the mayor now included D. A. Fishel and Sons, S. W. Bell and Brother, W. T. Carter, and W. W. Pegram. In Vaughan Department Store, Charlie's sons John and Willie clerked with longtime salesman Charlie Tucker. Veteran gauger A. T. Barnes at Vaughan's Feed Store died July 16 that summer. CBV still owned a cotton gin and was legally president of the Vaughan Hosiery Mill. Its German dyer named Emuel Myres boarded in the CBV home. On the Eaton's Ferry Road and just north of the original Pegram's Church site, J. G. King owned and operated an overalls factory called Virginia-Carolina Pants. Both local white men and women, according to the 1910 census, worked in these two apparel plants.

The town and surrounding countryside's only doctor was Dr. Roy Vaughan, licensed in 1909 after completing his studies of allopathy in Richmond. He had married Edgecombe County native Mary Daughtry in early April 1910. She was called May, and they would move that fall from Charlie and Mollie's home into a new house built for them in the Judkins side of town by his father CBV and Uncle Tom Myrick. They were experi-

enced partners in lumber milling and carpentry. Mr. Myrick's wife Vance was a sister of Roy's mother Mollie. Mr. Myrick was a genius with wood and metal. His lumber machinery was mobile and could be operated with a steam engine or a Model-T Ford. He had set the local standard early, prior to the huge influx of outsiders, for safe, sure lumber operations.

In the January 6, 1911, *News Reporter*, CBV, still wanting financial relief, advertised boldly "for a man with a little money as a partner in the manufacture of men's and women's hose. I have a nice plant here and will give the right man a good chance, commencing with a good salary." Success came almost immediately in response to his hosiery mill ad. *The Raleigh Times* on January 19, 1911, ran the following story: "The Allgood Hosiery Mill Company of Vaughan is incorporated for manufacturing and dealing in hosiery of all kinds made of silk, wool, or cotton. Authorized capital stock is \$12,000." Incorporators were M. F. Parker and CBV, the men who had bid in the mill at the courthouse, plus A. C. Allgood, a cotton mill superintendent living in Henderson. This development created more jobs, especially for local white women.

As the timber and other non-farm industries in Vaughan surged, the importance of safety and maintenance also increased. The January 6 issue of *News Reporter* called attention to Guss Oliver's newly opened blacksmith shop in town. It was described as a "first class shop capable of doing all kinds of new and repair work." It was located near the Skundberg Planing Mill, also known as Vaughan Planing Mill Company. A joint venture of New Englander W. A. Smith, P. B. Skundberg of Vaughan, and R. W. Bargamin of Richmond, this operation turned out all kinds of rough and dressed lumber. D. A. Fishel's similar plant northeast of the depot stood beyond it. Other mills further east included Fosburgh Lumber Company, fed by a spur line reaching into Halifax County, and Florida-based Apalachee Lumber Company, a wholesaler of long pine poles. CBV's cotton gin continued in operation, and a new store in 1911 was Mrs. G. A. Thoroughgood's millinery shop. Ben Fishel alone had assumed responsibility for the general store previously known as Fishel and Sons. That made a total of 7 stores in Vaughan. Six white teachers worked during 1911 in the public school there.

Part of John Vaughan's original store lot, purchased in 1881 from Jacob Faulcon Browne, finally changed hands on August 22, 1911, when James H. Harriss paid John Vaughan, Jr. and his sister Eugenia Pearson \$550.00 for the premises. CBV had been renting this property from his nephew and niece. Just under two years earlier, John, Jr. had married

Olive Terrell, and they set up housekeeping in Norlina where he was a railroad employee like his late father. That same day Mr. Harriss paid them for the store lot, John, with Olive's approval, sold Eugenia his share of the John Vaughan house lot for an unknown amount of cash. Eugenia and her family were still living in this family home beside the Seaboard Depot as they had been in 1910 and, perhaps, several years before.

In its September 22, 1911, issue, *Littleton's News Reporter* sounded a note of public concern about local railroad safety: "It may be all right for the engine to have more cars in front of it than behind it. There are seven or eight railroad crossings between Littleton and Vaughan, and when an engine is from 14 to 20 cars behind flat cars, there seems to us to be great danger of doing damage." In that same issue of this paper, CBV offered for sale a small planer and engine capable of finishing 90,000 feet of lumber a day. In another ad on the same page he announced that between the end of September and January 1, 1912, he wanted to sell out his "entire stock of goods, and anything you may have to buy I can save you money on it. I have the best line of men's everyday shoes in town. Call and see them. Every pair guaranteed." Who knew what Charlie Vaughan was up too? Did he even know his own mind? Was he dreaming of western North Carolina again?

Three weeks later in *The Warren Record*, he promoted his new, joint Vaughan Real Estate and Auction Company. Its first public sale was scheduled for October 25, Wednesday, starting at 10 and closing at 4. "We buy anything you have for sale and sell anything you want sold. Every Wednesday, rain or shine. From a paper of pins to a tract of land. Either Ben Fishel's warehouse in case of rain or CVB's lot. You can be sure we will have a sale." Mr. Fishel as president and CBV the manager, two competing merchants were joining hands in this unusual venture with a sense of urgency. Simultaneously the mystified townspeople had gained a druggist, Ridley Browne, the grandson of the late Dr. Browne. The druggist's uncle O. D. Browne had opened a new general store, and Greenleaf Johnson Lumber Company had established its lumber yard east of it. Henry R. Eason, a native of Gates County, managed the commissary there. Continuing growth of the population meant that there were now more white teachers at work in Vaughan School, and W. T. Carter was chairman of the Warren County Board of Education. Locals referred to him as Squire. The booming timber harvest had increased the population of Negroes as well as whites, and a three-room schoolhouse for black boys and girls was opened near the Greenleaf Johnson railhead.

Regular farming still held sway too. Hard to miss in this unusual environment of survival and growth was this November 10, 1911, notice in *The Warren Record*: "On Saturday, November 22 at 3:30 pm, Mr. W. R. Vaughan will demonstrate the use of DuPont dynamite as a sub-soiler, and he is particularly anxious that the farmers and others of the county who are interested will be present to witness the demonstration. He will use 50 pounds of DuPont powder, 200 caps, and 600 feet of fuse. The demonstration will take place in the town of Vaughan." Exactly where the blasts had been set off did not appear in the issue that followed Thanksgiving. Always a public servant like his friend Squire Carter, the Seaboard agent had started Christmas fireworks early that year as Brother Charlie's unsettled affairs remained up in the air.

In March 1912 a public sale of land took place in front of Mayor Charlie Vaughan's Department Store. By that time, many citizens in the surrounding region had figured out what might be going on. A completely frantic father was liquidating his possessions in order to raise money to save the lives of his four sons, all of whom, including Dr. Roy Vaughan, had been exposed and were suffering from active tuberculosis. This family and community scare continued throughout that summer and beyond. Contagion was afoot locally. Would the free-standing, screened sleeping porch built south of the Skundberg Hotel do any good? Rest and isolation were thought to be best practices. Where could other treatments or cures be found? In Asheville's mountain air? Moore County? Out of state? How much money would treatments require? As recently as 1910 a tuberculin skin test for children had been successfully demonstrated. Where should adults who were already infected live? Were their family homes unsafe for habitation? Or was infected ambient air rather than a contaminated object the culprit?

The mayor's old store business became Edgerton's Cash Grocery with W. K. Hunter as clerk, and Ben Fishel assumed ownership of CBV's cotton gin. Beloved Dr. Horace Palmer, dependent on a horse and buggy in all seasons, moved in to fill the gaping medical void created by the illness of young Dr. Roy Vaughan. The treatments for his disease were being administered in Durham. His suffering brothers went or were sent there and elsewhere. Had Roy unknowingly brought consumption home with him from his exposure to it during his medical studies in Virginia? His training there had coincided exactly with a worldwide wave of investigation and experimental treatment of this bacterial disease.

Or maybe the dreaded disease, as the persisting local legend insisted,

had been communicated to the Charlie and Mollie Vaughan household by a local Stone House Creek moonshiner named Fess Williams who also worked for the CBV family. Like the disease itself, there was no known cure for these competing theories and gossip. Some wags even quipped that Uncle Fess had no longer needed to work for the Charlie Vaughan family after the 1908 vote on prohibition passed. Illegal whiskey sales were booming with the town. If enterprising Charlie Vaughan provided this Negro man the raw materials for making moonshine by night, Fess's subsequently working daily among Vaughan family members to settle the account was a killer of a business deal. It would not be the first or last time a local merchant was in cahoots with the shiners. But! Fess Williams may never have had active TB in the first place. It did not kill him. He died of influenza in 1929 according to his death certificate signed by Dr. Horace Palmer.

December 9, 1912, lawyer John Kerr of Warrenton offered for sale for cash at the depot in Vaughan four lots CBV and his wife had purchased on credit in 1908 and 1909 and later defaulted. These four lots together would not amount to an acre. Even so, some of the land did not sell. Walter Vaughan, now the mayor of the town, ran the following recurring notice in *The Warren Record* during the spring of 1913: "All persons having claims and accounts against C. B. Vaughan are notified to file same with me on or before 26 April, 1913. Parties indebted to CBV please make immediate settlement." As legal guardian for his over-burdened and over-extended brother, Walter subsequently conducted mandated land sales in Vaughan and at the courthouse in Warrenton during August, September, and December 1913. The Charlie Vaughan residence and its premises seemed to be contaminated by the dread disease. Who would buy such property even when money was needed for treatment of the four doomed sons. Their mother, father, and sister Myrtis as well as Roy's wife and two young children seemed not to be plagued—with the disease itself.

In another change stimulated by the crumbling of CBV's enterprises and his family, J. T. Myrick, Mrs. Vaughan's brother-in-law, opened a cash grocery store in part of the brick building that also housed the now failing hosiery mill. There at 3 pm on Sunday, February 16, 1913, Rev. R. A. Willis, no longer officially associated with either of the local white congregations, preached. The occasion and the theme of his sermon were not divulged in the "Littleton Locals" feature of *The Record* for February 21. In the Myrick store the old minister probably proclaimed a timely message from the NC Anti-Saloon League as the booming town faced local health

hazards as well as economic opportunities. Sermons dealing with such social gospel issues were not readily acceptable when delivered from local Methodist or Baptist pulpits by the regular ministers. In the 1870s Rev. Willis had led Methodist worship at Pegram's, Cokesbury, Hebron, Shady Grove, Bethlehem, Prospect, and Warrenton.

Clearly Vaughan needed relief or instruction from somewhere. No mere quarantine would do. In *The Record* of Warrenton for February 21, 1913, ran this story opposite reference to Rev. Willis's sermon: "Through the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. P. B. Skundberg, the Womans Missionary Society held a Valentine Box Social at the Skundberg Hotel last Friday evening, February 14. The parlor and dining room were decorated with a profusion of red hearts, and the guests on arriving were met at the door by Miss Gladys Thoroughgood and Master Alf Sandsvick, who ushered them into the parlor. At ten o'clock the guests were invited into the dining room where there was an abundance of ice cream and cake served. Those present were: Misses Tempie Williams, Lillie Barnes, Mae Carter, Ruby Bell, Edith Harriss, Lucille Vaughan, Myra Vaughan, Clara Pegram, Mamie Tucker, Georgia Thoroughgood, Clara Thoroughgood, Alice Shearin, Agnes Skundberg, Bernice Skundberg, Lizzie Duke, Mr. and Mrs. W. K. Hunter, Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Hofler, Mrs. E. E. Mercer, Mrs. Helen Pierce, Mrs. G. A. Thoroughgood, Dr. Horace Palmer, Messrs Dallas, Willie, and Lee Riggan, N. F. Webb, W. F. Battle, Wyatt Pegram, Eugene Tucker, Joseph Bell, Sol. B. Fishel, Dan Barnes, Percy Thornton, A. W. Nixon, Joseph Duke, Vernon Browne, Ben Riggan, E. E. Hartsock, C. C. Sandsvick, and W. R. Vaughan." Among the single people attending were a number of couples who later married. For example, Mae Carter and Dan Barnes would be married by Mayor and Justice of the Peace Walter Vaughan on March 18, 1914. During the year before he officiated at the happy occasion of the Carter / Barnes wedding, Walter had endured two unpleasant experiences not related to his guardianship for Brother Charlie in 1913.

Vaughan's Seaboard Depot, with Walter still its agent, was destroyed by fire Sunday afternoon, April 6, seven weeks after the Valentine Box Social. Started around noon by the exhaust of a passing train, the fire burned very quickly in a strong wind despite the efforts of local citizens. Some of the freight and express was saved, along with office fixtures and tickets. The nearby property of D. A. Fishel Lumber Company was in constant danger. It caught fire a number of times but ultimately was not badly damaged. According to *The Record* of Warrenton for April 11, Wal-

ter Vaughan moved the depot operations for the time being into quarters above Ridley Browne's new Drug Store directly across the tracks, and a new depot was begun that Monday morning. Mr. J. T. Land was the experienced section master as this work got underway, and by late summer the new depot was in service. Besides the volume of passenger and lumber business, Vaughan's share of the 1913 Warren County cotton harvest was projected to be large.

Justice moved along almost as swiftly in the second non-family challenge Mayor and Justice of the Peace Walter Vaughan faced that summer. Littleton Bright of Portsmouth, Virginia, a blacksmith drawn to Vaughan by the lumber trade, was arrested for killing Fosburgh watchman Isaac Piland outside the Piland family home just west of the Vaughan Baptist Church about 8:30 pm on July 22, 1913. At issue was Mr. Piland's repeated resistance to Mr. Bright's courting the oldest Piland child. As evidence for the pending trial, Justice of the Peace Walter Vaughan preserved Mr. Piland's ante mortem account as well as the statements of all local witnesses to the fatal confrontation. In September after a jury trial in Warrenton, Bright was sentenced to thirteen years at the prison farm at Caledonia in Halifax County. He turned out to be a married man with children whose family had not accompanied him to his job in Vaughan. Mr. Piland's wife and three children, even before the trial, returned to eastern North Carolina where she and her late husband had grown up. It appears that Mr. Bright died in prison.

Meanwhile the drip, drip, drip of mandated auctions and guardianship, besides Seaboard responsibilities, preoccupied Walter Vaughan. He rarely spent an entire evening with his family on Embro Road, for other claimants were busy too. Citizens Bank of Warrenton printed and circulated a notice on September 19, 1913, that it had authority to sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash at the courthouse door in Warrenton a certain note of C. B. Vaughan dated April 26, 1911, and executed on May 4 for \$1,650 payable with interest on or before October 1, 1911. This note, the text continued, "is secured by a deed of trust on the dwelling house of Mr. Vaughan located in the town of Vaughan." The legal machinery related to default on loans ground more slowly in other instances as simultaneous efforts on many fronts to save Charlie and Mollie Vaughan's sons began to fail.

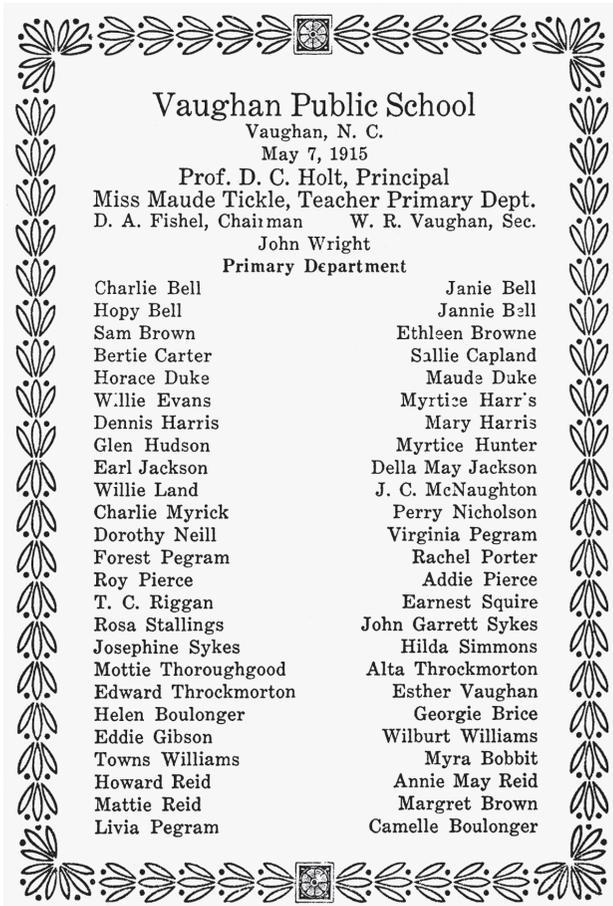
These four grown sons died in the order of their births between February 14, 1914, and February 16, 1916. Willis Barrett the oldest son died first, on Valentine's Day, not yet 30 years old, at House Creek in Wake County.

In 1915 Roy Adkin, age 27, died January 17 in Durham on Lakewood Avenue where he had been receiving treatment from Dr. E. H. Bowling. At the same Lakewood Avenue address in Durham where Roy had died, Charlie Morton Vaughan passed away October 29, 1915. Dr. R. L. Felts had been treating this 26-year-old bookkeeper since June 10. He was buried the day before Halloween in Vaughan Community Cemetery beside the graves of Willie and Roy. It was Charlie Morton who had signed Roy's death certificate for the family. John Pope, the youngest son, died at the Catawba Sanatorium north of Salem, Virginia, on February 16, 1916. Just 24, he had worked prior to his illness as a railroad office clerk in nearby Roanoke. Dr. John J. Lloyd had treated him for miliary and pulmonary TB for some time. His burial in Vaughan took place February 18, 1916.

During this two-year ordeal, legal maneuvers related to Charlie Vaughan's failed businesses had continued. December 21, 1914, for example, the North Carolina Secretary of State Bryan Grimes certified that the Allgood Hosiery Mill Company, a NC corporation with principal offices in Vaughan, was dissolved by unanimous consent of the stockholders. M. F. Parker was the person left in charge, according to two notices in the February 12, 1915, *Warren Record*.

REFLECTION AND DIVERSIONS

If any parents ever needed a guardian angel, whether a devoted relative like Walter Vaughan or someone else, Mollie and Charlie surely did. The Great War, known today as World War I, was not yet America's fight. That would begin April 6, 1917, but the Charlie Vaughan family had already buried all its troops. Somehow it was Dr. Roy Vaughan who had received most of the news coverage during this terrible ordeal. The *Norlina Headlight* on January 22, 1915, had stated that "He had been in declining health for quite a while." *The Warren Record* noted in its January 29 issue that Dr. Vaughan's remains had been accompanied on the train from Durham by his wife and brother John. Perhaps Charlie Morton dared not come home for the January 19 burial. That date was given in Christopher Riggan's diary and on the death certificate. Mr. Riggan had been among the numerous patients Dr. Vaughan treated in their homes early in his fated practice. Unable or unwilling to continue to live in the new house completed for her and Roy, his widow May and her two children moved instead into a house where Harry and Agnes Fishel later raised their family on Church Street. Fortunately by the time of her husband's death, Mrs. Vaughan had been the town's postmistress for nine months, since



April 13, 1914, when Mrs. Rogerson stepped aside. Mrs. Vaughan held that position until early July 1919. Orville D. Browne did not officially begin his tenure as Vaughan's fourth postmaster or officer in charge until October 19, several months later. This capable son of Dr. Ridley and Henrietta Browne had earlier been a merchant in both Littleton and Vaughan.

Records of post office box rentals for this period of transition from Mrs. Rogerson's management to Mrs. Vaughan's have survived. The names of adults or companies that appear at least once for the years 1913, 1914, and 1915 provide a glimpse, especially in that mid-census cycle, of the population of Vaughan as the boomtown experienced tremendous growth. The rental fees appear to have been stable, 15 cents each quarter for ordinary boxes and 25 cents for larger ones. Some residents whose

names do not appear may have used rather than rented a box.

The racially integrated listing was not alphabetical: W. H. Wright, C. Sandsvick, Jesse Payton, J. L. Pegram, D. A. Fishel, W. J. Parker, W. W. Pegram, J. H. Harriss, C. M. McNaughton, Tommie Williams, L. W. Hoffer, D. A. Fishel and Sons, Betsie Burrow, W. N. Carter, Mrs. G. A. Thoroughgood, C. P. Thornton, J. H. Paschall, D. A. Barnes, G. W. Gipson, T. W. Myrick, Plummer Shearin, J. W. Kearney,



Principal D. C. Holt
Courtesy Pierce Family

Isaac Piland, Fosburgh Lumber, P. B. Skundberg, W. T. Carter, W. H. Howard, Sol Clanton, A. J. Baker, Henry Williams, Whitt Williams, Effie Mobly, E. J. Harris, B. F. Kearney, Joe Person, Robert Harris, Cary Porter, Post Tel. Co., G. P. Williams, O. D. Browne, J. B. Pegram, J. R. Fisher, J. E. Worthington Lena Pugh, Walter Stallings, Harry Strong, Emily Overton, Dal Riggan, W. R. Vaughan, F. H. Blake, E. A. Skillman, Mrs. Harriss, W. H. Boyd, W. H. Walker, W. A. Pegram, Henry Clanton, C. S. Riggan, J. T. Smith, A. W. Nixon, Frank Brown, Peter Kearney, Nora Taylor, Florence Pugh, Charlie Barnes, S. J. Stallings, Ed Drumgo, C. D. Tharrington, W. Barth, J. C. Hudson, John Enright, J. L. Whitley, Littleton Bright, D. C. Holt, J. E. Henry, Greenleaf Johnson Lumber, Browne's Drug Store, Mrs. Lizzie Simmons, Steward Sutton, J. B. Pegram, Mrs. W. H. Pegram, James Brown, Cora Teele, Mrs. Duke, W. R. Hunter, Gid Williams, George Overton, George Pugh, Madison Privette, M. M. Riggan, Lee Strong, B. G. Gibson, J. Rob Johnson, B. W. Gardner, Mr. Epps, L. R. Duke, Billie Brown, and Kemp Browne.

Aided by his married, youngest child Thomas and Thomas's wife Della, Madison Privette had bought the land and moved into the Queen Anne residence of Henry and Bettie Evans on Evans-Riggan Road by 1916. Mrs. Evans had died in 1907; eventually Henry moved in with his adult children before his death in 1920. A widower himself, Mr. Privette and his four single, adult children represented an unusual phenomenon. As a merchant family, they arrived from eastern Wake County just when the boom time in Vaughan was beginning to subside. Residents had begun following the timber harvest to Hollister and elsewhere that year. Yet the Privettes settled in Vaughan to stay. Madison's older son Daniel Prentice, always called Dude, and his three sisters, Jennie, Lillie, and Etta, success-

fully ran a grocery store in at least two different locations along Main Street—first, a small store east of the hotel and then a larger one west of it. Miss Jenny, the eldest, was a widow with the surname Emery. Earlier Madison Privette had been a farmer; he loved the out of doors. His preferred occupation, passed down in the family, was making moonshine, steady night work along Big Stone House Creek, the headwaters of which flowed north in the vicinity of the Privette property. *Prohibition* was not at home in the Privette vocabulary, and the word was never very popular in Judkins and River townships either. Tom and Della Privette did not make their home in Vaughan, preferring Wendell instead.

While Postmistress May Vaughan occupied the Fishel house on Church Street, she arranged in August 1916 a big party in honor of her sister-in-law Myrtis Vaughan who had come back home for a visit, leaving her mother and ailing father in Durham. Her kid brother John, the last of her four brothers, had passed away in Virginia in February. According to the August 25 *Warren Record*: “The porch, parlor, dining room, and spacious hall were decorated for the occasion, the color scheme being pink and green. Both dancing and Rook were enjoyed after which refreshments were served. Those enjoying the occasion were Misses Sallie, Annie, and Sue Palmer and Miss Janice and Mrs. Walter Fleming of Warrenton, Miss Florence Perry of Macon, Miss Eva Glasgow of Littleton, Miss Myrtis Vaughan of Durham, and Misses Edith, Alice, and Rosalyn Harriss, Lucille, Myra, and Mabel Vaughan, Georgia and Gladys Thoroughgood, Pearl and Selma Fishel, Mamie Tucker and Bernice Skundberg, Mrs. J. D. Riggan, and Mrs. Horace Palmer of Vaughan.”

The story continued by listing the men who were officially hosting the party: Vernon Bennett and Glen Parrish of Middleburg, Hardy and Herbert Gardner, Jim and Alton Gardner, Jasper Shearin and Herbert Pope of Churchill, Harry and Sol B. Fishel, J. E. Northington, Zeno Davenport, and Marion P. Nicholson of Vaughan and A. P. Foy and Vaughan Hawkins of Warrenton.” The Fishel brothers in attendance were of draft age. Having been graduated by Westminster College in Westminster, Maryland, in mid-1916, Harry within the year became an aviation instructor at an American flying field in France. He had earlier dreamed of completing medical school. Sol served in the U.S. Army in Vancouver, BC, with the Spruce Production Division, a forestry outfit. Someone asked Harry after he returned to Vaughan from France if all the barbed wire deployed across Europe had to be rolled up. It was an absurd question that fit the times.

Charlie, Mollie, and Myrtis Vaughan, homeless at home, had moved to Durham in 1915 to the same Lakewood Avenue address in Lakewood Park where sons Roy and Charles passed away that year. Roy Vaughan, Jr. had visited his grandparents and aunt there in June 1916. The same Dr. E. H. Bowling who had cared for the boy's father now treated his grandfather. Go-getter Charlie, listed in the 1915 *Durham City Directory* as a clerk, was slipping steadily downhill by mid-1916; he died of lobar pneumonia February 20, 1917. His widow supplied the information for his death certificate. In the line for his occupation, Mollie described her devoted husband as a "lumber man, buyer of lumber." Brought home to Vaughan by train, he was buried near his four sons February 21, 1917. The joint granite marker erected later mistakenly gave the year of his death as 1918. It would have been cruel for this man to suffer life another day, much less an entire year.

June 13, 1919, while visiting in the home of James and Nellie Butts near South Hill in Chaptico, Virginia, CBV's sainted widow Mollie Nicholson Vaughan died very unexpectedly. She, too, was brought to Vaughan for burial. Before he and his wife had been the initial managers of the hotel opened in Vaughan in 1910-11, Jim Butts had been a partner in the Vaughan Feed Company with Charlie and Walter Vaughan. Mollie Vaughan and Nellie Butts' friendship began then. Not long before her death, a tract of land Charlie and S. B. Morris had bought in 1900 was offered for sale at the courthouse in Warrenton. What money, if any, came to Mollie Vaughan from the sale is unknown. As her husband's executrix, she had found his estate to include \$80.00 in the Peoples Bank of Durham, a record of that small lot in Vaughan, and a separate Peoples Bank account of \$204.67 for surviving daughter Myrtis who as her father's ward had not yet turned eighteen when he died. Mary Elizabeth Clark Vaughan died May 20, 1917, three months to the day after her middle son Charlie. Rev. W. E. Swain conducted her funeral in Vaughan at the Methodist Church. Age eighty-nine, she was buried in the family plot in the cemetery beyond the Baptist Church.

July 7, 1919, May Vaughan, Dr. Roy's widow, and her two children left Vaughan and moved initially to Hollister, the current lumber boomtown formerly known as Fosburgh Camp. Other residents of Vaughan had gone there with their families, temporarily as it turned out, to live and work. Former postmistress May Vaughan, however, had left Vaughan for good. The 1920 census listed her as a bookkeeper for a bank in Hollister where she lived with her son Roy, age 9, and daughter Mary Bryan who was

just 6. Lily C. Powell, May's mother, now widowed for a second time, lived with them. May had not remarried. By 1930 she had moved into Rocky Mount to work as a stenographer and bookkeeper for a lumber plant there. Mrs. Powell had passed away, and Mary still lived with her mother. From the first having adjusted well to life without his father, young Roy had moved away from home on his own.

Both Roy and his sister actively shared the gumption of their Vaughan family forebears. The fall of 1917, for example, young Roy was making the honor roll at Vaughan School where his teacher was Bessie Laughlin. Honored with him were classmates Addie Lee Hudson, Myrtice Harriss, Perry Nicholson, and Joseph Riggan. Little Mary had made a good adjustment as well. That same year at age four she was selling subscriptions and renewals to *The News and Observer* door to door in Vaughan. Her aim was to win a toy car. Years later Roy A. Vaughan, Jr., married with a son named John Philip, served in the US Navy, 1944–45. He died in January 1991 in Manchester, Connecticut, where he was buried. His sister Mary Bryan died the next year at age 79 in Alban, Wisconsin, and was buried in the Lutheran Church cemetery there. On May 15, 1936, she had married Dr. Vernard August Benn in Emporia, Virginia. He was a native of Medford, Wisconsin. No children survived this couple.

Myrtis Vaughan, aunt of Roy and Mary Bryan, after a very rough girlhood, would lead a somewhat more stable adult life. In Richmond she married at age twenty-four a divorcee named Charles H. Sherrod, also a native of North Carolina. They raised four boys on his income as a life insurance salesman. She had never gone beyond the eighth grade in school, and if she ever worked outside the home, those details have not been discovered. A live-in maid assisted Myrtis with housekeeping at 3111 Lamb Avenue for years. Her closest bond within the Vaughan family after the deaths of her four brothers, father, and mother was with her brother's widow May. Relations between the Sherrods of Richmond and Walter Vaughan's family do not appear to have been close before or after Mr. Sherrod died in October 1955. Myrtis Vaughan Sherrod lived until December 1988 and was buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Richmond.

STABLE BROTHER WALTER

Lessons Walter Vaughan had learned from the sudden death of his brother John in 1890, their father's death in 1892, and the deaths of Charlie and most of his family between 1914 and 1919 are not known. Not known, that is, except in the record of steadfast work and service both personal



Valeria and Walter Vaughan
Courtesy Paul Matthews

and public that charted Walter's own adult life. In him his parents sent a strong messenger down the years. He always labored on: leadership, public speaking, and management being his skill set. Even with his large, immediate household of nine children and a wife, his demanding Seaboard job, and his guardianship for Charlie consuming his time, Walter did not easily say "no" whenever other people called upon him. In late March 1914, for example, he had been appointed by regional Seaboard agents and telegraphers to secure the reinstatement of Littleton depot agent A. M. Newsom; the keen diplomacy of Thelma agent J. T. Benn and W. R. Vaughan was successful in this important task. There were others; Walter was a force for good.

His letter to the editor of the April 10, 1914, *Littleton News Reporter* was emphatic about a contagious disease other than TB: "I heartily endorse the position taken by Mr. D. L. Ryder in your last issue relative to the lifting of the quarantine on smallpox. I think it is a shame that a disease so malignant and so prevalent in our county should not be hedged about as to at least restrict its spread . . . I hope that the good citizens of Warren County will see to it that the quarantine against smallpox is reestablished." During this health scare Mrs. Falcon Browne died of a stroke. The former Ada Rightmyer and the mother of ten grown children, among them Ridley, Vaughan's druggist, was buried in the community

cemetery after a large funeral at the Methodist Church. Mayor Vaughan was among the mourners despite his misgivings due to the spread of smallpox. Early that May he had been active in the Judkins Democratic primary. In an investigation of the local practice of moving the ballot box from place to place on election day, he prevailed. Then in November 1914 the superintendent of Greenleaf Johnson brought a citizen of Panama to see the company's lumber spur line running south from Vaughan; as mayor the Seaboard agent served as host.

New means of making additional money concerned this busy leader as well. That same May, he and J. E. Northington had opened a real estate and insurance office as partners in Vaughan. Another purely business venture made Mayor Vaughan the countywide agent for the Kor Ker tire puncture treatment. Having bought his own automobile, he installed the patented material inside his tires and boldly placed newspaper ads guaranteeing it to prevent flat tires and prolong the life of the rubber itself. With tongue in cheek, *The Warren Record's* friendly editor informed its readership in March 1915: "Our friend Mr. Walter Vaughan had struck a bonanza if the claims made for a puncture proof material sold by him prove to be true from experience. We trust that he can prove that the material sold by him will prevent punctures—for his own sake and the sake of those who buy." Besides having both train and automobile travel at his bidding as Charlie and Mollie's family demanded more and more medical care, often at a distance, Walter and Valeria Vaughan also hosted his aged mother Mary and his niece Eugenia Pearson and her two children in Vaughan. Prior to 1915 Eugenia and her husband C. S. moved to Norlina where he worked for the railroad.

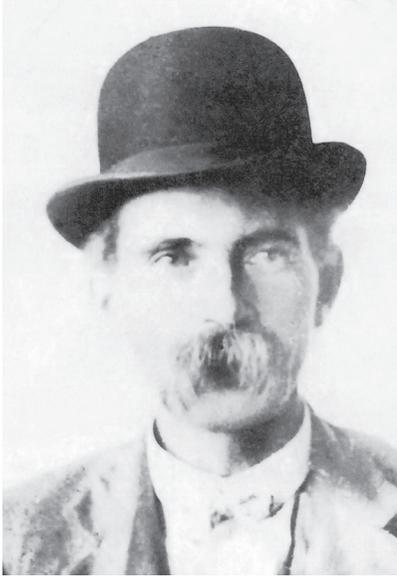
Walter's last year as mayor of Vaughan was 1915. Besides being Charlie's legal guardian, Walter found himself in front of crowds of men and women gathered in Vaughan and elsewhere to promote, for example, free inoculation campaigns for blacks and whites against typhoid and smallpox. He promoted anti-spitting laws to control disease as well as Moonlight Schools to address adult illiteracy. All citizens over age twenty-one who could not read and write, about one-seventh of the Vaughan population, were signed up for basic instruction by paid teachers three nights each week before November 1915.

Whatever the topic or the cause, Walter Vaughan was in the progressive vanguard. His county-level comrade in education, Mr. J. Edward Allen, sometimes took a different approach, using shock and insult as motivat-

ing techniques, as in an October 23, 1915, item in *The Warren Record*: “A large part of North Carolina thinks of Warren as a county where the 15,000 Negroes are owning the land and where the 8,000 white people vilify one another; where politics is always hot and where cooperation is always lacking, where we pay more attention to our dogs than to our children. We need sympathetic cooperation.” Exactly that kind of cooperation prevailed whenever Walter Vaughan and W. T. Carter, who became Vaughan’s mayor in 1916, took the stage together. That October they officially welcomed Britt Shearin’s new cotton gin to Vaughan. Located east of Mr. Carter’s home on the old Warrenton-Halifax Road in River Township, it would be more convenient for local farmers than the gins in Littleton and also seasonally good for Seaboard’s freight business.

Another common cause for these leaders continued to be the public’s health and education. Walter Vaughan and Squire Carter gathered citizens in the oak grove where Dr. Ridley Browne’s *Favonia Haunt* once stood and called for improvements. They and their like-minded friends knew that sometimes projects took years. Even if Vaughan’s boom times were ending as the surrounding forests were almost all harvested and mostly shipped away, life must go on intelligently. Walter Vaughan had been serving on the county school board several years beginning in 1910. During this time the local emphasis upon education included starting a new school building. It began to serve white high school students in 1915–16 under Principal D. C. Holt. There had been a succession of two white elementary schools in the village since 1881. The first stood just south of where the Eaton’s Ferry and Warrenton-Halifax roads intersected. This log structure was eventually damaged by fire, and a two-story dwelling just east of the Baptist Church was converted into a school.

Mayor W. T. Carter recalled these earlier schools and became Mr. Vaughan’s confederate in the dramatic construction of the new school south of the railroad and right in front of the residence of Mr. and Mrs. G. S. P. Browne. To commemorate this progress, the Brownes painted their large house white, and the entire community felt improved. Thanks to the team of Vaughan and Carter who had led the campaign, Vaughan had been designated and then succeeded as a special tax school district. Just before Christmas 1919 Littleton’s *News Reporter* announced that the “Vaughan school building is nearing completion, and they expect to move in by the first of the year.” As early as October 1, 1915, *The Warren Record* had asked: “And who could mention anything in the neighborhood



W. T. "Squire" Carter
 Courtesy Brenda Mays

of Vaughan that had for its purpose the uplift of the community and not find Walter Vaughan and Tom Carter taking a hand in it? It would be *Hamlet* played and Hamlet left out."

The education-minded Seaboard agent was also as concerned about good public roads and dependable tires as he was about safe railroads. He had begun sending editorials to the local papers in February 1912 to advocate for the organization of local Good Roads Clubs. Occasionally he even publicized information to bolster the work of the NC Highway Commission. In August 1917 in *The News Reporter*, for example, he ap-

plauded the completion of three miles of improvements on the old road between Littleton and Vaughan by a chain-gang in a day and a half at a cost of \$325.53 per mile. As secretary of the Warren County Highway Commission, that November he accepted the responsibility for erecting road signs to indicate the direction and distance to points of interest in Judkins Township. The state legislature had recently directed that these signs were to be clearly visible and perfectly clear. He also served that fall on the committee appointed by the Warren commissioners to change portions of the township lines between River, Judkins, and Sixpound. Serving with him were W. T. Carter, J. L. Pegram, and J. H. Harriss of River and H. A. Manning, Ridley Browne the druggist, and J. T. Myrick of Judkins. That civic duty ended suddenly for Mr. Vaughan when he and his wife came down with malaria in mid-November. Both had recovered by Thanksgiving.

All of Walter Vaughan's public services, meanwhile, were related directly to his long record as a Democrat. Since 1906 he had often served as chair of the Warren County party. His active membership in the Masonic Order gave him even wider influence. Vaughan had had its own lodge since 1911, upstairs in Mrs. John Hudson's general store just east of John Vaughan's original store site. W. R. Vaughan rose to be district

deputy Grand Master in this organization. Another special group formed in the area with help from Mr. Vaughan was the local chapter of the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union. When the United States entered the Great War in Europe in April 1917, Walter Vaughan, former mayor but still a Judkins magistrate, served on numerous committees as township representative. He raised funds for war bonds as well as to support the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. He saluted the local troops as they went away and later welcomed them home



Jesse P. T. Harriss
Courtesy Pierce Family

in whatever condition. He helped host the July 25, 1919, parade and barbecue-Brunswick stew feast in Warrenton after victory had been won.

Among veterans from local families, Walter Vaughan knew Thomas S. Walker of the Verser family as well as Willie King who had been gassed in Europe, plus Jesse Harriss who was a sailor, and the two Fishel brothers Harry and Sol. Local Negro WWI veterans included Pvt. John Prime Clanton of Company 14, 155th Depot Brigade and Hubert Fogg, son of George and Anna Fogg, who survived the war, plus Mahalia Browne's son Andrew who did not. Private Browne was killed October 18, 1918, and later buried beside the relocated Ashley Grove Baptist Church with full military honors. Unlike almost all other Negroes descended from Browne family masters and slaves, Andrew, in contrast to his mother, retained the final letter of their surname in spelling his. Soon someone erected an iron fence around the grave of this unique fighter.

With enough land for a cemetery, this second church of that name had been built in 1912-13 on an acre purchased for \$5.00 by the Negro membership between 1894 and 1896 from the heirs of Dr. Ridley Browne. For over a decade these black Baptists still worshipped in their log church on Ash Hill as gradually around their future church and cemetery east of Vaughan developed the Greenleaf Johnson Lumber Company Railroad hub. It would



Skundberg Hotel
Courtesy Pierce Family

provide employment to many Negro laborers whose weekly offerings would eventually pay for the small weatherboard house of worship beside its own cemetery. Pvt. Andrew Brown who came home to rest forever in that hard-earned place had grown up on Ash Hill in sight of the original log church of Vaughan's black Baptists.

Earlier that July of 1919 Walter Vaughan spoke at a lawn party in front of the Skundberg Hotel in honor of local white soldiers who had returned from overseas. Hosting the party near the depot were Mrs. Elizabeth Skundberg and her two step-daughters Agnes Riggan and Bernice Eason. In recent months, due to the manpower shortage the war occasioned, Agent Vaughan had worked nights at the Littleton depot after putting in a day's duty in Vaughan. In both locations in the previous year he had warehoused baled cotton and distributed \$50.00 down-payments per bale to local cotton growers through the NC Cotton Growers Association. For cotton, a valuable military raw material, was also becoming a staple of the local economy again. If Walter Vaughan was not primarily a farmer, he was the farmers' railroad agent.

TRANSITION

The second phase of the 1918 influenza epidemic had made its belated visit to the Vaughan community in January 1919, two months after the end of the war. Someone in nearly every home became ill. Church groups did not meet. Walter Vaughan took to his bed too. His assistant Zeno L. Davenport ran the depot. Others, not yet ill or already recovered, did their parts willingly. Tradition holds that the Porter family on Evans Road was the hardest hit, but no lettered stone in any local cemetery records a flu death in 1918 or 1919 in Vaughan. Hard as the epidemic hit the town, its population had been diminished much more by TB and the earlier subsiding of the spur-lines lumber boom.

Whole families had migrated to Hollister and elsewhere after 1916 when Vaughan's population crested at 500. Greenleaf Johnson merchant H. R. Eason, saw miller Marion Pope Nicholson, Dr. Horace Palmer,

pharmacist Ridley Browne, liveryman Ben Fishel, and planing mill foreman Dan Barnes, are examples. The Vaughan's civic order seemed to be prepared for continued growth, nonetheless, just as the last logs were being harvested in Judkins leaving open, stumpy fields not yet ready for large crops of cotton or anything else.

Other town officials working with W. T. Carter as mayor included commissioners W. W. Pegram, J. H. Harriss, B. O. Riggan, and E. P. Nicholson. E. L. Riggan was chief of police, and J. L. Pegram served as town treasurer. Dr. Horace Palmer had been health officer before moving to Hollister. Postmistress May Vaughan departed for there in mid-1919. Walter Vaughan still ran the Seaboard operations in Vaughan assisted by J. T. Land. The planing mills east of the depot were not humming at full speed anymore, and Peter Skundburg, who had anchored those operations along with D. A. Fishel and Sons in Vaughan, had moved his machinery, first to Hollister and then to Norge, Virginia, a Norwegian settlement near Williamsburg. He had died there of pneumonia the week before Christmas in 1916. Just forty-nine years old, Mr. Skundberg was buried in the Vaughan Community Cemetery. His wintry grave foretold the ending of an era.

The two spur lines running south from Vaughan became less and less busy and finally unprofitable. By 1917 the North Carolina Corporation Commission granted Fosburgh limited common-carrier status on its Hollister-Vaughan logging road because the company did not have locomotives or rolling stock that was adequate and sufficient for transporting sawed logs. Upgrading the equipment was deemed an unnecessary hardship on the company, and in 1920 Fosburgh, based in Norfolk, sold its assets to Montgomery Lumber Company, which retained the Fosburgh name. For similar economic reasons, by 1922 Greenleaf Johnson Lumber Company was owned by Montgomery Lumber Company too. These two spur-line companies had consumed the surrounding forests and were now reduced to stumps themselves. The 1924 John Buck map of Warren County did not refer to the Greenleaf Johnson line at all, but the original Fosburgh spur just east of Vaughan was shown as the Hollister Lumber Company Railroad. The commissary of Greenleaf Johnson was pulled or skidded a mile south of its original location to the ruins of *Faulconia* to support the housing and farm storage needs of Cap'n Jim Harriss, the current owner.

Montgomery's salvage operation along both lines would take several years. The old rails were hauled away; crossties were often left where they lay. One massive grave for railroad metal was dug, filled, and covered half



Sunday Fosburgh Railroad Excursion

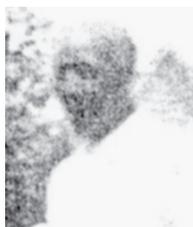
Courtesy Pierce Family

a mile south of where the commissary had stood and a few hundred yards north of Greenleaf Pond, the original watering hole for that line's steam locomotives. Into warehouses in Vaughan the salvaged railroad shop and blacksmithing equipment was moved and gradually reestablished by the new owners, Cap'n Harriss and his mechanical genius son Jesse, who made the broken parts of trucks, cars, and wagons work again. He also created sturdy new bodies for wagons and trucks out of wood.

RECOVERY

George Pugh, deacon at Ashley Grove and a Mason, was Jesse Harriss's equally skillful blacksmith to whom a spoke shave was an extension of his sharp eyes and a bellows his other set of lungs. His wife Della Watson Pugh was a teacher, having attended NC A&T in Greensboro. She taught children in her native Embro as well as at Epworth and at Johnson's, although the Pugh home was not far across the old Greenleaf Johnson line from the original Vaughan school for colored children. It stood between Andrew Brinkley's house and the home and store of Tom and Polly Henderson.

Their log store had benefitted from the patronage of lumberyard workers, black and white. How badly the noise of the lumber trains had affected students and the few teachers in the schoolhouse can be imagined, for that traffic went on right across



George and Della Watson Pugh
Courtesy Ashley Grove History

the road. Ironically in 1923–24, after the lumber trains on the Greenleaf Johnson yard were silent, a new school for Negro children was constructed through the well-known public-private partnership called the Rosenwald Fund. This southern brainchild of Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute was named for Julius Rosenwald, the president of Sears, Roebuck and Company. Vaughan's two-teacher Rosenwald school stood next to the home of Washington and Cora W. Teele on the road running in front of Mary Ann Browne's once grand *Oakley Grove*, by that time a tenement occupied by several white farm families.

Already by 1920, though Vaughan counted only 273 local residents of both races, they realized that not nearly all the town's recent boom had been for naught. Important quality of life measures thrived amidst obvious economic decline. The smaller town would get along, albeit more soberly. Prohibition politics was part of the reason, and Walter Vaughan was named to the county committee to publicize the growing movement



Oakley Grove, a Tenement
Courtesy the State Archives of North Carolina

to eradicate bootlegging and its effects, especially the relatively new menace of drunk automobile drivers. Deplorable red clay road conditions, especially in winter, added to the ongoing campaign for automobile safety and travel. No one any longer doubted the Vaughan Seaboard agent about the need for improved, safe roads. Automobile repair as well as safety also grew in demand. Answering the call for such work, J. T. Myrick



Vallie Tillotson and Matt David Nelson

Courtesy Nelson Family

and Company opened a garage. Mr. Tom Myrick, a leader before and during the sawmilling and home building boom times, sold general merchandise and did auto repair in the old brick building just north of the depot where Mrs. Myrick's brother-in-law, C. B. Vaughan, and others had once operated a hosiery mill business.

The 1920 census confirmed that Matt and Vallie Nelson had relocated to a large farm extending from Greenleaf Pond to Walker's Creek south of Vaughan. The Owen Davis estate now owned this considerable part of the Ridley Browne lands that had been so hard to dispose of. The young Nelsons had been married in Williamsboro in December 1916, before moving to farm the Kelly place between Henderson and Bearpond. They arrived in Vaughan in late 1919. Daughter Louise was not yet two; Vella, their second child, had been born that July. Matt had not been drawn into the war in Europe, and neither he nor Vallie had been sickened during the flu invasion. She had taught school before her marriage, first in Wake County after attending Meredith College and later in Granville County after further training in Greensboro. Her birthplace was east of Stovall; he was from nearby Grassy Creek and had gone through the fourth grade in school in Granville.

In Warren County the Greenleaf Johnson spur line, its use already much diminished, ran less than a mile west of the new clapboard house Dallas Riggan and his crew had built for them. Nearby stood a stable, crib, pack house, and curing barns. Tobacco would be the Nelsons' main

crop, although their horse-and-mule operation was diversified. They were the most unusual couple to arrive in Vaughan in that entire period for their motivation was to farm and raise a family, not to harvest timber or accumulate land. Also they had come to stay. Their nearest neighbors were Bob Johnson, his wife Rowan, and other Negroes including the Lee Strong family.

POLITICAL SUCCESS

It was during this period of movement and adaptation that Walter Vaughan's name gradually came to the fore as a candidate to represent Warren County in the North Carolina General Assembly. J. W. Daniel wrote in *The News Reporter* for April 29, 1922: "I want to suggest the name of a man, if he will go, who will do as much towards restoring to the people local self-government as any man we can send, and that man is W. R. Vaughan of Judkins Township." Anonymous citizens wrote to add their support, but even before Mr. Vaughan got into the primary race, he had an opponent, N. H. Paschall of Nutbush, another Democrat. W. T. Carter signed his long letter endorsing Vaughan, and the paper published it May 6, 1922: "Mr. Paschall is a good citizen and a good man, but is not generally known throughout the county. We believe that Mr. Vaughan should permit his name to be presented to the voters in the primary, and we believe he will do so, if he thinks it is the desire of the people generally." On May 12 W. R. Vaughan announced in *The Warren Record*: "I have been requested by friends from all sections of the county to become a candidate for the House of Representatives Sessions 1923-24. I believe I can be of some service to the citizens of Warren County and to the State, and I therefore hereby announce my candidacy for the House of Representatives and will appreciate the support of all Democrats in the June primary."

He was immediately attacked in the Littleton paper by Will Allen Connell. Candidate Vaughan on May 27 replied at full throttle, having been accused of being a spokesperson for railroad interests and organized labor. Describing his lifelong support for honest labor, the Seaboard agent stated: "I was raised on a farm and have never left it, and am now engaged in working a four-horse crop." Taken care of by Negroes Ed and Jennie Drumgo who lived in a house behind the Vaughans, this small farm included chickens and other animals besides cows and horses. The depot agent's letter rang true, and the voters came to his side of the ballot. Yet he had been truly affected by Mr. Connell's insinuations. Mr. Vaughan's

victory or thank you article in the June 16 *Warren Record* belabored the sore point: "I am under no obligations to any click or clan; I belong to no faction, and I am under no obligation to any special interest, corporate or individual. I have an open mind upon all questions pertaining to legislation and will gladly consider suggestions." The town of Vaughan celebrated his election with a community singing, followed by an ice cream social for the benefit of the Baptist Church. Other gatherings saluted the new representative-elect as well. He was toastmaster in mid-July at a large Masonic banquet in Littleton. In October 1922 at the Agricultural Fair in that town he returned to the theme of farming and emphasized the value of applying business policies in that work. He had in mind the cooperative marketing of farm products: "Farmers are entitled to the best that money affords, but the trouble has been that they produce wealth only to pass it into other hands."

Other citizens were making professional changes as well. Longtime Vaughan hostess in the hotel business, local society, and Baptist church affairs, Mrs. Elizabeth Skundberg, who had also established a hotel in Hollister with her husband, had left Vaughan to move to Thomasville in early February 1922. She had accepted a position as the matron of the Baptist Orphanage there. Mr. W. C. Porter, hoping to increase his furniture business, purchased Mrs. Skundberg's stock of goods and fixtures in her hotel millinery shop. Henceforth named the Riggan Hotel, it would be managed by Agnes Skundberg Riggan and her husband Dallas, a very much in demand carpenter in and around Vaughan.

With the residential population shrinking further, the Vaughan Baptist Church, ironically, had taken on an expansion project in 1921-22 to add four Sunday school rooms to its 1896-97 sanctuary. To raise funds the adult classes sold refreshments in the church grove some Saturday nights. Labor Day 1922 weekend, though, many people were away, having taken one of the Seaboard excursions to Ocean View in tidewater Virginia. Walter Vaughan and his daughter Esther were among them. The addition to the Baptist Church was finally completed and in use by Easter 1923.

Between Labor Day and Thanksgiving of 1922, however, the church had lost another promising member. Walter Harriss, the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Harriss and a Seaboard employee, died at age 26 of pneumonia. His broad popularity in the rising generation was reflected in one sentence in his November 17 *Warren Record* obituary: "Among those who placed floral offerings upon the freshly covered grave were three members of the Klu (sic) Klux Klan." White supremacy was alive and well in

that era when suffrage for white women had also become highly controversial. In the November 3 issue of *The Warren Record*, Warrenton suffragette Amma D. Graham wrote: "Tuesday, Nov. 7, from sunrise to sunset Warren County men and women will cast their votes in the general election. The contest was fought in the primary, party men here say, but they urge the men and women of Warren County to rally at the polls and roll up a big majority for Democracy." Below her preamble the ballot was reproduced. On it the only candidate for the NC House of Representatives was Walter R. Vaughan. He won easily and served in the NC General Assembly for Warren County in 1923 and 1924. In late May 1923 he was present at "Buck Spring" when a bronze plaque, against the expressed wishes of the late honoree Nathaniel Macon, was placed on a bulky granite marker at the head of the grave already marked by the large heap of stones the great statesman had suggested as sufficient. This monument had been ordered erected in 1919 by the North Carolina Historical Commission and the community club in nearby Macon. The Warren County Commissioners had generously donated \$1400 to the project that was also supported by both the Daughters of the American Revolution and the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Walter Vaughan's generally progressive point of view, enhanced by his legislative service in Raleigh, had led in August 1923 to his being appointed as one of two receivers when the Bank of Hollister was found by auditors to be insolvent. His role, shared with one other man, was to take into protective custody the affected property or funds of others in that boomtown that was now going bust. Vaughan residents who had moved there and some residents who never left Vaughan before moved to James Town, South Carolina, to work with Greenleaf Johnson. Among these men were Wyatt Pegram and E. P. Nicholson and his son Marion Pope Nicholson. Other Hollister residents came home to Vaughan and found new ways or resumed former ways to make a living. The Dan Barnes and the Henry Eason families are examples. Moving to Norlina was not a good option, although some local people did go there, for it was the next railroad boomtown to lose its bank. C. S. and Eugenia Vaughan Pearson left Norlina then and moved to Tidewater Virginia. There he got a job building railroad coaches. Even W. T. Carter temporarily took a weekday job at Hopewell near Richmond; he went up Monday morning and came back home Friday evening by train.

In the spring of 1924 Representative Vaughan addressed the Warren County convention of Democrats and was selected as a delegate to

the state convention. J. A. Dowtin was chosen as the candidate to succeed him in the NC House. The established concerns of Representative Vaughan about public health continued that summer. He promoted the free triple treatments for diphtheria and typhoid at biracial clinics during July and August. Another favorite subject, road improvements, was finally getting attention as well. A new road planned from Warrenton to Littleton would be hard surfaced; the red clay and gravel surface that the old road could no longer be maintained. Moreover, Civil Engineer Nichols was surveying the proposed route completely south of the Seaboard line to avoid all railroad crossings. The new map of the county by John E. Buck appeared in 1924 before this route to be hard surfaced was completely surveyed, but the case for a safe and durable highway had been made. On the Buck map, the Embro Road on which Walter Vaughan lived was shown in place, another sign of Representative Vaughan's political success in Raleigh and Warrenton. US 117, opened in 1926 was a 156-mile route from Norlina through Warrenton, Macon, Vaughan, and Littleton, then on to Murfreesboro where it turned north into Virginia and ended in Virginia Beach. Not until 1932 would the North Carolina route be extended east and west as US 158.

Among the visits busy Walter Vaughan made during the fall of 1924, none was more personal than those he and his wife Valerie made south of town to the home of Matt and Vallie Nelson. Another daughter had been born there, making five girls in all. Two weeks before baby Esther's arrival, Vella, the second oldest, had been badly burned in a front-porch accident on Halloween morning. Clothing aflame, she had run through the house to the back porch where her pregnant mother was washing clothes with the help of Florence Strong, a black neighbor. Seeing the burning child, Mrs. Nelson lunged toward her and in doing so fell off the porch. Florence quickly smothered Vella's flames with her own body as Mrs. Nelson got to her feet. The two frightened women called for help. Florence's energetic mother Emma came running from her house nearby. Mr. Nelson soon arrived from the low ground and drove to the depot in Vaughan to get word to Dr. Palmer and Dr. Putney in Littleton. Between that frightening morning and the birth of Esther on November 12, both Vella and her mother were the centers of intensive care and attention at home. The entire community, black and white, leaned in to help. Vella slowly recovered with one major burn under her left arm. Two midwives attended Mrs. Nelson when Esther was born. By Thanksgiving there was truly much to be thankful for in and around Vaughan that year.

DEPARTURE, NOT FAREWELL

In the *Norlina Headlight* for December 26, 1924, appeared a December 7 letter written by Walter Vaughan. It was addressed to Mr. C. H. Sauls, Supt., Raleigh, N.C.

Dear Mr. Sauls: I thought perhaps you would be interested in knowing that 32 years ago today I celebrated my 21st birthday and received my first check for salary (\$10.00) as agent at Vaughan. That ten dollars looked then as big as one hundred dollars looks today, and would almost buy as much: for flour sold for \$3.50 per barrel, eggs for 8 cents a dozen, "frying size" chickens 10 to 12.5 cents per pound, and everything else in proportion.

I want to say that those 32 years have been pleasantly spent and with that \$10.00 beginning I have raised a family of nine husky children, three of which are married, one teaching school in the "lost provinces" of North Carolina and the others are in high school and I am feeling like a two-year-old.

Yours very truly,

W. R. Vaughan, Agent

This letter was not a formal announcement of the imminent departure of Walter Vaughan and his family from the town they had lived in and which he had served so long and so well. It was, however, the only public parting shot he took. What happened in Vaughan when the news of his planned departure spread did not make the papers either. The next reference to him in a Warren County newspaper appeared, also in *The Headlight*, on March 20, 1925. It was just an incidental mention of "W. R. Vaughan of Henderson."

By that time, Walter Vaughan had resettled his family in Henderson where he spent the remainder of his life, dying there January 17, 1958, having long since retired with distinction as a career Seaboard agent. His successor as depot agent in Vaughan in 1925 was L. O. Haskins, a crippled man who moved his family, a wife Pattie and their young twin sons, into the house the Vaughans had built and enjoyed on the Embro Road. Previously Mr. Haskins, a Mason like his predecessor, had been the SAL telegraph operation in Creedmoor, N.C. Before 1930 he had been transferred to Suffolk in his native state of Virginia. He worked there as agent until his death September 1948. The next SAL depot agent at Vaughan was William W. Brown, a native of Pennsylvania, whose wife Nina and their seven children, ages one to sixteen, filled up the Walter Vaughan

house. The job of section foreman was already in the capable hands of Jack Walker, a native, who lived with his wife and growing family in the large new section house east of the depot.

Taking up the civic responsibilities that Walter Vaughan had shouldered so well for so long were several other local men. J. Dallas Riggan, the in-demand carpenter, served several terms on the county board of education. Also serving in that capacity were Jesse P. T. Harriss and the always willing W. T. Carter. John L. Skinner, active in the North Carolina County Commissioners Association and elsewhere, exerted influence in local civic and political affairs in an even wider area.

LEGACIES

So where is the apt story to conclude this tragic yet also positive account of the Vaughan Family in the history of Vaughan? Both honor and pathos would be appropriate in memorializing Walter Robert Vaughan, the last man standing. Even he occasionally lost his cool. But first things first. Democrat Representative Vaughan, as was his nature, had become good friends with Cameron Morrison, the good roads governor of North Carolina from 1921–25. These two men from rural areas had something else in common besides the aim to connect towns and cities through improved transportation. Both these public servants enhanced their personal force of character when faced with the challenges of adulthood. Both exceeded expectations.

Soon after Rep. Vaughan began his legislative term in Raleigh, he had issued a special invitation that Morrison accepted. The governor agreed to travel to Vaughan and deliver the commencement address at the Vaughan High School. On May 11, 1923, after an evening meal and a reception at the home of Walter and Valeria Vaughan on Embro Road, the governor delivered his speech in the high school auditorium. According to Morrison's published papers, his topic of the day was his intention to investigate prison conditions in North Carolina. How this topic came across to the young and old people of Vaughan was not recorded. Early in the short speech, he observed: "Since I have been Governor, so many large questions have required my thought and effort that I possibly have not given the attention to reform in the penal institutions that its importance required; and too, I was under the impression that the legislation enacted during the administration of Governor Bickett, when the entire subject was up for consideration, was satisfactory to the people." In closing the governor said: "I am thoroughly in accord with modern and progressive

thought upon the subject of prison reform, and under the law as it is now written, I am satisfied the whole system can be put in modern and up-to-date shape, if it is not now in such shape." Indeed, Cameron Morrison had put many aspects of North Carolina society in better shape by the time he left office in 1925.

Besides nearly seventy-five million dollars for a modern highway system, he had increased funding for higher education, insane asylums, reformatories, sanatoriums, and special schools for special needs youth. The State Board of Health and regular public schools received significant new money, including funds for new school construction. While he also banned from public schools a science textbook that advanced the theory of evolution, Governor Morrison created the North Carolina Commission of Interracial Cooperation, and his 1923 proposal for a State Department of Commerce and Industry was funded soon after the next administration began. The citizens gathered in the Vaughan High School auditorium were probably in Morrison's corner all the way.

Governor Morrison had arrived in Vaughan May 11, 1923, by automobile after a stopover in Warrenton. Did he stay the night with the Vaughan family or at the local hotel? Maybe he returned directly to Raleigh. In retrospect, that may have been the better plan. For during the build-up to the end of the school year in Vaughan, a harsh dispute had festered. Rep. Vaughan was the leader of a faction that wanted the local school board to fire Mr. J. R. Nixon, the principal of Vaughan High School. The county school board under the leadership of Superintendent J. Edward Allen had held a public hearing on the matter of Mr. Nixon's termination. No action had been taken by the evening the governor spoke. One issue in the mixture of concerns was why Principal Nixon had failed to present a certain certificate to one of Rep. Vaughan's deserving daughters. This omission was a big little thing to her father Walter.

Friday evening, May 18, 1923, a week after Governor Morrison's graduation speech about penal reform, Rep. Vaughan and Principal Nixon fought openly on Main Street in front of Privette's Store east of the hotel. Mr. Land, the longtime Vaughan section master, witnessed the fight. What no one present knew immediately was that Rep. Vaughan had been stabbed. Once under the shoulder and once at the eighth rib. One of his lungs had been pierced.

Principal Nixon was a whittler. So what could he do? While trimming a stick he had been attacked by a member of the General Assembly to defend the honor of a deserving daughter. Well, well, well. One eye wit-

ness to this affair was Vernon Bennett, Rep. Vaughan's son-in-law. After being deputized, resident J. C. Hudson arrested Mr. Nixon, who then filed assault charges against the wounded representative who needed immediate medical attention. Questioned by W. T. Carter, Mr. Nixon, with his bond set at \$1,000, was bound over to Warren Superior Court.

The matter would never come to trial. By the end of May, Walter Vaughan was much better and had written and published a letter of apology in which he expressed his gratitude for the medical and personal attention he had received. The judge remitted his fine of \$25.00, and the case against Mr. Nixon was dismissed. Part of Walter's letter published in *The Warren Record* cleverly stated: "The whole affair was very unfortunate, and I am heartily ashamed that such a thing could occur in the community in which I live. This is not the worst community in the country; there are many fine people here." How many readers knew or recalled that the recovering depot agent and politician had precipitated this episode himself?

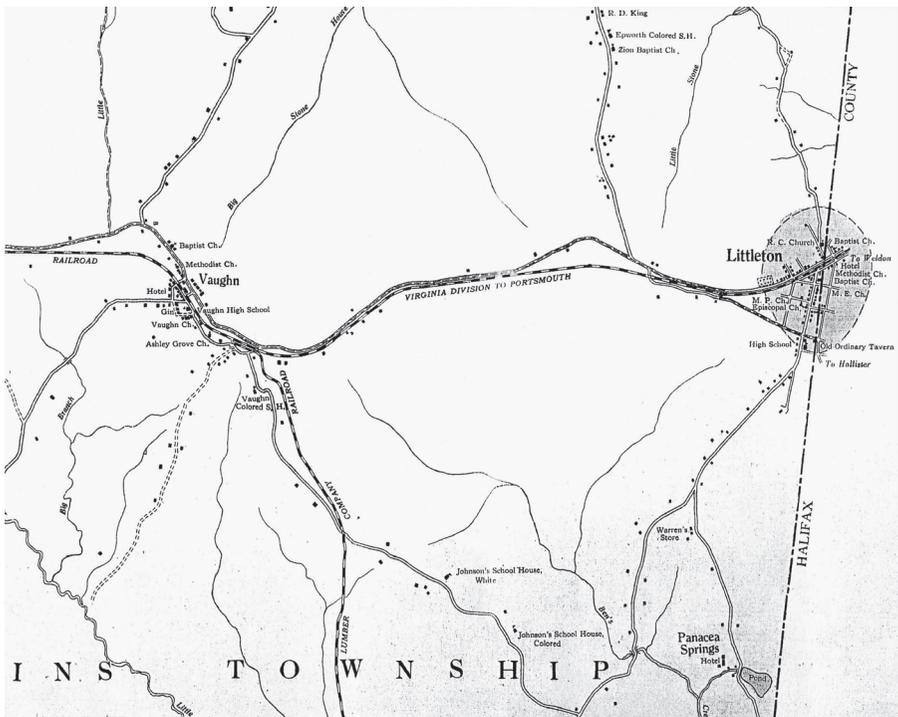
If Governor Morrison were among Representative Walter Vaughan's well-wishers, wonder what his message said. We shall never know. Like so much else in the Vaughan family's four and a half decades in Vaughan (1879–1924), easy answers do not show up. Consider, for instance, John Vaughan's immediate family troubles and his protracted estate settlement; Charlie's heroic struggles and drawn-out, tragic demise; his sons' and daughter Myrtis's Job-like fates; their mother's unimaginable burdens; and valiant Walter's success followed by his strangely muted departure from the recent boomtown that still called itself by his family name. He got out alive.

VAUGHAN AT GROUND LEVEL: 1900–1925

Two white female Vaughan natives, years later and independently, recalled the heyday of Vaughan and its immediate aftermath. Each of them prepared annotated maps to illustrate their memories. Longtime postmistress Bertha Browne and Myrtice Harriss Pierce, the youngest daughter of Sallie Pat and Cap'n Jim Harriss, were in excellent positions to recall who lived where, how some roadways were laid out or put through, and what businesses and other facilities sustained Vaughan during the approximately twenty-five momentous years prior to 1925. Just after the departure of the last members of the namesake Vaughan family and just before the paving of the new highway, that year gives these hand-crafted maps real importance.

Following is a section by section composite of the two renderings plus an expansion of the notes that accompanied them. Assisting Miss Browne and Mrs. Pierce in their invaluable work in their later years, respectively, were Virginia Rue Evans Weaver and her daughter Betty Weaver plus Dr. Margaret Anne Pierce.

One limitation of any profile of the town in the years leading up to 1925 based on these two maps is the almost exclusively white demographic information. While some Negroes, including Whitt Williams, the Frank Brown family, the Ed Drumgos who worked for and lived near Walter Vaughan, and the Fess Williams family, lived within the town itself, a large black population lived on all sides of Vaughan. They contributed significantly to the local economy as the domestic as well as manual labor



Detail, 1924 John Buck Map

forces in town and at outlying farms and sawmills. The following description also places these families in their segregated neighborhoods.

One other feature of Vaughan's landscape that was being rapidly transformed during this quarter century should be mentioned. Nineteenth century farm roads and pathways still served daily as routes through the area. In addition to them there were the grids of parallel streets or avenues that especially the western portion of the Ridley and Henrietta Browne holdings had been subjected to, beginning in the late 1890s, in several ambitious real estate development schemes. Although almost all these plans failed on paper and in fact, these grids nonetheless did occasionally introduce thoroughfares that intersected the old Halifax road, Eaton's Ferry, and the old Judkins road as well as more recent roads such as Evans, Embro, and Vaughan Gin.

As baseline, the old stage road to and from Halifax always divided the town into River Township to the north and Judkins Township to the south. Thus Vaughan residents who voted never did so in just one precinct. Eaton's Ferry Road to the west and Evans Road just over a mile to

the east headed north from this old road. Eaton's Ferry Road was old too, but Evans Road, while it accessed a well-established neighborhood, was much newer and, in fact, did not show up on either the 1874 map by R. D. Paschall or the 1924 one by John E. Buck. The 1938 official soil map of the area was the first to include Evans Road and its eight dwellings.

RIVER TOWNSHIP: WEST TO EAST

Concerning Eaton's Ferry Road, west of its intersection with the old Halifax road lived white families named Riggan and Fishel as well as Negro families such as the Hawkinses in the direction of Macon. Closer to the intersection itself were four cemeteries identified with the Pegram, Stallings, Carter, and Rogerson-Squire white families who lived and farmed in that immediate vicinity. The still occupied homes there in the early twentieth century belonged to William Plummer Stallings, George Stallings, Newell Carter, and the Squires. The Squires dwelling only stood in Judkins facing the old stage road from the south. Immediately to the east of Eaton's Ferry but in River Township stood the home of Anna Squire Collins. Northeast and behind it the Vaughan Community Cemetery was slowly developing, but no graves in it had been marked with cut stones by 1900. This plot had been a burying ground since at least the middle of the nineteenth century when Pegram's Chapel stood west of it facing Eaton's Ferry Road. Just north of the old church site on the east side of the road after 1900 stood an overall factory, later converted into a dwelling that eventually was occupied and owned for the black J. Prime and Edith Clanton family. Their family cemetery was behind the dwelling. Prime's parents were Henry and Alice Clanton. Edith was a Burgess from Odell.

Further east of this location, off the road, stood the Henry Solomon Shearin home and its nearby family cemetery. Far north of it across fields and woodlots stood the ancestral home of the Nat Nicholson family. These places had access to both Eaton's Ferry and the old Halifax roads. On the old Halifax road on Shearin-owned land stood the house rented from 1909–13 by Fosburgh watchman Isaac Piland and his family. Next door stood the Vaughan Baptist Church, just over a decade old. The two-story residence east of it was eventually used as a school after much of the old log one in Judkins at the intersection burned. Next to the temporary school stood the large home of Sallie Pat and Cap'n Jim Harriss. Their son Jesse built and occupied the next house to the east. Black and mostly blind Whitt Williams lived in their backyard house and worked for these two families. Rev. D. A. Fishel and his large family lived next door.



Back row: Tommie Myrick, Nannie Myrick, Matt Newsom, Molly Riggan Burrows, John Riggan, Sallie Bet Evans, Zachariah Henry Evans, Betty Jackson Stalling Evans, Jesse Neal. *Middle row:* Jimmie Myrick, Alice Myrick, Pat Larder Myrick, Molly Evans Smith, Thomas Richard Evans, Mattie Neal, Rosa Evans, Charlie Myrick, Macon Neal. *Front row:* Dal Riggan, Willie Regan, Omstead Riggan, Lee Riggan, Alice Evans Riggan, Acie Riggan, Naomi Neal, Ella Riggan, Mary Neal, Cooke Neal, Vesuvia Evans Neal
Image from Ancestry.com

Their neighbors were Charlie and Mollie Vaughan until four of their five children died of tuberculosis between 1914 and 1916. These beset parents and their surviving daughter retreated to Durham. Eventually the Thoroughgood family associated with the lumber trade occupied their vacant house. Well before then, the village's first cotton gin had stood a little to the east of this residence. Across an open field from the gin, which had doubled as a livery stable, were the dwellings of the John Scofield, Jackson Lee "Bud" Pegram, and Olmstead Riggan families. Next came the ill-fated brick hosiery mill later used as a store and a garage by Mr. Tom Myrick. W. T. Carter's home stood east of it next door to his own store building, once a distillery.

Evans Road, sometimes called Riggan Road, was a dead-end. Privately maintained by residents for many years, it headed north from the old Halifax road just beyond Carter's corner. Along Evans Road on the

left, heading north, were the dwellings of Willie Riggan, Tom and Bessie Evans, and Tom Porter. At the end of the road the cabin of Henry and Bettie Evans stood near the Evans cemetery. This remote cabin was later occupied by the black Major Davis family. Henry and Bettie's fancy new residence stood on the east side of the road heading south. Behind their dwelling later developed the small Madison Privette family cemetery when that family from west of Louisburg owned this property after 1916. Heading further south toward the railroad, in order came the homes of Vesuvia Evans Neal, James Myrick, Jr., Cary and Alice Porter, and J. T. Land. Some distance in the woods east of or behind the Land dwelling were the Fess Williams home and cemetery. At the southern end of Evans Road developed the Evans-Riggan cemetery. Across a field east of it, the Rogerson home stood on the north side of the old Halifax road. East of this dwelling on the old road the Fosburgh Lumber Company developed its yard, spur line, and small terminal on both sides of the Seaboard mainline. At this site the old Judkins road had originally joined the old Halifax road due north of *Oakley Grove*.

JUDKINS TOWNSHIP: LUMBERING EAST TO WEST

Immediately south of the old Halifax road, heading west from the Fosburgh site, Vaughan's booming lumbering businesses developed between 1908 and 1916. Half a mile west of Fosburgh's site, the junction of the SAL and the Greenleaf Johnson Lumber Company spur and associated structures were located. The railroad and these two spur lines were central to the success of this historic bonanza.

Further west between the old Halifax road and the main line, Britt Shearin's cotton gin operated until fire destroyed it around 1910. Farther west grew the Fishel and Sons planing mill with its deep water well. Over a decade later this dynamic business was also destroyed by fire with grave consequences for its local owners and their work force. Several other lumber operations had been established in that busy area near the depot by national companies from elsewhere. South of these operations along the old road and facing the railroad was erected the new section master's dwelling occupied by Jack Walker and his growing family. His hand car and tool house faced his dwelling at the southern edge of the tracks. At least two smaller section houses for Mr. Walker's workers stood just east of his residence north of the tracks. Cap'n Jack was the popular name of this endearing leader who had succeeded Mr. Land in this vital job as the boom time was subsiding.

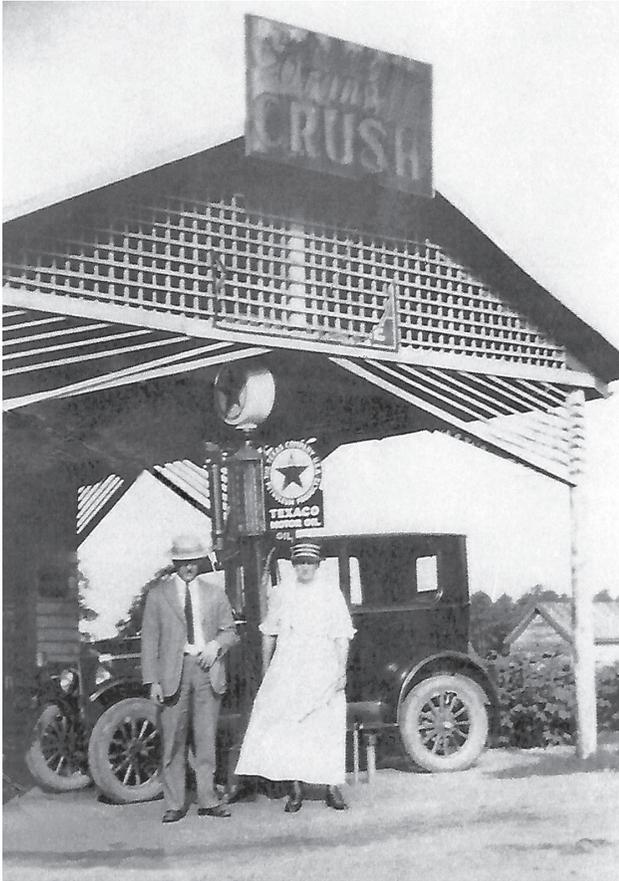
A new road, later closed, crossed the railroad on a dangerously steep grade and intersected with the old Halifax road between Cap'n Jack's residence and the depot and its yard where longtime agent W. R. Vaughan had labored for over three decades beginning in 1892. For years before the new section house was built for the Walkers, an old roadway east of this dangerous crossing had allowed traffic on a more moderate grade to connect with the old Halifax road near the Evans Road intersection.

Because of the booming lumber businesses after 1910, the railroad tracks had been expanded to include the main line and a passing line plus a siding for loading and unloading freight. Facing the railroad immediately west of the depot stood John Vaughan's old residence, the village's original section house from the early 1880s. In the west corner of its backyard, just south of the old road, was the burial plot where John Vaughan's young wife had been buried in 1884. His grave was added in 1890. In 1908 a marble shaft and iron fence had been placed there for their oldest daughter Dora and her infant by her widower.

JUDKINS TOWNSHIP: MAINLY RESIDENTIAL EAST TO WEST

Immediately west of this plot, a heavily travelled dirt road curved off from the old road to Halifax and crossed the railroad to the south. Vaughan's thriving commercial center began in that curve where Charlie Tucker eventually ran his store beside his 1910 residence. Directly south of it and facing the railroad stood the smaller residence where his son Kenneth, a house painter, lived later. Prior to his occupancy of it that house had been the dwelling of the Duke family and then of a Ridgeway native by the name of John Meeder who operated a store in the space just south of Charlie Tucker's store. Meeder's business, including a livery stable, was in one of the two original store and storage buildings built by John Vaughan in the 1880s. This one had been operated as a feed store by him and his brother Charlie Vaughan. Pennsylvanian A. T. Barnes later worked there, just as Charlie Tucker had clerked in the other Vaughan family store diagonally across the railroad to gain his experience as an independent merchant. This sturdy old structure run by Meeder stood very close to the north-south road and convenient to the railroad siding. The Meeder business was eventually damaged by fire in which some of his horses were lost, but the bulky older part of the Vaughan storehouse was saved.

Returning to the old Halifax road, the dwelling west of Charlie and Lena Tucker's home and across a garden plot served several families as home before 1925. One was named Butler, and eventually the place be-



Charlie Tucker and daughter, Mamie, at his 1920s store
Courtesy Moseley Family

came the property of Alice and Cary Porter when they moved there from Evans Road. Across a field from the Porter residence stood the Methodist Church. H. B. Cobb, married to Mamie Fishel, one of Rev. Fishel's daughters, lived behind the church close to the railroad. His house incorporated part of the old log school that survived the fire at its original location to the west. Up the Cobb access path toward the old road, the house on the left was the residence of Dr. Horace Palmer. His next-door neighbor to the west was Mae Vaughan, the town's third postmistress and widow of Dr. Roy Vaughan. Until his death in 1914 she and he had lived in their own house across the railroad and about half a mile due south.

Her temporary residence with her two children was the property of

Harry Fishel, a pilot in France during the Great War. Next door stood the home of his brother Will and his wife Emma. Tom Myrick and his wife, the former Eugenia Nicholson, lived across a pasture west of them. Next came the Stith Bell family's home. It was destroyed by fire after the summer of 1913, and the Bells moved to the old Nat Nicholson place north of Vaughan. The old log school site and the remnants of the Squire home were further to the west, south of where Eaton's Ferry intersected the old Halifax road. The John L Evans store had been established on that same site by Claibourne Shearin more than a decade before the Civil War. His granddaughter Sallie Pat Shearin later taught in the nearby log school before it was damaged by fire, causing instruction to be transferred to the dwelling just east of the white Baptist Church.

JUDKINS TOWNSHIP: MAIN STREET WEST TO EAST

Vaughan south of the railroad bustled in the era following the construction of the two lumber spur lines within a mile and a half east of the depot. Three stores operated south of the railroad to the west of the road that curved off the old road beside Charlie Tucker's store and service station and crossed the railroad. In the western-most of these buildings Mr. and Mrs. Peter Stansbury took over and ran a business the Bell family had begun. Mr. and Mrs. Cary Porter ran a second-hand furniture store east of it, and closest to the road the first of the stores run by Watt Pegram was located. Farther east and across the north-south road that had begun to be seen as an extension of the road to Eaton's Ferry stood the old Vaughan Brothers store first operated by John Vaughan in the early 1880s. Mr. Hunter ran this store when it was briefly owned by W. G. Edgerton of Macon after Charlie Vaughan's sons became ill, but in 1912 Cap'n Harriss purchased it and expanded the stock considerably. Mr. Hunter continued to clerk there. Next door Mrs. John Hudson ran a store. Upstairs in the Hudson building Vaughan's Masonic Lodge had set up a meeting room about 1911. Eventually a barber shop occupied the downstairs commercial space.

Vaughan's post office, in its third location since 1881, was in the left-hand front corner of the large Ben Fishel storehouse. Two-stories tall, it housed stores, auctions, and occasionally families in the right-hand space. East of the post office was a small, multipurpose building completed in 1911. A small store run by Bud Pegram occupied part of the ground floor. Drug store stock owned and dispensed by Dr. Ridley Browne's grandson Ridley took up another room. Across the hall was the office of Dr. Horace

Palmer. The building's owner Cap'n Harriss also operated an undertaking business and a coffin shop out of that building. The large hotel he had built next door to the east opened in early 1911 and before long was occupied and operated by the Peter Skundbergs, who were primarily lumber entrepreneurs. Prior to the opening of this thriving business, Jim and Sallie Pat Harriss had their rented spare bedroom space to local teachers who were also boarded there. Beside the Skundberg Hotel Mrs. Barr operated a dry goods store. This building, out of which Dude Privette with the assistance of his three sisters later operated his first of two Vaughan stores, had been built as a post office but only briefly functioned as one after Ben Fishel made affordable space available in his nearby store building. The last structure on this street was the residence of E. Pope Nicholson and his family. Local people thought of this densely developed block as Vaughan's Main Street. Busy as it was short, it seemed to end when it intersected the dirt road that had formerly crossed over the railroad prior to the construction of the section house.

JUDKINS TOWNSHIP: COMBINING THE OLD AND THE NEW

In fact, Main Street continued east as an old farm pathway and carriage road that predated the Browne family's success in establishing Browne's Turnout, Vaughan's predecessor, in 1851 along the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad. Slaves and other plantation workers had used this country road to move crops and other freight between *Oakley Grove*, numerous other Browne holdings, and the original depot. Eastwardly during the more recent development of Vaughan, this meandering roadway crossed Greenleaf Johnson's spur line and Judkins Road south of the SAL railroad before eventually turning south past *Oakley Grove* en route to Odell. About a hundred yards east of the *Oakley Grove* house itself and parallel to this farm road, the Fosburgh Lumber Company's spur line headed south toward Hollister as well.

Half a mile back toward the main line, northwest of *Old Oakley*, lived and farmed Charles Skinner Riggan and his wife the former Alice Pegram. They had been married in late March 1867 by Judkins Justice of Peace Dr. Ridley Browne. Young Charlie was a Civil War pensioner, destined to outlive all but five of his fellow Tar Heel soldiers. Having joined Company B of the 30th North Carolina Infantry under Colonel W. S. Davis early in the war and despite being wounded several times, Private Riggan had fought with Lee through Gettysburg in July 1863 and was present when General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appo-



Civil War Veteran Charles
Skinner Riggan
Funkhouser Image

mattox in the spring of 1865. On the Charlie Riggan farm at Browne's Turnout and later Vaughan, several Riggan sons and as many daughters grew to adulthood in a majority black community of slave descendants. The Class A old veteran received \$72.00 each month for his service to the Confederacy.

Heading west beyond the Riggan farm and back into Vaughan along the old farm road, the home of the Robert L. Brown family stood south of the main Seaboard line and west of Judkins Road. Mr. Brown was a lumber yard foreman, and his residence was strategically placed because of his demanding job. The style of his residence was a mirror image of the house Charlie Vaughan had built facing the old Halifax road in the village in the late 1880s. Directly south of the farm road from this white family of Browns lived black Will Brown, who had a famously good water well; beyond it the Andrew Brinkleys lived close to the schoolhouse for colored children where the Judkins Road curved to the east. West of there the old farm road crossed the busy Greenleaf Johnson spur line again.

Amidst the hubbub of the lumber yard and the Greenleaf Johnson commissary, the small clapboard Ashley Grove Baptist Church stood beside its cemetery by 1912. White families, the Newsom Pittmans, the Matt Newsomes, and Lee Phelps's family resided at different times in a house within view of the busy Greenleaf Johnson rail yard and south of the old farm road. West of this dwelling across a field were the homes of Robert Moseley's family and druggist Ridley Browne and his wife Annie Lee. The Dempseys followed them in the same house. These places were accessible from a private avenue that ran south from the old farm road. At that junction was situated the general store of G. S. P. Browne. Slightly west of it stood Mr. Browne's residence. Along a public avenue running southwest of this residence, stood the dwellings of two of his kinsmen, Clinton and Fred. Eventually Mr. Browne's store was operated and occupied by Mr. Moseley's brother Jim. Directly west of this store and Sharp Browne's front yard, the new Vaughan School, eventually to have high school grades, was being built in stages after 1915. The hillside surrounding it sloped toward Main Street. Directly across the old farm road from this area of Vaughan a female member of the Rogerson family, Annie by



Greenleaf Johnson Commissary and Office
Courtesy Wyatt Pegram

name, opened a dance hall for white patrons. It stood surprisingly close to the main Seaboard line. Equally odd, at the eastern edge of her plot of land, black Baptists led by a Rev. Plummer erected and used a small chapel as an alternative to worship at Ashley Grove.

Where the old farm road again became Main Street, turn left onto the old road that had connected Dr. Ridley Browne's plantation house *Favonia Haunt* to the railroad since the 1850s. This well-worn route was destined much later to become the road to Embro. It crossed the extension of the road to Eaton's Ferry and continued west. South of this intersection a short avenue eventually to be known as Vaughan Gin Road went down a steep hill, crossed a branch, and after about forty yards turned sharply left into the avenue on which stood the three Browne family dwellings belonging to Sharp Browne and two nephews. Just beyond the sharp turn to the left stood the house completed in 1910 for Dr. Roy Vaughan and his family. His death from tuberculosis in 1914 shortened his family's enjoyment of this large dwelling that briefly also functioned as a doctor's office.

South of the Dr. Roy Vaughan house, a rough wagon path climbed two hills toward a large settlement called Brown Town. Browne family slave descendants and others lived there; the Elvin Brown, George Pugh, and George Fogg families were neighbors of Clantons, Carters, Sellerses, Smiths, Davises, and other Browns. A road running east and west along the ridge through their community was, in fact, part of another old farm road the white Brownes of *Oakley Grove*, *Faulconia*, and *Favonia Haunt* had used to facilitate their social interactions and business dealings. Tom

Henderson and his wife Polly lived and ran a store to the east across the Greenleaf Johnson spur line and Judkins Road from Brown Town proper. Their black neighbors in addition to Will Brown and Andrew Brinkley, were named Mitchell, Robinson, and Brim, plus more Browns, especially Turner, Clarence, Commodore, and Garfield and their families. All were mindful of Edward, a retarded son in the Robinson family. George Pugh, who had been injured when a Greenleaf Johnson boxcar ran over his leg, operated a shade tree blacksmith shop in that close-knit community.

Heading west of Judkins Road and the spur line along this well-worn, private thoroughfare, then turning right in Brown Town to go back into the part of Vaughan populated by mainly white people, pass on the right the Roy Vaughan residence later occupied by the John Hudson the Howard Odom families. Mr. Odom was a rural mail carrier. Machinist Elmer Powers rented space for his family next door in the residence of one of Sharp Browne's nephews. These brothers, Clint and Fred, were employed in the shipbuilding industry in Norfolk and thus were frequently not at home. Mr. and Mrs. Powers had three children, a daughter named Virgie who taught school north of Vaughan and two young sons, Elmo and Eddie. They attended Vaughan School across the playground from where they lived. Teachers deemed Elmo to be a discipline problem. When he and a teacher had a standoff, he would go to the window of the school and shout for his mother. Her immediate arrival meant that his behavior was soon improved. Elmo's classmates felt that his reputation for bad discipline was worse than his actual behavior. Buffering this schoolhouse commotion was the noise of Cap'n Harriss's steam-driven cotton gin and its associated planing mill located nearby at the intersection at the top of the hill.

With the gin and its seed house on the right, turn left. The first four houses on the left are the homes of Daniel A. Barnes, old Mrs. Barnes, Walter Vaughan, and Ruth Burrows Hunter. Her husband W. K. had clerked for different owners of the original Vaughan store building on Main Street until his death from pellagra in 1915. Afterwards, the Powers family also lived in the Hunter house. Behind the homes of the Barneses, Vaughans, and Mr. and Mrs. Hunter, two elderly sisters, Sarah and Sally, occupied a small house. They were relatives of Peter and Margaret Stansbury who lived mainly in the hotel. West of the Hunter dwelling were the homes, back off the road, of the Henry Mannings, land owners, and the Charlie D. Shearins, tenants who moved about year to year as sharecroppers. The flooring in this particular log house occupied by the

Shearins was red clay, hard packed since slavery times. The Mannings, in contrast, lived and worked for years within sight of where the ruin of *Favonia Haunt* stood until it burned after 1914. Once used as a railroad hotel, then briefly owned and operated by the Skundbergs, in 1911 it had become a tenement. Still standing on the grounds were the one-room private school building and another building, west of the house site, believed to have been Dr. Browne's detached office. The fire that consumed the remains of the famous old house also ignited a nearby stable. The animals perished, the smell of their burned carcasses spreading across the countryside and town. Because of these buildings and this location, the road toward Embro turned south at the Manning line and skirted the Browne Place, the evolving name for the site of *Favonia Haunt*.

At the northern edge of the family graveyard marked by field stones and a few cut stones with inscriptions, the grove of magnificent oaks still stood, surrounding a prime, rock-walled, cold water well. Between this cemetery, well, and the site of the old mansion lost to neglect and flames, the road to Embro was privately extended gradually westward, but it was not completely put through the yard until 1923. Located in that gradually accessible area to the southwest were the Norfolk-style dwellings of Elvin Brown's proud sister Mahalia Browne and other Negroes such as the John Hicks and Lois Rodwell, plus Scott and Lovelee Clanton. White people farming along the route or nearby the old Verser place were named Harris, Shearin, Jenkins, and Stallings. The old Browne grist mill on Walker's Creek became accessible again from several directions. It was operated by the Josh Harris family who lived between the Judkins Road and this old landmark south of the new Walker's Creek bridge on the road to Embro.

Heading back east on this road into Vaughan beyond these Browne landmarks, some distance north of the road and north of the grove of oaks stood the dwelling of Ridley Harris. Much closer to the road stood a cabin left over from slavery times and occupied by Cicero and Lula Brown, a black couple. A good bit northeast of this small structure, black Frank Brown ran his watch repair business. Farther east up the road stood H. R. Eason's dwelling on the corner where the extension of Eaton's Ferry intersected the road to Embro. Across this street from the Easons stood a small building associated with the hotel. To the north were the residence of Ben Fishel and another house, often a rental property. Opposite these two dwellings was the residence of postmaster Orville Browne and his family. North of them in a curve an old railroad warehouse was maintained by Cap'n Harriss and his son Jesse. Behind this building stood the substan-

tial home of Frank Brown and his elderly mother, other descendants of Browne family slaves. Diagonally across the street and south of the railroad stood the old John and Charlie Vaughan store.

Appropriately this ground level study of Vaughan between 1900 and 1925—just before, during, and after its boom time—concludes at the original business establishment owned and operated as a store and post office by the village's founder John F. Vaughan. Dead since the summer of 1890, he would not have known where he was if, late in 1924, his brother Walter, before departing himself for Henderson, had called John's ghost back to town for a look around.

THE GREAT EXPRESSION OF VAUGHAN: 1925–1940

After the Walter Vaughan family moved to Henderson, did any residents of Vaughan ever dream, then or later, of giving the old town yet another new name? The record does not say, but if such an effort had been made, the new place name probably would have been Harriss. Not Harrisstown or Harrisburg but just plain Harriss. Like the Brownes of Browne's Turnout with that extra *e* and the Vaughans with the second *a*, the James H. and Sallie Pat Harriss family had an uncommon spelling of its surname. An added *s*. Nevertheless, Vaughan was destined to remain *Vaughan*. Finding Vaughan to be home, generations of natives and newcomers have made a value of keeping Vaughan.

Perhaps the name of this venerable place lived on unchanged because other families prominent in its history were still too vibrant in the population to make a popular choice possible. Two families named Pegram and two more named Riggan survived, often in the same lines of work such as storekeeping and carpentry, but without recent or remote kinship links being clear. Different residents with the surname of Shearin may have once been the same bloodline, but evidence of that was no longer clear either. Tucker is another example.

Three particular challenges loomed for the old and young residents of Vaughan in the new era, 1925–40. Everyone welcomed the first challenge: the new highway put through south of the railroad. Its location turned the town in a new direction, away from the depot and toward the new business prospects along US 117, soon to become US 158. Supervised by public employees, convict crews worked on this project alongside local

laborers who were paid. Hardly any new people settled in Vaughan as a result of this new road. One exception was Charles Duell, a widower, and his grown daughter Eva from Saratoga County, New York. They lived for several years in the Ben Thompson house across from the Orville Brownes. When Mr. Duell's work on the highway ended, he and Eva moved back north.

The second challenge the transforming town faced was the astonishing drain of experience and leadership caused by the deaths among Vaughan's old timers. It must have seemed to survivors as if Walter Vaughan's year of departure had begun a long funeral. Widower Benjamin Olmstead Riggan, who as a young carpenter had married Mary Frances and John L. Evans's daughter Lucie, died March 19, 1924. In June Newsom Pittman, a farmer in recent years, died at age sixty-six. Three local women died that same year and the next: Ida S. Pegram, wife of merchant Watt Pegram, Mary Alice Pegram Riggan, wife of veteran Charlie Riggan, and Emma Nicholson Fishel, Rev. D. A. Fishel's wife and the mother of his children. She died at home February 20, 1925.

The Great Depression threw down the third gauntlet. As the deforestation of the boom times was slowly effaced by the growth of new timber, cleared land became productive for the first time since the Civil War. But in 1929 the prices paid for lumber and cotton as well as tobacco hardly seemed worth the efforts of saw millers and farmers to harvest these commodities. Then came boll weevils and punctured some lingering hope.

Yet east of town the new highway passed in front of an impressive new Ashley Grove Baptist Church. During 1926 and '27 Cap'n Jim Harriss and his son Jesse were the building contractors of this replacement for the much smaller clapboard church that had been in use since 1912 when the spur line and SAL trains were coming and going in the same vicinity. Now the lumber companies were gone along with the dust and noise of commerce. July 28, 1927, this new house of worship was dedicated. Back in July 1920 the membership had paid Henry and Bernice Eason \$225.00 for the land on which the beautiful new church building stood.

By the date of its dedication, both Henry Eason and Jesse Harriss had established new stores on the south side of the highway less than a mile to the west. A lot owned by Mrs. Skundberg and the road to Eaton's Ferry separated these two new businesses. Mr. Eason's experience as a merchant had been gained from his management of Greenleaf Johnson's commissary where Ashley Grove's larger sanctuary now stood. His new store faced the highway directly opposite O. D. Browne's residence that



Ashley Grove Baptist Church, 1927
Courtesy Church History

had been moved to the north out of the right of way of us 158. Already a builder, saw miller, and farmer, Jesse Harriss began business as a merchant in competition with, among others, his father-in-law Watt Pegram as well as Mr. Eason. Mr. Pegram's smaller, older store faced the railroad just east of the hotel and directly behind the lot, facing the highway, on which Jesse Harriss had built a large garage for wagons, machines, and motorized vehicles of all kinds. He had salvaged much of his shop equipment during the dismantling of the spur line maintenance shops of Greenleaf Johnson. Mr. Eason sold gas and motor oil at his new place, the second service station attached to a general store in the area. Vaughan, the old railroad town, was finding its place on a major highway at last.

Another development of historic proportions, not only for black citizens in and around Vaughan but for the entire state of North Carolina in the late 1920s, was the purchase, supplemented by state funds, of a school bus by local black farmers in cooperation with families in the neighboring Olive Grove-Rising Sun communities. The local money for the bus, approximately \$1,000, had been raised in a campaign headed by G. W. Teele and Tollie Kimble. Soon Mr. Kimble's population of students increased, and he raised money for a separate Olive Grove-Rising

Sun bus. Vaughan then began to cooperate with Macon in this successful effort to provide black students with daily access during the school year to Warren County Training School in Wise as well as to the local elementary school houses. Each family with students paid \$50.00 per year for this opportunity; the fees of the student drivers were waived for their service.

During June and July of 1929, Lillie Barnes opened and operated a licensed ice cream shop built by her brother Dan in their sister Carrie's front yard diagonally across the highway from the new colored church. More usually Miss Lillie had worked at home as a seamstress constructing garments for women and girls, black as well as white. A dress made by her sold for \$2.00. In her seasonal roadside business in addition to ice cream, she sold doughnuts and other sweets plus chewing gum, peanuts, soft drinks, cigarettes, and cigars. Her supplies, her surviving ledger shows, had been bought from Mr. Eason or Jesse Harriss as well as traveling salesmen who represented the Lance or Tom's companies. On her best day her sales totaled \$5.40. One line item indicates she paid out \$3.00 for four boxes of candy bars.



Adaline Gensler Barnes
Courtesy Ed and Ruby Thompson

As Vaughan was slowly turning itself away from the railroad and toward the new highway, Adaline Barnes, the mother of Lillie and Dan and their siblings, had died at age seventy-seven on September 2, 1927. The old lady born in middle Pennsylvania in 1849 had been in declining health, but her household was busy. Carrie Barnes Phelps' first child Ruby had been raised by her Aunt Lillie in the Barnes home. Renting part of this residence were Clement and Eula Pegram plus their daughter Edith. George Rightmyer, the eldest son of the Rightmyers, those 1868 arrivals from Catskill, New York, had earlier rented space there. He had died in 1926. His older brother Edwin died nearby ten years later.

Both family and friends had been shocked when Blanche J. Nicholson, the wife of Elijah Pope Nicholson, died



Sallie Pat Shearin and James Henderson Harriss
 Courtesy Pierce Family

of a sudden stroke, February 27, 1928, age fifty-two. Two days later her funeral at home was attended by a large crowd honoring her memory. The obituary was written by a member of the Women's Missionary Society of the Baptist church where she had been very active. Tradition says she had been sweeping the kitchen floor when she fell dead. Florence Riggan Pittman, her widowed mother, also lived in the Nicholson home. Six months later on October 19, 1928, Blanche Nicholson's neighbor and friend Elizabeth Skundberg passed away. This native of Norway by way of Wisconsin had maintained with her husband the old Browne place, *Favonia Haunt*, as a hotel before eventually owning and managing the new one built by Cap'n Harriss, fronting the railroad in Vaughan. After she made the transition from the facility some distance from the railroad to the one right beside it, neighbors such as the Barneses missed seeing her as she travelled from the old Browne place and back to meet the evening trains and collect customers. With her whenever she made the trip on foot was her little white dog named Tell. Most recently a house mother at Mills Home, the Baptist orphanage in Thomasville, Mrs. Skundberg was fifty-five when breast cancer ended her rich life.

The news had spread quickly back on May 7, 1928, of the death, at age fifty-eight, of well-off and beloved Sallie Pat Shearin Harriss. Unlike Mrs. Skundberg, she was a Vaughan native, the daughter of Sol Shearin and Alice Virginia Jones. Mother and daughter had been generous founders of Vaughan Baptist. Miss Sallie also had taught school locally after

attending college in Littleton and Oxford. Her equally influential husband Cap'n Jim, farmer, saw miller, builder, and merchant, died after a brief illness just before Thanksgiving that same year, November 21, 1928. He was sixty-one. This amazing man for whom the town might eventually have been renamed died without a will, as his wife had six months earlier. Records show that especially local white Baptists felt the impact of so much personal loss. Indeed the whole community was bereft with Cap'n Jim and Miss Sallie Harriss dead and gone.

The surviving Harriss children, a son and five daughters, all adults, hired lawyers when the suggested division of almost 3,000 acres of land in the joint James and Sallie Harriss estate was contested by one family member and her husband. This legal action brought into public view again the seemingly interminable questions of what to do with the old Browne plantation lands, many, many acres of which had ended up in the possession of Cap'n Jim and his wife. The plaintiffs, Rosalyn Harriss Crews and her husband N. G. of Vance County, were represented by the firm of Parker and Allsbrook. Jesse Harriss and his wife Annie Laurie, Edith Crinkley plus her husband Brown, and the single daughters, Alice, Mary, and Myrtice, were defended by Royster and Royster. The discovery and settlement maneuvers were not acrimonious but still intense, lasting from mid-December 1928 through the end of March 1929. Meanwhile the late Mrs. Harriss's double first cousin Estella Jones Rightmyer and her husband Edwin moved into the family home with Alice, Mary, and Myrtice as the country far and wide slipped slowly toward the Great Depression.

Immediately after Cap'n Harriss's death just before Thanksgiving, his son Jesse and daughter Edith officially estimated the Harriss estate's value at \$25,000. This fact plus his good reputation for business led Raleigh's *News and Observer* to say in its front page, November 25, 1928, obituary: "Mr. Harriss was one of the most substantial citizens in this part of the State from the standpoint of worldly goods and personal worth." Local papers printed similar testimonials about this "successful business man" who "will be much missed in the community which he knew and loved."

In his contested estate were forty-one parcels of land ranging in size from less than an acre to 960 acres. One of these holdings had been given without a deed to son Jesse and another had been given but not officially deeded to daughter Edith by their father. Each of them had made improvements to this gifted property. On his one hundred eighty acres, Jesse had spent \$4,000, cultivated the land, and paid the taxes. Edith also had paid

the taxes and spent \$1,000 to improve a two-story house and grounds on her acre of land in Vaughan itself. If commissioners were to be appointed to divide the estate into six equal shares, R. Hunt Parker of Parker and Allsbrook advised the court just before Christmas 1928 that the division be done without “considering the improvements” made individually by either Jesse or Edith to their gifts. Honorable John D. Newell, Clerk of Superior Court, ordered that these conditions be followed as he appointed the three commissioners: W. B. Myrick, S. D. King, and R. L. Bell.

When the commissioners were sworn by Justice of the Peace W. C. Fagg on March 7, 1929, Mr. Myrick had been replaced by J. L. Skinner. A week later Royster and Royster responded in the affirmative for the defendants based in part on newly found information. A survey civil engineer C. E. Foster had made in early February revealed that “J. H. Harriss had no recorded title” to three tracts of land “that had been in his possession for “a number of years.” The largest of these parcels contained 230 acres. It was a majority of the land designated for Ida Browne by the appointed commissioners who had divided the Mary Anne Browne estate in early 1884. Another piece of unregistered Harriss land was a storage house lot in Vaughan. Deeds for these two parcels were quickly procured and recorded in Warrenton. The third piece of land, for which no deed could be found, contained about twelve acres in River Township near Enterprise Baptist Church. All three parcels were added to the original forty-one, increasing the 1929 commissioners’ workload to forty-four Harriss estate properties to be divided equally. The middle of March had arrived before all six heirs agreed about how to proceed.

By the end of March 1929 the report of the commissioners was official. From an inventory of 2,944.71 acres plus thirteen lots, each of the six Harriss children inherited specified land valued at between \$12,000 and \$13,000, a total of about \$75,000. Some money passed among some of them as directed by the court to make the division as equal as possible. This family estate dispute had been settled peacefully, and by mid-July Jesse Harriss hosted a special celebration of especially his father’s life and reputation. The party held in Vaughan drew a crowd of about one hundred people who ate barbeque and Brunswick stew cooked by legendary pit and pot master Jack Riggan. They also heard speeches by Congressman John H. Kerr, Solicitor R. Hunt Parker, School Superintendent J. Edward Allen, and Clerk of Court John D. Newell. Cap’n Jim’s popular tradition of a hot weather gathering in his home grove had been extended beyond his grave.



Vaughan High School 1928–29 basketball team: Stith Walker, Bryant Miller, Red Fishel, Claude Nicholson, Harold Newsome, and Coach Doyle Early

Courtesy Ed and Ruby Thompson

Even before this celebration, the news of three now well-off single young women spread in the region. Mary Harriss was the first of them to marry. In Emporia in July 1931 she wed John William Shearin who had grown up between Vaughan and Macon. In fact local men were chosen by the other two sisters as well. Alice, a talented landscape painter, married Charlie, the diligent son of Blanche and E. Pope Nicholson. He worked in the Vaughan Depot as a telegraph operator before assuming the position of agent that he held until his death. Occasionally during his tenure the

temporary depot agent was Julius Banzet, the experienced agent at Ridgeway. This was a good job; by 1940 the regular annual salary for Vaughan's SAL agent amounted to \$960.00. In Rabun County, Georgia, on July 3, 1935, Myrtice Harriss married Roy Eugene Pierce, a grandson of A. T. and Adaline Barnes. Their daughter Helen was Roy's mother, and he had come of age in Vaughan. Prior to marrying he worked in farming, hauling, and sawmilling after a hardscrabble youth following the early death of both his father and old Mr. Barnes. While still single Myrtice had advanced her studies by completing what high school courses Vaughan had to offer by 1927, then attending Pineland College in Salemburg, N.C. She also took a teacher training course in Cary before earning her teaching certificate from Cullowhee College in the mountains. Along the way she clerked for a couple of years in the store Cap'n had opened on the site of the original John Vaughan business. Eventually Myrtice taught elementary grades 1–6 in Vaughan, even serving that school as principal for one year. Her brother Jesse's long service on the county school board continued through that period.

Meanwhile two of Dr. Ridley Browne's sons, Orville and Granville, representing the third generation of that once powerful local family, passed away. Orville died one night in March 1929 in the backyard of his home, leaving the Vaughan postmaster position vacant once again. His oldest daughter Bertha's appointment as postmistress did not become official until August, but she had assumed the post at his death. His federal salary the last year of his career was \$682.00. Brother Granville S. P. Browne, the medicine salesman who no longer worked, died of apoplexy in February 1931. That same month Madison Privette, eighty-five years old, succumbed to his stomach troubles at the home on Evans-Riggan Road he shared with his four unmarried children. They buried him in the side yard, a grave now lost. Wyatt Pegram, the son of Watt and the late Ida Pegram, died of cancer in October 1931 in Warrenton where he was a wholesale grocery clerk. He was only thirty-four. His young widow Mable and their two young children, Bill and Louise, returned to Vaughan and lived with her parents Robert and Margaret Brown to the east of town. Two grandsons of Dr. Ridley Browne also died—Walter in 1932 and Clinton in 1936. Their parents had been Falcon and Ada Rightmyer Browne.

Not to be left off this list of Vaughan notables who died as the Depression came to town is the March 15, 1929, death of legendary Fess Williams who had worked years ago in the doomed Charlie Vaughan household. Influenza, not consumption, was recorded as the cause of Fess's

death. Two days after Christmas in 1933, another legend, Rev. D. A. Fishel, died. His house opposite the Methodist church and beside the former home of Charlie and Mollie Vaughan had been accidentally set afire by a lamp toppled in the room of a black servant at the back of the dwelling. In the uproar of flames the 84-year-old Methodist Protestant minister and local farm and lumber businessman was stricken. His body was moved to the home of a neighbor, and a doctor was summoned. His daughter Pearl also comforted him, but all efforts to save his life were unsuccessful. He had once been a powerful force in his large family of ten children, the Vaughan community, and a wider region for over half a century. Not a native of Warren, having been born in Davidson County in 1849, Rev. Fishel was memorialized in a service at the home of his daughter Selma Johnson in Littleton and buried at Sunset Hill Cemetery. Signing his obituary were ministers S. W. Taylor, H. L. Powell, and R. L. Vickery as well as Rev. Fishel's venerable Vaughan Methodist friend W. T. Carter. On the humorous side, someone had once asked Rev. Fishel how much money he used to make each year from his preaching. He answered that it might have amounted to \$25.00. The questioner commented that that was mighty poor pay. The old man replied: "And it was damned poor preaching."

Nimble D. A. Fishel's humor belied the facts of his earlier career as a popular Methodist preacher, beginning in western North Carolina. He was not ordained an elder until the Temple Conference in Edgecombe County in 1879 while he was serving, from 1877-81, in the Littleton Charge. Next he preached in Granville County before he was assigned to Greenville in 1889-90. Then family, farming, and the lumber business filled his life, so for the next several decades he served as conference supernumerary in the Littleton Charge. Rev. Fishel was never the regular minister to the Methodist Protestants in Vaughan. In 1939 that dwindling congregated finally affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church.

DEATH BY MURDER AND OTHER CAUSES

Listed in the 1930 census as an occupant of the D. A. Fishel residence, Willis Let was a single Negro man in his mid-forties who worked for that family. If he still lived there in late December 1933, he may have been the person who toppled the lamp that set the house on fire. Other records indicate that he lived after Rev. Fishel's death in the settlement of colored families called, depending on the speaker, either Brown Town or Nigger Town, on the southern flank of Vaughan. There he was living alone



Elvin and Carrie Brown
Courtesy Ashley Grove History

June 5, 1936, when a young black neighbor named Buddie Brown came to confront him about sexually abusing his younger sister Lorena. The men argued, and Let shot and killed Brown. Warren County Coroner Jasper Shearin assembled a jury of six white local men who conducted an investigation. They found that “Buddie Brown came to his death from gunshot wounds inflicted by one Willis Let.” Furthermore, these jurymen concluded that “Lett shot Brown in defense of himself and home,” so they exonerated Willis Let “on the grounds of a justifiable homicide.” C. V. Adams, Gid Alston, H. R. Eason, R. D. Chewning, R. E. Pierce, and W. C. Porter signed the official record. Elvin and Carrie Brown, Buddie’s parents, apparently took no actions to appeal the white jury’s on-site decision. The location of the grave of this beloved farm worker who was sociable and funny among white and black residents alike remains unknown. Yet his memory has survived him all these years.

Pennsylvania native Helena Gensler Wise, age eighty-one, had died in Vaughan May 18, 1936, several weeks prior to the murder of Buddie Brown and not far from the scene of that tragedy. She was the sister of the late Adaline Barnes and resided after World War I primarily in the Barnes family home. Years before settling in Vaughan as a widow, Auntie Wise, a noted and beloved seamstress, had lived in the nearby Epworth community, then in Portsmouth where she and her husband ran a board-

ing house. He died there of tuberculosis in 1910. Their only son Howard was infected. Prior to 1920, as the flu pandemic plagued the country, Mrs. Wise had accompanied him to Moore County in search of a cure or treatment. He died at Catawba Sanatorium near Salem, Virginia, later that year.

AN ERA LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

Former mayor, merchant, and oft times Justice of the Peace, Squire Carter, died in 1937. His grave was marked with a stone behind the Methodist church site. Born in the late 1850s, he had raised children by three of his four wives and consistently maintained his strong support for education on both the local as well as the county level. His confederates in this struggle for continuity of schooling since the departure of Walter Vaughan had been Jesse Harriss and Dal Riggan. Education loomed larger than ever.

Mr. Riggan's first wife Agnes had died of a cerebral hemorrhage November 25, 1934. She was forty-one years old and the mother of their only surviving child, Ellis Pete. Much lamented in death, she had been widely beloved in life. Just over a year later Bernice Eason, Mrs. Riggan's sister who was a teacher, died January 10, 1936. Both she and Agnes had been raised by Peter and Elizabeth Skundberg, his children by his first wife. The hotel business that Agnes and Dal had continued to operate beyond the boom years had gradually been adapted to function, in part, as a teacherage. By 1930 five local teachers lived there. The large facility became, as well, a place for Vaughan's young white married couples to begin their family lives together.

The Depression was one reason for these adaptive uses of the hotel by teachers and young couples. Other changes had been equally impactful on the operation of the Vaughan School itself. In July 1931, for example, *The Warren Record* on its first page reported that for the coming school year only two white teachers would be working in Vaughan. The upper school faculty would be terminated or transferred to Littleton. The remaining elementary students in grades 1-6 would be given instruction in whatever subjects the teachers still employed there were qualified to teach. How many youth would be affected by this reduction in force was not mentioned in the July article, but in October 1929, when the national economic crisis was first acknowledged, 148 pupils were registered at Vaughan School with an average daily attendance, during harvest season, of eighty-six.

Another idea of the distribution of Vaughan-area students in the lower and upper grades can be gathered from a September 1930 school truck report written by Claude Nicholson, the driver. The vehicle he drove picked up and delivered sometimes forty students a day. Seventeen were elementary boys and girls; twenty-three were in high school. He stopped at the Vaughan School en route to Littleton High School; the daily round trip covered twenty-four miles, sixteen on the highway, six on maintained gravel roads, and two miles of unimproved roadway. Claude, youngest of Blanche and E. Pope Nicholson's four sons, was paid \$15.00 per month for his services. The sheet of data he submitted September 26, 1930, for the signatures of the local school committee chair W. W. Pegram and Harry O. Fishel, the Vaughan School principal, preserved the names of Claude's fellow student passengers on the reverse side.

These are the white students who were experiencing formal education in and around Vaughan in the first full year of economic hard times: Louise Nelson, Esther Nelson, Edith Nelson, Lois Nelson, Vella Nelson, Harry Marks, Luther Marks, Rivers Marks, Vera Harris, Joseph Harris, Lucille Faucette, Edith Harris, Lucy Myrick, Margaret Fishel, John Wright, Elmo Spragins, Mary Riggan, Mildred Evans, Horace Porter, Alfred Barnes, Edward Miller, Elizabeth Miller, Elizabeth Reid, Jessie Myrick, Bessie Phelps, Claude Nicholson, Harold Newsome, Arthur Lee Phelps, Mary Fleming, Mary Walker, Elizabeth Bobbitt, Dallas Bobbitt, Mary Elizabeth Skinner, William Skinner, Robert Bobbitt, Cathryn Bobbitt, Walter Bobbitt, Edith Reid, Freeman Ellington, and Malcolm Bobbitt. All schooling during hard times was not book learning, however. The report indicates that the school truck would be carrying students to the picture show in Warrenton later that same September day.

From an earlier generation of youth who were getting their initial schooling in Vaughan as its boom came and went, a female member of the Granville S. P. Browne family had earned additional degrees in North Carolina as well as New York. Born in the village September 25, 1893, Anne Goodloe Browne in 1911 completed a bachelor's degree at NC College for Women in Greensboro. From that year until 1913 she taught in Valle Crucis, N.C., at the Industrial School, an Episcopal Mission. Then she moved to New York where in 1914 she received another bachelor's degree from Barnard and a master's degree from Columbia the next year. In early January 1919 while still living and working in New York City she applied for a passport in order to serve allied soldiers in the YMCA Canteen system set up abroad in the immediate aftermath of the Great War.

When back in New York Miss Browne during 1924–25 earned a certificate in library science from Pratt Institute. Returning to North Carolina, she worked as an assistant cataloguer in the university library at Chapel Hill during the 1925–26 academic year. The next year and a half her job was as the librarian at New Jersey State Normal School in Montclair. From there she moved to Aurora, New York, to accept a job as library cataloguer at Wells College. After a year and a half she was promoted to librarian, a position she held until her retirement sixteen years later ended her amazing career.

Two of the daughters of D. A. and Emma Fishel also made their own professional marks as educated teachers. Pearl, born in 1890, was very accomplished as a vocalist as well. Like Miss Browne, she worked in Chapel Hill. Sister Selma Fishel, ten years younger, taught until her marriage to Littleton businessman Paul A. Johnson. She had been a student at St. Mary's in Raleigh just before World War I. On a completely different career path, Joseph Riggan, born west of Vaughan on June 8, 1908, was ordained in 1934 by the Vaughan Baptist Church. Years later he became its pastor. Also a farmer, he had graduated from Wake Forest College where he excelled in biblical languages. Some of his preparation and encouragement for active ministry had come from his volunteering to drive for the Rev. Jimmie Marshall who was blind.

In these years, Vaughan was growing again. Henry Thomas Taylor, a Jefferson, South Carolina, native, had arrived in Vaughan with a sawmill crew before the Depression gripped the area. He married Edna Shearin in late June 1929 and was working for the WPA when he filed his military registration in 1940. He and Edna raised three children, Myrtle, Billy, and Janet. Mr. Charlie Shearin, their grandfather, and his wife lived with them and their parents at several locations in the town, most notably as neighbors of the Bob Moseley family. The Taylor children enjoyed better educational opportunities than previous generations of their family had had. Joe Bobbitt, a clerk, and his wife Kathryn Chewning bought the Walter Vaughan house and raised their family of four children there. They were Joe, Jr., Albert "Pee-Wee," Myrtice, and Freddie, all enterprising youth and active adults.

Another family destined to need and to repay Vaughan's warm embrace moved into the town from Inez in southern Warren County during this period. Wiley J. Callihan and his wife, Ina, arrived with Clovis and Carl Adams, with whose sawmilling operations Mr. Callihan had a long association in Columbus and Bladen counties. The six Callihan children



Tyree and Bessie Phelps Callihan
Courtesy Ed and Ruby Thompson

included Tyree and Early, born in Bladen, and Cary, born at Inez as were daughter Juanita and son Aaron. Truitt, the youngest, was born in Vaughan in 1934. Mr. Callihan's physical and mental health soon began to fail, and he died in the state asylum in Raleigh on June 20, 1936, of septicemia and acute mastoiditis of the left side of the skull. This tragedy added to the hard lessons of that hard era. After sawmilling jobs, military service became a sustaining route into adulthood for all five of the Callihan sons. Juanita married a minister, Earl Howard, and Mrs. Callihan was sustained by the Vaughan community and her children. Tyree married Bessie Phelps in 1941, Early married Dorothy Walker, and Aaron married Charlotte Jones who grew up east of Littleton. Truitt's wife Patty was a native of Norlina; Cary's wife Christina was not a local person. Mrs. Callihan lived in Littleton at the end of her life.

During 1934-35, an unusual reminder of the extent of the physical

challenges to people, the natural environment, and farm animals during the Depression was the systematic removal of cattle from the twenty-five Dust Bowl states west of the Mississippi River. Many animals bought by the government were slaughtered and buried in place to control disease while providing ranchers ready cash. Other herds in better shape were bought before being slaughtered and processed at packing plants for food banks. Not to overtax the capacity of these packing plants, railroad freight rates were officially reduced in early June 1934 so that healthy but at-risk cattle could be shipped to areas in southern and eastern states that had not been drought-stricken. A small shipment of these cattle arrived in Vaughan from Oklahoma. Unloaded at the depot, the large, long-horned, stressed animals were hauled in a truck by Roy Pierce to the nearby Owen Davis Estate managed by Matt Nelson on Judkins Road. To set aside a large area for grazing and foraging, Bob Chewning and Needham Smith had already been paid to erect a five-strand, barbed wire fence to trees on the west side of the farm toward Walker's Creek. The herd became a spectacle, but by Thanksgiving, the makeshift pasture had been denuded and the replenished cattle had been moved again, this time to be slaughtered and processed for food, some of it to be distributed locally.

The Oklahoma cattle that spent the summer of '34 south of Vaughan were a mere fraction of the more than two million animals that had been purchased by the government at an average cost of \$13.64 per head. This massive county, state, and federal effort to avert needless loss of animal life in the face of human suffering cost more than \$104,000,000 according to a report submitted by Philip G. Murphy in July 1935 for President Franklin Roosevelt's Drought Committee of the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation. Gradually, through programs such as this one, the hard economic times began to soften.

After the mid-1930s members of Vaughan Baptist Church were finally able to afford better maintenance of their house of worship, by then about forty years old. During the pastorate of Rev. Garland Hendricks, 1938–39, members and other workers replastered interior walls, made repairs to windows and doors, and painted the exterior. Meanwhile private individuals found improvements were affordable again. Wilton and Monroe Moseley, Nelson Riggan, and Dal Riggan demonstrated their experience and skills in several of these projects. River Township examples in town were the large stable behind the church, a replacement for the D. A. Fishel residence that had been damaged by fire, the Charlie Vaughan/Thoroughgood house improvements next door, and a major



Vaughan Baptist Church
Courtesy Pierce Family

remodeling of the Jim and Sallie Pat Harriss home for recently married Myrtice and Roy Pierce. Himself a widower since 1934, Dal Riggan on February 7, 1936, married Clara Fleming Pope in a home ceremony conducted by the Reverend Joe F. Roach. Building never took a honeymoon. On the south side of the railroad in Judkins, Wilton Moseley tore down the store building of Stith Bell, later used by the Stansburys, to build a barn across the highway for Henry Eason behind his house. During that period Wilton and Dal also constructed for Dude Privette a new store building facing Main Street on the site of the original John Vaughan store and post office. Behind this new business they also built a small residence for the Privette family plus a detached shed room for the store. Later Roy Pierce purchased this property from the Privettes.

As these improvements were going on, the town itself was made up of 211 residents according to the *Industrial Directory and Reference Book* for the state. Prepared by J. T. Anderson, an industrial engineer, this volume



Jim and Edith Clark
Clark Family Archives

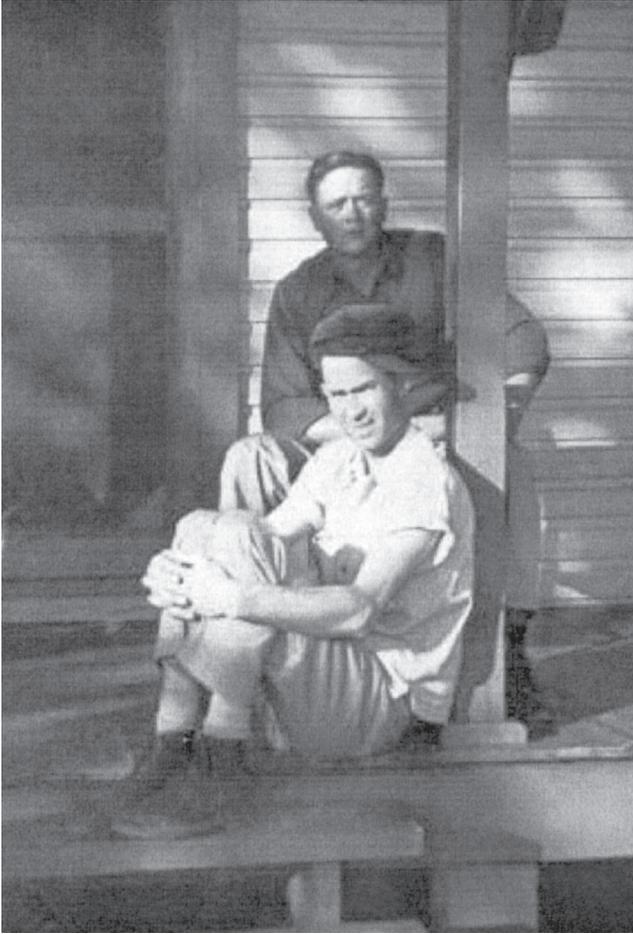
Depression years of living simply at home had prepared local citizens to need a public expression of plenty and hope; oddly enough this celebration of frugal Nathaniel Macon appeared to be the answer. Leading up to the 1937 Independence Day event at *Buck Spring*, an official state historical marker, approved in 1935, had been erected on the north side of US 158 in Vaughan in early 1936. Later it was moved to the south side of the highway.

A courtship that began at the July 1937 commemoration of the centennial of Nathaniel Macon's death led on December 28, 1938, to the marriage of Edith Nelson and James W. Clark at the parsonage of Rev. Robert Brickhouse in Warrenton. Their matchmaker was Edith Harriss Crinkley.

She and the mother of the bride were friends; the groom worked for Mr. Crinkley at *Elgin*. Initially the couple lived at *Long Branch* near Inez but moved near Vaughan after their first child was born.

LINGERING DEPRESSION AND LOOMING WAR

Enduring W. W. "Watt" Pegram had relocated to Littleton before 1940 as the hard economic times continued. Trained as a bookkeeper and commissary worker for Greenleaf Johnson, he adjusted his life accounts well. A widower since 1924, this native Sixpound Township farmer turned merchant lost his only son Wyatt to cancer in 1931. Two of the three Pegram daughters, Annie Laurie and Clair, married local men. Watt himself did



Ed Walker and Perry Nicholson
Courtesy Walker Family

not remarry and never owned a house in Vaughan, preferring to rent in River or in Judkins. In Littleton he operated a filling station with the assistance of Elmo Spragins who had come of age north of Vaughan. What Mr. Pegram demonstrated into the last decade of his life is how much an eighth-grade-educated person can achieve by always being adaptable—in employment, housing, and family dynamics including location. He was civic minded and served on the school committee for Vaughan in 1930. In his final years he spent time with his two local daughters, Clair Riggan and Annie Laurie Harriss. Their sister Virginia Clyborne's marriage and career took her first to Richmond and then to Greensboro.

While the Depression lingered, a variety of people from local families had entered government service. Grover Cleveland Tucker, known as Bobby, and Jim Pierce, for example, both worked for the Works Progress Administration to clear debris from steams in the vicinity. Bobby later helped construct the new gymnasium at Littleton High School until he got a job in the textile mills in Roanoke Rapids and began, as well, to drive the mill bus to transport others in Vaughan and the area south of the Roanoke River who worked there too. Neighbors and friends Ed Walker and Perry Nicholson spent idle times on the front porch of the section house. Dan and Mae Barnes's son Alfred, along with his cousin Howard Phelps, joined the Civilian Conservation Corp. Alfred worked in Bryson City, Burlington, and Lexington; in the Davidson County town he engineered a project for the Rural Electrification Administration. These three cities were among the sixty-one CCC camps spread across North Carolina. For his work Alfred was paid the standard \$30.00 a month. He kept \$5.00, and the remainder was sent to his family in Vaughan.

From Forney Creek Camp near Bryson City, Alfred sent a letter to his cousin Ruby Phelps in Vaughan. Postmarked November 3, 1934, his positive message included the following praise for the surroundings: "Forney Creek runs through Camp Forney, and you can take a piece of stale bread, break it up and throw it in the creek and rainbow trout will jump after it by the dozens, some as much as 12 inches long. I wish you could spend one day up here and see what a wonderful country we are in. Our camp is in the heart of the Great Smokey Mountains and in a National Park."

Ruby's brother Howard Phelps shared his CCC income with family as well. His father Lee Phelps, the former trainman and locomotive engineer on the spur lines in Vaughan, had moved to Tallyho in Granville County during the Depression. Trying his hand at farming, he died there of a heart blockage in May 1938. His widow Carrie Barnes Phelps and several of their children returned to Vaughan to live within the Barnes family circle during those hard times.

Pauline Barnes, the oldest daughter of Dan and Mae, had left Vaughan to join the National Youth Administration. Initially she worked constructing mattresses and bed clothing at Ellerbe in Richmond County. Next she was enrolled at the local high school there to learn typing and bookkeeping. For six weeks she used her new skills at the courthouse in Rockingham. The NYA supervisor then moved Pauline into the position of dietician at the Ellerbe Springs Inn where she planned menus a month ahead and served seventy-five meals every day. Memorably, she prepared

lunch for Eleanor Roosevelt who was touring the country to boost the various programs of the Works Progress Administration. Then Pauline interrupted her NYA assignment to return home to Vaughan where her father lay dying of cervical cancer. After being treated at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem, he passed away March 3, 1940, at home, age fifty-nine. Alfred had come home too and easily found work. Long accustomed to hard work himself, Mr. Barnes had been a farmer in his youth, a day laborer at a planing mill owned by the D. A. Fishel family, and later a foreman for Ben Fishel's operation in Hollister. A great heart and soul told Dan Barnes he was a carpenter. His customers and family agreed. He had an eye for construction.

News reached Vaughan later in the summer of 1940 that in Raleigh SAL engineer John F. Vaughan, Jr. had died at age fifty-six of carcinoma of the brain. Born July 6, 1884, in the village named for his father just three years before, only rarely had John, Jr. lived in Vaughan, given that his maternal grandparents raised him in Halifax County because his mother had given her life in giving him birth. Many residents of the town knew nothing of John F. Vaughan, Jr. In contrast, the lamented death earlier that March of Daniel A. Barnes was the last one recorded of an exemplary local citizen who had ridden Vaughan's boom after 1910, escaped its bust between 1916 and 1924 by living and working elsewhere, and finally come home to make whatever could be made of life there. Like marriage, the Great Depression for Dan Barnes was for better and for worse.

A WINNING COMBINATION

Having begun his life journey in 1881 in central Pennsylvania, his family's migration soon afterward to a farm in eastern Warren County, then eventually into Vaughan as a feed store clerk, had prepared Dan for the series of adjustments he would make to very different, often difficult circumstances. Non-farm jobs in Norfolk beginning in 1904 as a single adult made him a carpenter. Thirty, still unmarried, and back in Vaughan, where his father had died in 1910, Dan worked as a woodlot laborer. By 1912 he had built a house for the family he hoped to have. Beginning in 1913 when he was thirty-two, an enduring love relationship with Mary Ella "Mae" Carter, a native of Vaughan, led to their marriage in March 1914. They made a winning combination. Both were very handy adults, he with wood in any form and she with needlework, gardening, and, yes, chopping stove wood and kindling, a daily chore she considered good for health and happiness.



George Brack, Killed at Chancellorsville, Spring 1863
Courtesy Brenda Mays

Mae Barnes was deeply rooted in this community despite death's menacing habits there. George W. Brack, her maternal grandfather, had fought alongside Charlie Riggan in Co. B, 30th NC Infantry in Virginia, but George as well as his brother Benjamin were killed May 3, 1863, at Chancellorsville. Just three years old at the time of George's death, his daughter Edelia was raised by her mother Elizabeth, formerly a Pegram. By 1881 young widower W. T. Carter had courted and married Edelia as his second wife. He and she produced a son named Willie and two daughters, Lula and Mae, the younger sister, who was born in 1891. Edelia died in 1903 as Mae turned twelve. Her Grandmother Elizabeth, who lived with the Carters, had passed away too. In 1904 Mr. Carter married again. His third wife Octavia became the maternal force in his blended family. Mae often spent time with Sister Lula who had married William I. "Ike" Porter of Halifax County in 1902.



Pauline and Alfred Barnes
 Courtesy Brenda Mays

After marrying in March 1914, Mae and Dan Barnes had their first child, Alfred, in February 1916. Soon economic opportunities convinced this couple to leave their new dwelling in Vaughan in the care of Dan's siblings and other relatives. Ben Fishel had offered Dan a job as planing mill foreman in the developing Halifax County hamlet of Hollister. So, Dan and Mae moved there with young Alfred. Mae loved Hollister, and Lula lived nearby. Fosburgh's spur line enabled the Barneses to maintain close contact in Vaughan with her father and his younger daughters, Dan's aging and widowed mother, and his single

and married sisters and their children. By the time Pauline Barnes was born in Hollister in 1919, the lumber business was playing out there, as it had earlier in Vaughan. And Dan and Mae moved again, this time to the southern outskirts of Littleton. There they lived in a house owned by the John Leach family near *Mosby Hall*. Alfred and Pauline started school in Littleton, and Dan resumed working as a carpenter. It would be 1924 before he brought his family home to Vaughan and settled for good into the house he had built there twelve years before. By coincidence they were returning home when the neighborly Walter Vaughan family was moving away to Henderson.

The new highway Mr. Vaughan had fostered as a member of the NC General Assembly soon brought job opportunities to Dan Barnes in Vaughan. Jesse Harriss, for example, employed him to construct a large general store building on the south side of the new hard-surfaced road. Next an equally large machine shop engaged the skills of Mr. Barnes and others across the road.

On that job site while cutting a knot out of a truss with a hatchet, Dan badly damaged one of his eyes when the sharp debris flew off and hit him in the face. Fitted with a glass eye, he eventually found other employment, carpentry being more difficult and dangerous with his limited vision. He often walked to and from these jobs to support his growing



Daniel A. Barnes
Courtesy Brenda Mays

family. In addition to Alfred and Pauline, two other daughters had been born into the Barnes family, Velma in 1925 and Dorothy in 1927. These four children, plus their cousins, made good company for their paternal Grandmother Addie next door as she became more and more reclusive before her death in September 1927. Then Dan Barnes, Jr. was born in 1930, and Betty arrived in 1937, making six Barnes offspring in all.

Alfred later recalled that before he joined the CCC himself, his father and he had been able to earn money from the WPA by improving the drainage system of Vaughan Gin Road all the way up to Brown Town. For the first quarter of a mile, this road was the eastern boundary of the Barnes property. Father and son working together had earned a dollar a day doing rough spade and wheel barrow work. Warren County provided

the gravel and the culverts required to complete their job. Mae remained diligence personified, the motherly soul of peace and kindness, a force for good in any family's life but especially in this one.

Daniel A. Barnes's great expression of sustained human dignity and utmost integrity, in health and in sickness, was wonderfully reflected, in the accomplishments and loving support exhibited by his wife Mae and their children. Their quiet example transformed the late stages of the Great Depression for all Vaughan citizens, black and white, into a healthy, supportive community, neither booming nor busting. Surely Dan was comforted by this realization in his last months and days. How richly he, too, this honest, valiant man, would have enjoyed a good meal and a heart-to-heart talk with Eleanor Roosevelt, herself another just such magnificent human being as he.

SHOT TO DEATH, KILLED, AND MURDERED AT VAUGHAN

Shot to Death with a Rabbit Gun: February 8, 1907

The fatal shooting of William Henry Dickerson by James Harris took place during squirrel and rabbit hunting season. Coming into Vaughan from hunting in the woods, the story goes, James, as so often before, was ridiculed by Henry in the presence of witnesses loafing at a local store. James retaliated by shooting his antagonist in the face. Harris who had turned 21 the previous month was arrested and taken to jail in Warrenton. The dead man, age 30, was buried several days later at Greenwood Cemetery in Macon.

At the age of twenty, Henry Dickerson had married Emma Thomas Riggan in 1897. She had been born in 1863, the daughter of Jeremiah, an overseer, and Mary Johnson Riggan. Much older than Henry, Emma was about 34 when they married and already had a daughter. Berdie Riggan, age 15, became his step-daughter. The 1900 federal census shows this family consisting of the husband and wife, plus son Malvern age 1, and Berdie age 17. Later two other sons came along, Henry Eugene in 1902 and Cammie three years later. When Mrs. Dickerson became a widow in February 1907, she was 43 with three sons under the age of 9. Her daughter Berdie had left home by the time of Henry's death.

At the February 1907 term of Warren County Superior Court, Harris was indicted for murder. The minutes of the docket are clear:

The Grand Jury in a body comes into open court and presents and returns the following Bill of Indictment: The State of North Carolina, Warren County / Superior Court, Spring Term 1907:

The jurors for the state, upon their oaths, present that James Harris last of the County of Warren on the 8th day of February in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seven with force and arms, at, and in the County, aforesaid, feloniously, willfully, and of his malice aforethought did kill and murder one W. H. Dickerson against the form of the statute in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the state. J. H. Kerr, Solicitor.

Endorsed on back: “We find a True Bill, E. B. Stallings, Foreman of the Grand Jury.” The record does not show whether Harris was released on bond or detained in the jail.

When the Dickerson-Harris murder trial still was several months in the future, on February 15, 1907, in *The Reporter* of Warrenton appeared an unsigned article of local news from Vaughan. How this story may have influenced the outcome of the murder trial is not clear, but while the background details fill in the record considerably, the reference to “Wood’s store” was misleading, perhaps on purpose. Available records document 1906–07 village merchants named Bell, Watson, Vaughan, and King only. Maybe the anonymous writer wanted to spare one of them direct exposure. I have bracketed my own words throughout “Homicide At Vaughan”:

Henry Dickerson, a white [railroad] section laborer, was shot and killed instantly here Friday afternoon Feb 8th by Jim Harris, a half-witted white “boy.” For over a year a crowd of small boys had been guying Harris about falling from a train he had gotten on to ride to the section, and seeing that he was easy to tease, they kept after him every time he came to town. Finally some men took it up.

There is a crowd of “hangers on” that daily congregates at Wood’s store and who are generally tanked up on mean corn whiskey, and Dickerson was one of the leaders. They were having a hilarious time teasing Harris, who, becoming exasperated, told Dickerson to shut up, whereupon Dickerson commenced to curse and abuse Harris, applying a very vile name to him and threatening to kill him with a weight.

Harris was finally put out of the store and went [nearby] and got his shotgun and was passing by the store again when Dickerson came to

the door and cursed him and [then] slamming the door went back into the store. Harris turned and walked back to the window and Dickerson on the inside kept cursing him. Finally he came outside and said, "You drew that gun on me and I am going to have you arrested." He walked by Harris for about ten yards and [Harris] said, "You are a damn liar." Dickerson turned and started back to him, putting his hand in his pocket threatening, when Harris [came] up with his gun and shot Dickerson in the face, killing him instantly.

Dickerson leaves a wife and three small children. Harris is an orphan boy, raised by Mr. W. B. Pierce, a farmer here. [Harris] is about 22 [actually 21] years old. It is generally conceded that he had been teased and abused beyond endurance, and being not too bright, public sentiment is in his favor. In fact ninety-nine men out of every hundred would have done the same thing [Harris did].

He was immediately arrested and committed to the Warren jail. His foster parents were deeply grieved over the murder and will defend him with all their means.

It is hoped that this will be a lesson to the drunken, hobo element of our little town, and that the law-abiding citizens of our town and community will take the necessary steps to break up this congregating of drunks that infests our community.

Tuesday, June 18, this case was the first murder trial heard and decided in the new Warren County Courthouse. It had gone into service the previous day. The docket minutes provide details:

The prisoner being heretofore formerly arraigned and pleading not guilty as alleged in the bill of indictment of the felony and murder charges is brought into open court and being warned of his rights, the following good and lawful men are chosen and sworn to well and truly try, and true deliverance make, between the state and the prisoner at the Bar, whom they have in charge and a true verdict to give according to the evidence, to wit: E. G. King, T. S. Tharrington, R. L. Pinnell, M. E. Newsom, L. H. Hawks, John Powell, J. F. P. Harton, J. W. Burroughs, B. L. Reavis, W. H. Martin, T. C. Reavis, and R. T. Watson. The Jury thus constituted was duly empanelled to sit together and hear the evidence and say whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty of the felony and murder whereof he stands charged. Deputy T. R. Blacknall, was duly sworn as officer of the Jury. Pending the trial of this action,

court takes a recess till tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock. C. C. Lyon, Judge Presiding (of Bladen County, 7th Judicial District)." J. R. Rodwell was Clerk of the Court and R. E. Davis the sheriff.

In its account of the court session, *The Reporter*, a Warrenton weekly, on June 21 stated that the morning of June 19 was taken up with the presentation of evidence. The attorneys spoke that afternoon. The state's case against James Harris was argued by Solicitor John H. Kerr and S. G. Daniel. Defending Harris were Tasker Polk and Walter E. Daniel. Presiding Judge C. C. Lyon charged the jury until after 6 pm. Deliberating for one hour, the jury returned its verdict: "The Jury heretofore empaneled is present, and the trial of this action is resumed, and they say that the prisoner is not guilty of the felony and murder charges whereof he stands charged."

James Harris was discharged.

Before this historic session of Warren County Superior Court was adjourned, one more decision came down in this case: "In the foregoing action of the State versus James Harris it is ordered by the court that Dr. M. P. Perry and Dr. P. J. Macon be and are hereby allowed the sum of ten dollars each as fee for expert testimony."

By 1920 Mrs. Dickerson, 57, still had two boys at home, Henry Eugene, 17, and Cammie Bracey, 14. Malvern, then 21, had moved on. He married and worked in the Richmond, Virginia, area as a grocery salesman. He died there in 1988. He and his wife Lattie had a son and a daughter. His mother had lived to be 92 years old; she died after gall bladder surgery September 30, 1956. Henry Eugene, a lifelong, married resident of the Macon area, and his mother were buried at Greenwood Cemetery just weeks apart. Cammie lived nearby and was buried there too when he died of cancer in 1964.

There is yet another part of this tangled tale. James J. Harris was found dead sitting at the foot of a tree near his home place north of Vaughan in early June 1949. His death certificate identified his mother as Mary Harris. Census recorders sometimes noted her name as Emma Harris. At the Vaughan Baptist Church and in other censuses she was referred to as Miss Emma Pierce.

In the 1900 census William B. Pierce is 56 years old, having been born in 1844. In 1872 he had married Ruina Shearin who had earlier married a man named Harris. He may have died during the Civil War. Emma Harris had been born to that couple in 1861. No 1890 Warren County census

record has survived, but the 1900 listing showed her son Jim, born in 1886, as W. B. Pierce's nephew and Emma herself as his step-daughter. Also living in the Pierce family at that time were W. B and Ruina's son Charlie Pierce, age 27 and single, and a widower Nathaniel Shearin, age 66, identified as W. B. Pierce's brother-in-law.

Charlie Pierce married Miss Helen Barnes of Vaughan in 1903. He died of pneumonia December 29, 1907, leaving a widow and two children, Roy and Addie, the latter having been born the evening of his death. Thus 1907 included the arrest, trial, and not-guilty verdict for Jim's murder of Henry Dickerson in addition to the death of W. B. Pierce's only son and the birth of one of his two grandchildren. His daughter-in-law Helen Barnes Pierce soon left the Pierce home place with these two children and moved in with her parents, Alexander and Adaline Barnes in Vaughan.

The 1910 census listed W. B. Pierce as 66, his wife Ruina as 73, and Emma Pierce as 47. Jim, called J. J., at age 24 was listed as a Harriss. A. A. Shearin also lived in the Pierce household. During November 1912 Ruina Pierce died. In 1920 W. B. Pierce was 75 and living with Emma Harris age 59 and James J. Harriss age 33. She was identified as a step-daughter, and he was called a step-son. By 1930 Emma Harriss was listed as head of household, and Jimmie Harriss was listed as her adopted brother. She was 69; he 44.

Exactly how Jimmie Harris or Harriss became Jim Pierce in public parlance shall remain unclear. His being found mercifully not-guilty of murdering Henry Dickerson is more understandable. When he died in June 1949, Jim would have been 63. He was buried in the family plot at the Pierce Place where he had always lived. His stone reads as follows: James J. Harris January 9, 1886–June 7, 1949.

Wary Watchman Isaac Piland Killed: July 23, 1913

Bertie County native Isaac Piland was married twice and murdered just once. He does not rest in a marked grave. If a marker were ever to be placed in the Vaughan Community Cemetery in Warren County where Piland family tradition says he was buried, the approximate date of his birth and the exact date of his death can now be included. For sharing information about the family of this tragic man, I am grateful to Bertie County historian Gerald Thomas, a relative of the first wife of Isaac Piland.

Known as Ike, he had brought his family to Vaughan before 1908 to work as a watchman for the Fosburgh Lumber Company Railroad. Founded in 1904 as a haul line or spur off the Seaboard Air Line Railway, a successor to the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad put through in 1840, Fosburgh's business was based in Norfolk, Virginia. Exactly when the Piland family relocated to the growing Warren County village is unknown. Besides being listed in the 1910 US census for Vaughan's River Township, Mr. Piland had run an ad in the November 4, 1910, *Littleton News Reporter*: "FOR SALE—for cash or good security one Frick Saw-mill, boiler 25 horse power, engine 20 horse power. All in good condition. ISAAC PILAND, Vaughan, N.C."

Soon after he was killed on the front porch of his rented home beside the Vaughan Baptist Church in late July 1913, his survivors, a widow who was his second wife with their two daughters and one son, lingered for his burial and then moved away. They finally settled at Scotland Neck in Halifax County, after living temporarily at Potecasi in Northampton County with Rev. Dancy Cale, Mrs. Piland's father.

The murdered husband and father had been born in August 1864 to Caroline and Arodi Piland, farmers living near Windsor. Ike had two brothers and a sister also named Caroline. Their mother raised them after their father died as a young farmer. Sister Caroline married George W. Hatchell. At age twenty-five, Ike married his first wife in November 1889. She was Alona "Lonie" Jane Thomas who died giving birth to their first child in early June 1890. The premature baby did not survive either. Mariah Jane Cale, his second wife, was Lonie's first cousin. She was about fourteen at the time of her marriage to Ike in 1891. He was 27. Their three children came along gradually—Mattie in February 1895, Sibyl in February 1902, and John Macon in October 1904. At some point during these years Mattie suffered a mild case of polio. As a result, one of her hands always moved sympathetically to the other.

The livelihood of Ike during these years as his children came along already included work as a watchman in and around Windsor. By 1909 his name first appeared as a customer in a store ledger in Vaughan. Twice during that year the new Warren resident conducted business back in Bertie that suggested that his future would not evolve in the area of his birth. On March 25, 1909, he and Mariah along with Caroline and George Hatchell sold to the Wiltz Veneer Company of Plymouth all of the twelve-inch timber standing on the Piland family land. Their interest

in this five-hundred-acre tract, Ike and his wife sold to Carolina and her husband six months later.

The *Littleton News Reporter* ran Mr. Piland's ad in its issue dated November 4, 1910. He offered for sale for cash or good security a Frick sawmill, a 25-horse power boiler, and a 20-horse power engine—all in good condition. His ad ran only once, a sign that the machinery sold immediately. Another sign of the thriving community was the new hotel being built in Vaughan to house tradesmen and the growing population.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Piland and daughter Mattie became active in the Vaughan Baptist Church that stood fifty yards east of their rented clapboard residence. Since 1903 the Vaughan Baptist Church had been affiliated with the Tar River Association. A preacher's daughter, Mrs. Piland and older daughter Mattie became active members. The record of the Women's Missionary Society, for example, lists Mrs. Piland, as a founding WMS member on November 17, 1911. On June 10, 1912, Mattie Piland joined this group, and the WMS meeting that July was hosted in the Piland home. Their names as well as Ike's appear on the church roll. He did not serve on a church committee; but his wife was on the entertainment committee, and Mattie served on the committee to collect offerings for the Home Mission Board.

On July 27, 1912, Ike Piland served under acting Warren County coroner Simon Fleming on a site jury that determined that Fosburgh employee Charles Murcillus had died of natural causes while on the job. Others on the jury were W. T. Carter, William Hendrick, J. C. Hudson, C. Sandsvick, and W. C. Ellington. That November Ike returned to Windsor again to collect \$87.45, his share of his mother's estate being administered by his sister.

Vaughan was experiencing a business and population boom, the village's first since the Civil War and Reconstruction years. The population of 90 in 1900 had grown to 420 by 1910. In 1911 and 1912 during the pastorate of R. P. Walker, the white Baptists erected brush arbors between the church and the Piland home to accommodate the overflow crowd of revival worshippers. Timber and other commodities were drawing families besides Ike's to the railroad junction. Some of the workers arrived as single men. One of them was Littleton Bright, a blacksmith from Portsmouth, Virginia, where he had a wife named Maggie and three sons, the youngest of whom was born in August 1912. Before arriving in Vaughan in late 1912 or early 1913, he had worked on boilers at the Portsmouth

Naval Shipyard. He himself was an explosive character, mercurial, with a reddish complexion and tattoos like a sailor. Whether he was employed by Fosburgh, Seaboard, or the Greenleaf Johnson Railroad is unclear.

Still in his late twenties, Bright was immediately attracted to Mattie Piland, age 18. Neither she nor her parents were interested in his efforts to court her. Mattie's father first suggested and then plainly ordered the suitor to stay away from the Pilands. To no avail. July 22, 1913, while Ike Piland was on an errand at a nearby store, Bright came to see Mattie again, arriving after 8 pm. When her father returned, a gun battle between the two men left Ike mortally wounded. Unhurt, Bright ran but was soon arrested and taken to jail in Warrenton that night by Walter Vaughan, the local Justice of the Peace.

Several local men and Mrs. Piland observed some of the confrontation that led to this murder. She had retreated inside the home when the argument mounted and both men fired shots. When she returned to the front porch, she found her husband badly injured and sent her son John to the nearby home of Stith Bell to ask his assistance in calling doctors to the scene. Two doctors arrived but were unable to save Ike Piland. They were Dr. Willis Alston of Littleton and Dr. Horace Palmer of Vaughan. With JP Walter Vaughan they signed the ante-mortem statement of Mr. Piland:

Littleton Bright came in my yard tonight and I told him not to come in and that I had told him I would shoot him if he came again. He turned to go the other way and I shot at him and he then shot me. I told him three weeks ago not to come in my yard again and if he did I would shoot him. Bright claimed to be coming to see my daughter and she would not entertain him. She and her mother told him repeatedly that she did not want to see him but he persisted in coming. They expressed to me to keep him away and I asked him not to come any more. He came again and I warned him as above stated before I shot at him.

Another citizen, W. T. Carter, was involved in the local proceedings that same evening as were Mrs. Piland and the three other deposed witnesses: J. C. Hudson, Stith Bell, and Tom Myrick.

Nothing is known about the funeral and burial of Isaac Piland, the wary watchman, except that he was laid to rest in the Vaughan Community Cemetery directly west of his house. It being hot summertime, the funeral was held almost immediately. Mr. James Henderson Harriss, known as Cap'n, probably provided support. He was a neighbor and the

Form 13
4-12, 1000 M, C 1937

SEABOARD AIR LINE RAILWAY

To the Clerk of the Superior Court of Warren
County - I herewith return all papers
in case before me against Littleton
Bright July 23rd 1913. Charged with
shooting to death of Isaac Piland
at Vaughan n c On 7th of July
22nd 1913

This August 14-1913
W. J. Vaughan, J. P. Justice of the Peace

Justice of the Peace Walter Vaughan's report of Bright's murder
of Piland to Warren County Clerk of Court
Courtesy the State Archives of North Carolina

owner of the house the Pilands rented; he also sold caskets and had a team of white horses, Nancy and Jessie, to lead the procession to the nearby graveyard. The Baptist minister was a local teacher named K. W. Hogan. Perhaps Rev. Cale also came to Vaughan and took part in the service for his murdered son-in-law.

On Friday, July 25, 1913, *The Record*, the Warrenton weekly, carried on the top of its front page a brief article entitled "Killing at Vaughan." The widow and her daughter Mattie were later subpoenaed in Potecasi and came to Warrenton for the mid-September 1913 trial. It was quite a sober spectacle with John H. Kerr as solicitor and R. B. Peebles of the 3rd Judicial District as presiding judge.

In the Criminal Action files for Warren County preserved in Raleigh in the State Archives are the documents associated with the trial and conviction of Littleton Bright for the second-degree murder of Ike Piland. Initially Bright had pleaded not-guilty. That there had been an exchange of gunfire, not a single fatal shot, made a technical difference in his charge. When Bright submitted to the guilty verdict, he was sentenced to Caledonia Farm at Tillery in Halifax County for 13 years. The doctor who exam-

ined Littleton Bright for the prison system noted that he was probably epileptic.

Both of my paternal great-grandfathers were called to the jury pool of seventy-five men; neither was seated. T. C. Alston served as foreman. In Vaughan during my youth two different accounts of the death of Ike Piland circulated and were believed. One account said he had been seeing another man's wife. This husband came home, shot and badly beat Ike, and then brought him to his own house and threw him into the front hall where he died. More historic sounding, even compassionate, was the competing tale. Walking home after work from the Fosburgh station east of Vaughan, Mr. Piland was struck by an automobile. Its driver picked up the injured man and brought him home to die, the first car accident victim in the history of the town. Until I found the July 25, 1913, article entitled "Killing in Vaughan" in *The Record*, I believed one of these competing stories must be true. Imagine my surprise when neither was so.

Believe it or not, I made the discovery of the truth on a microfilm in my own home on July 22, 2013, exactly a century after Littleton Bright shot and killed Ike Piland.

John Macon Piland, the son of the fated man, became a well-known musician in the Roanoke Valley. He headed a band that entertained in the region until the 1960s. In a conversation with his elderly daughter, I came to believe that Ike's children never looked into his life and death. This wary watchman was truly dead and gone, and no marker yet stands for him in the Vaughan Community Cemetery. RIP

Through a cruel irony, Ike Piland lived beyond his unmarked grave. On August 22, 1913, while his murder case was pending in Warren County Superior Court, his name appeared in Warrenton's *Record* as having "left the county" without paying his 1912 taxes. The bill, according to W. T. Carter, Deputy Tax Collector, was \$2.78. This is the same Mr. Carter who assisted in the local proceeding the night Bright killed Piland. Perhaps the post mistress did not get the mixed messages, for on the roll of postal box holders for 1914, there he is again: Isaac Piland, restless spirit—paid up through the third quarter!

Buddie Brown Murdered and Gone: June 5, 1936

Growing up in Vaughan between World War II and 1961, I often heard mention of the 1907 murder trial of Jim Pierce; almost never was he called Jim Harris. Likewise the legends associated with Ike Piland's death

in 1913 still circulated. In neither of these two cases of white-on-white crime was there ever a tinge of deep regret for the victims. Both Henry Dickerson and Ike remained outsiders brought to Vaughan by its lumber railroad hub, one from Macon and the other from far away Bertie County.

But young Buddie Brown was different. He was a local black man of good family, one of the post-slavery descendants of the mighty Brownes of *Oakley Grove*, *Faulconia*, and *Favonia Haunt*. He was a good worker in his own right. Sociable and funny too. His father Elvin, son of a former Browne slave named Solon, started adulthood and marriage as a farmer but became a railroad sexton. Carrie, Buddie's mother, kept house in their large residence and also taught school. Her parents were Polly and Tom Henderson, the most successful Negro merchants in the community.

Buddie worked on the Owen Davis estate, wooded and arable land formerly belonging to Dr. Ridley and Jacob Faulcon Browne. My maternal grandfather Matt Nelson superintended that operation after 1919 for the next fifty years. My mother and her sisters and brother, who grew up on that place, to the ends of their days have paid sincere respect to the much-lamented Buddie Brown. Both Grandmother and Granddaddy Nelson memorialized Buddie too. There is a prized photograph of him in the Nelson Family archive.

Buddie was shot and killed June 5, 1936, by a Negro neighbor named Willis Let. Buddie had gone to Let's house, nearby his family's place in Brown Town, on the hilly southern flank of Vaughan. Buddie's fatal errand was intended to convince Let to leave one of Buddie's sisters alone. Words turned to insulting threats, and Buddie was shot dead on the spot. Exactly where Buddie's body was buried has been lost to time and eternity, but his good name lives on.

No story ever appeared in the *Warren Record* or any other newspaper, and court documents about the case are singular—meaning only one was ever filed. This black-on-black crime did not merit publicity, respect, or more than perfunctory investigation. Following is the report filed by Warren County Coroner Jasper W. Shearin:

North Carolina

Judkins Township

On the Matter of Buddie Brown Deceased

Be it remembered that on the 5th day of June 1936, I., Jasper W. Shearin Coroner of Warren County attended by a Jury of good and lawful men, via, C. V. Adams, H. R. Eason, Gid Alston, R. D. Chewning,

R. E. Pierce and W. C. Porter, by me summoned for the purpose according to law, and after being by me duly sworn and impaneled at Vaughan in Judkins Township Warren Co., did hold an Inquest over the dead body of Buddie Brown, and after Inquiring into facts and Circumstances of all testimony to be procured, The Jury find as follows. To witt That Buddie Brown came to his death from gun shot Wounds inflicted by one Willis Let, We further find that Let shot Brown in defense of himself and home, Therefore. We exonerated Willis Let on the grounds of a Justifiable Homicide.

Inquest held and
Records signed in
the presence of,
Jasper W. Shearin
Coroner of Warren Co.

6/5/36



R. D. Chewning
Courtesy Ed and Ruby
Thompson

Signed

C. V. Adams
Gid Alston
H. R. Eason
R. D. Chewning
R. E. Pierce
W. C. Porter

MANY VOICES: ONE HOMETOWN

People devoted to finding and keeping Vaughan, to holding this place dear, have shared both oral and written accounts with me during the years I have worked on this social history. Here are edited, expanded, and attributed transcripts of selected reminiscences. They further extend the narrative beyond 1940, the date of the last US Census to which I have had access. I thank each of these friends and neighbors, living and dead, for their contributions. My sister Betsy has been very helpful to me in gathering the information included here.

JAMES ALLEN MOSELEY

The Tucker side of my family arrived in this area about 1880, the year before Vaughan was assigned as the name of our first post office. Mama was the older daughter of Charles Jackson Tucker and Lena Nicholson who were married March 19, 1890. At that time Granddaddy, related to people who had farmed and done home repair, worked as a store clerk for John Vaughan. In a couple of months Mr. Vaughan died of malaria. Then Charlie Vaughan, his brother, kept Granddaddy on as a salesman in what became the Vaughan Department Store.

During that decade of the 1890s and the next, the C. J. Tuckers lived on the north side of the old road to Halifax in River Township. They were among the founding members of Vaughan Baptist Church in 1897–98. Their next-door neighbors were the Olmstead Riggan family. Across the road was Fishel and Sons' Planing Mill, well within sight and earshot of the railroad.

In 1900 my mother was five and her brothers Eugene and Willie were

seven and two respectively. In 1910 their parents moved the family across the road and several hundred yards to the west into a new house Granddaddy had built on land he owned in Judkins Township. He still worked as a salesman for Charlie Vaughan. Mother's sister Betty Cree turned ten years old the year the family moved. My Uncle Kenneth was not born until 1913. Mama, still single, at that time worked at the nearby Vaughan Hosiery Mill. Another business of Charlie Vaughan, this brick building was located next to Squire Carter's home and business.

Granddaddy eventually sold his first home place to Jackson Lee "Bud" and Vender Pegram, local merchants and brothers. When Bub, already a widower, died in the early 1930s, Vender, until then a farmer, moved his wife Flora and their family into Vaughan from the old Pegram place two miles west of town. Vender and Flora Pegram's grandchildren were my friends and playmates. We went to church, Sunday school, and Bible school together. It was of no importance whether you were a Methodist or a Baptist as long as you were going to church.

My daddy's family, the Robert Moseleys, moved into Vaughan around 1924. Their son Wilton was my father. They lived south of the railroad and in sight of the new road that was being surveyed at that time. Both their house and the one Granddaddy Tucker built in 1910 still stand, and farming and carpentry skills were breadwinners among the Moseleys as they once had been among the Tuckers. Neighbors of the Moseleys were Brownes, Fishers, and Dempseys.

I grew up in Mama's home place, not Daddy's, but I now live beside it and own the acreage. Before 1920, Granddaddy Tucker opened his own store facing the old road to the east of his new house. He sold gasoline and other merchandise. By 1930 it was a general store because the new highway south of the railroad had taken much of the car and truck traffic off the old road.

Growing up so close to the railroad gave me the thrill of trains night and day and provided dreams of escape as well for the other thirty or so boys and girls in my Vaughan generation. When I was younger, a special thing was to sit on our front porch when Mama's brothers Willie and Charlie came home for a visit. They would tell stories about long before I was born. Sometimes after dark I would be too scared to go inside to get a drink of water. Summers we young'uns went swimming in Walker's Creek and at Rocky Ford. Depending on who was present, we skinny dipped. But going to the movies in Littleton on Saturday night was a special treat. Sometimes we boys—John Walker, Linwood Tucker, Charles



Vaughan Baptist Church Royal Ambassadors: James Moseley, John Walker, Jimmy Johnson, Linwood Tucker, Aaron Callihan, leader: Tyree Callihan, Truitt Callihan, and Charles Newsome
Courtesy Ed and Ruby Thompson

Newsome, Jimmy Johnson, and myself—would thumb a ride standing in my front road. If folks who knew us had room, they would pick us up. Our most dependable driver was Joe Stallings. He usually had room because every Saturday he drove his pulpwood truck to town. A canvas in the back covered his load. We could climb in back when he stopped and find a place to sit or stand. Mr. Stallings was hauling us and moonshine, not pulpwood, and we provided him “cover” in exchange for a ride. To come home when the show was over we hopped on the late evening train. The engineer Finn Kelly knew us. He would signal us with the steam whistle, slow or stop the train to pick us up in Littleton and then let us off in Vaughan. Life was good.

My memories of Christmas are not all good. At home every year I

always got a new pair of brown pants and socks and some vine-dried raisins. To this day I hate brown clothes and do not eat that kind of raisins. It became my habit to go around and see what gifts the neighboring children had received, and as I made my Christmas morning rounds, I was given presents too. Miss Myrtice Pierce especially understood that as the only child of older parents I felt left out at that special time of year. She became my generous Santa Claus, a role she filled in my life as long as she lived. Today I still love Miss Myrtice and all the shirts she gave me.

ROSAMOND JOHNSON WEST

Daddy (James L. Johnson), Mama (Cora Mae), Jimmy, and I moved to Vaughan in 1943 after our home burned. It was located across from the Bethlehem Christian Church near Eaton's Ferry. Mama was a Daniels and had family living near the river when we were there, but to my knowledge we had no relatives in Vaughan other than distant kin. We first moved into the house Bobby and Lizzie Tucker later owned behind the Methodist Church. There I had my first exposure to the railroad track and the trains. I was so afraid of the big black thing and cried every time it went by. We had some chickens, and Mama paid me and Jimmy a nickel a day to feed, water, and get the eggs in. One day Jimmy promised me 5 cents if I would stand out with him and watch the train go by and wave to the people. I told him "only if you would hold my hand." Who would ever have thought I would end up married to Fred West, a railroad man?

Of course, when Garfield Brown got too old, Daddy took his job with the post office of bringing in the mail from the train and putting the mail on the train. So I spent a good part of my time on the tracks. Mama worked at the cotton mill in Roanoke Rapids as did several other people in Vaughan. Bobby and then Kenneth Tucker drove a bus to the mill and back for years, hauling people who worked there. I guess it was 1945 when Mama and Daddy bought the old Hosiery Mill building that they had renovated into a dwelling. Somebody drew up a blueprint (I may still have it), and they hired all the young guys around Vaughan to do the work. I remember the Callihan boys, Walker boys, and Dan Barnes working on the place. We lived there until 1956 when Bobby Thomas bought the place.

Things I ought to remember I can't, but stuff I should forget I remember. Dude Privette operated the store beside the post office for a long time before Horace and Ruby Lee Porter moved their business there from over on the highway. Mama and I walked into Dude's store one day. He had

blown up balloons and hung ladies pink panties on them with a big sign that read “Bloomers for Sale.” When Jim Clark ran the store and service station Mr. Eason had begun years earlier, I remember the big ice cream cones we got. Jim could pack a cone full, and it would take thirty minutes to eat it! I also remember the train depot very well—all the goings on with the trains, Mr. Jack Walker and his section men, and the little rail car they used pattering up and down the tracks. I also recall the trains blocking the crossing for what seemed like a long time. If I needed to cross, my biggest decision was whether to crawl over the cars or go under them before they took off. I also know that not many summers passed that I didn’t stick a spike from a fusee in my foot. Daddy would take me down to Dr. Palmer to get a shot. And who can forget “Old Lady Jones,” the health nurse? She would set up shop on Porter’s Store porch to give those awful tetanus shots every summer.

One highlight for me was the community stew that was cooked every year at the old Vaughan School and then later behind the Baptist church. The Halloween carnivals held at the old school were a big event too. But to me just to ramble all over that big old building and admire the large mural Miss Alice Nicholson had painted for the backdrop of the stage left me in awe.

I remember so much about growing up in church, how exciting it was to get old enough to move up a class. My Sunday school teachers were Miss Ruby Chewning, Jim Clark, and Miss Myrtice Pierce. We studied the Bible in GA’s and BTU. Revivals, feeding the preacher and his family, having picnics, and Bible school were special. I also remember going to revival at the Methodist church where Mr. Cary Porter was always in charge. Someone always played the old pump organ.

There were so many children in Vaughan during these years of the 1940s and ’50s. It pleased me so very much when Mama died to have several people tell me how much fun they had had at the parties and dances Mama hosted in our big living room for my friends and Jimmy’s.

I can’t forget either how hard we worked putting in tobacco. What seemed like an endless job did buy me some great school clothes that I was happy to own. Also I dedicated myself to 4-H. Mama always had a big garden, and we worked hard harvesting, freezing, and canning the produce. Food preservation was my main 4-H project.

The big snow fall of 1947 or ’48 I remember very well. It was a drifter and stayed around for a long time. We ate snow cream and made a sled out of an old wooden chair to slide on all day long since school was can-

celled. Another thing I remember was old No. 1 school bus with the seat down the middle. We were not allowed to sit on the big seat until we got to be a certain age. I really looked forward to that day because we were packed in the bus every day. If someone up front decided to start pushing, the ones of us in the back piled up in the floor. I hated it. I am sure that before I ever got to the big seat, we had a new bus with seats that faced forward.

The tragic day Forest and Lota Pegram's home burned, killing him, I remember trying to help these close friends and neighbors. From our other neighbors, the Walkers, we bought milk. They had two cows, and Mrs. Walker bottled the milk. It was so good. Mr. Walker also sawed firewood with his small sawmill. We children would catch the wood when it came off the frame and pile it up for him.

It was such a treat for me and Jimmy to go with Daddy to Littleton. His dear friend was Mr. Browning at the drug store; he saved us the comic books that were supposed to be returned or destroyed. We felt very special when he took us in the back of the store to give them to us. Jimmy adored these comics and saved all of them. I wish I had them now.

During these trips to town we sometimes went to the movies. Another special treat, but I loved every day I lived in Vaughan and am proud of my upbringing and the friends I made there. I have not lived far away, and the church keeps me close.

HENRY WATSON PUGH

Born in 1929 as the only child of older parents, I was always on the move, for Mother and Daddy were seasoned adults with jobs to do well before I came along. They raised me carefully but fast. A relative named Julia Brown lived with us and helped mind me. After I grew up and married in 1959 I still did not know the meaning of the words "slow down." My twenty-two-year military career trained me as a jet mechanic with the responsibility to see that the ejection system in a plane was in working order. I had been drafted into the US Army in 1951 and joined the Air Force in 1954 after I was discharged. It was the era of Korea and Vietnam.

Vaughan was still getting used to being on a major US highway when I became aware of where I lived as a child. Daddy farmed but mainly worked as a blacksmith in Jesse Harriss's new shop on 158. He also had a small shop at home. From there on a hill south of town I was eventually old enough to find my way with Daddy's lunch bucket to Mr. Harriss's

business during summer days as the Depression persisted. Fall, winter, and spring I was in school with Mother. A teacher, she transferred me from school to school as she moved about in her career. At different times she taught at Epworth, Embro, and Johnsons on the Jesse Shearin Road. Daddy drove us to these places each morning and came back to get us in the afternoon. Mother never drove a car herself. I later walked from home to our Rosenwald School east of Vaughan next to the Teele place. Then I rode the school bus to Warren County Training School in Wise where I graduated. One of mother's faithful friends in Vaughan was Miss Myrtice Pierce. As elementary teachers, they shared ideas, materials, and stories with each other.

I recall that in walking back and forth to school in Vaughan, I and my friends would stop in the afternoon to buy penny candy from Herbert Johnson who lived along our route. Cripple since birth, he had come to Vaughan from Pitt County long before I was born. Since his handicap kept him from active employment with the lumber railroads or on a farm, Herbert found a way to make a little money selling candy and other things from his humble residence. Salesmen who stopped at Mr. Eason's store in Vaughan would sell simple merchandise to Herbert at wholesale prices.

During those hard years of the middle 1930s, one of our neighbors, a young man named Buddie Brown, was shot and killed by Willis Lett just west of where I lived. It was summer; school was out. Before the funeral, Buddie's open casket was in the home of Elvin and Carrie Brown, the distraught parents. Their younger children, Melvin, Palmer, Polly, Lee, and I were playmates. We would play outside and then sneak inside to witness poor Buddie, the first murder victim we ever saw. Our neighbors, black and white, were shocked too, especially when the murderer whom everyone knew was not charged with a crime. He was black too.

A more pleasant memory of those days is associated with Mr. Henry Eason. He had a store and service station on the highway. Travelers and local folks, including Daddy, bought gas and oil there, and I knew how the pump operated from filling the tank in his car. The pump was one of the tall ones with the globe at the top. Filling the globe with the hand pump before and after dispensing the fuel made me feel grown up. I also imagined where the strangers who traded with Mr. Eason were going; the local folks who bought gas intrigued me as well for they were on the move too. Without fail Mr. Eason was good to me and paid me for my work when he hired me to chop cotton on his farm across from Ashley Grove

Baptist Church. This cotton field was where the Vaughan Elementary School stands today. Before he bought the land and raised cotton there, he had run the commissary for Greenleaf Johnson on the same acreage.

Imagining where travelers who bought gas from Mr. Eason were heading came to be a reality for me when I began to follow my military orders in the early 1950s. Just as moving from school to school with Mother had been a childhood adventure, all the places I would eventually be stationed in the Army and Air Force made me an experienced man of the world. On the list in no particular order were England and Spain as well as New York, Texas, Washington State, North and South Carolina, and finally Arizona where I retired in 1973. As a lone survivor of my family, I was never sent into a war zone.

I had married Helena Beatrice Williams of Littleton while on leave in June 1959, several weeks after my mother's death. Daddy was still alive then. He died in February 1964. Helena, a school teacher, and I have one daughter, Della. They benefitted from our travels, and now we live beside each other south of Littleton in Halifax County. Since coming back to the area to live in retirement, I have learned that some of my white playmates from Vaughan have not survived. I refer to Dan Barnes, Jr. and Robert Newsome, but Matt Nelson, Jr. is still around. Robert used to go to the post office and ask Miss Bertha Browne if anyone was sending me a letter that day. If she had mail addressed to me ready to go out, Robert would write me a note on the back of that envelope.

One group of older black friends and neighbors strikes me as especially worthy of remembering. They are families who took advantage of the programs of the New Deal in the early 1940s to build and sustain rural lives for themselves. These heads of households near Vaughan include Hughley and Janet Spruill, Matthew and Flora Williams, John and Mary Perry, and William and Mary Bullock. They worked with the Farm Security Administration to find their stride as good farmers and stewards of their newly acquired land and buildings. Daddy's own work as a farmer was always complicated by a leg injury he had sustained as a young worker for Greenleaf Johnson. One of the log cars rolled over him. He had been taken to St. Agnes Hospital in Raleigh to recover as well as he could. In later years, Daddy always owned and drove a car, but he often walked to and from the blacksmith shop on 158. Sometimes I walked with him, especially when we had scrap metal to weigh and sell at the cotton gin at the top of the hill where the Embro Road intersected the road and path to our house. War fears were spreading, and by the early 1940s communities like Vaughan

began to prepare for our part in the long battle to come. Collecting scrap metal became a civic duty. That was my first military activity.

As much as walking, horses and mules were a major means of transportation. I cite a special example. Brother Briston Brown was a legendary figure in our church congregation, a flesh and blood black man beloved and, probably, a little feared by men and women too, whatever their race. He rode a horse or mule from his farm beyond Walker's Creek to worship services at Ashley Grove. Sometimes he came in a horse-drawn wagon. After he tied his prized animal to a tree in the bottom east of the church, he would march inside and take a seat beside a window on that side of the sanctuary. As the service wore on, if his animal became restless or unruly, Briston would yell out the window to quell the disturbance, often using boisterous language in the process. The preacher kept right on with his sermon, but Briston Brown was as unique a character as I have ever met anywhere, always in command.

Stories of our people's determination, opportunities, quirks, and misfortunes or tragedies still move through my imagination today. Yet I feel blessed to have seen the world, served my country, and lived to come home with my family to where I began my journey. Greater Ashley Grove Baptist Church has flourished, and I am proud of be a part of that growth and development. Likewise, I would be glad to see my hometown undergo another renaissance.

ELIZABETH TERRY BROWN

Mama and Daddy were Caroline and Louis Terry. Carrie is the name she answered to. They moved to a house on the Owen Davis Estate where Matt and Vallie Nelson became their neighbors and friends. They worked the land together. It was January 1930. That March I was born in the "house beyond the tobacco barns." Being one of the thirteen Terry children, ten boys and just three girls, it always pleased me to know I was the first one of us born after the family moved from Vance County to Vaughan. Except for one son named Sam who died when he was thirteen, all my brothers and sisters lived to be grown. Six of us are still living.

I married James Samuel Brown. Everybody called him Bear, but most folks did not know why. The story goes that he drank Three Bears Wine, an extra rich red grape wine made in Petersburg, Virginia. His nickname came from there. Bear was the grandson of Big Briston Brown. His son Bobby Brown, Bear's daddy, lived on Blacks Road near Churchill when Bear and I got to know each other and then married. He was working to

clear right of way for the power lines. Over in Virginia as well as here. It was dangerous, dirty work that involved the use of creosote as a herbicide. My brother Thomas worked on the same crew. Merritt Kimball from down near the river was the crew chief and driver. When Friday came he dropped the power line crew off around Vaughan. My brother Thomas and I would take Bear home. Eventually Bear worked steadily for John Shearin and was considered a very good mechanic and equipment operator. Folks depended on him; they sure did.

I knew Merritt Kimball as the driver of the school bus I rode to attend high school in Wise. We called him Mert. His daddy and Mr. Wash Teele had helped get a bus for the colored children around Vaughan and Olive Grove. Before I rode that bus, I walked to the school beside the Teele family home. We lived nearby. My teachers in that Rosenwald School were Sallie Bet Sledge, Cora Teele, and Rev. Faison. He was from Henderson.

Bear and I made our home in Terry Town just west of Vaughan where Mama and Daddy had bought some land from Harry Fishel. Slowly our family community grew into a settlement of Terrys. Mama had done domestic work in Vaughan, especially for Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Harriss. Daddy had stopped farming with the Nelsons and started working for Mr. Johnny Shearin at the sawmill. Every weekend Daddy would likely be drinking, and often he got drunk. Although he was a peaceful drunk, drunk folks always frightened me.

Just like Bear had a nickname, Daddy had one too. It was Fairly. If you asked him how he was feeling, high or sober, he would almost always say "Fairly Well." Everybody liked Daddy. Mama was the tougher one in our household and community. She let you know she meant business.

My brother Thomas always had something going on. One time Mr. Clark told him that if we picked some cotton for him, he would pay us and we could go to the fair in Littleton. So we went to the field and did the job. Thomas had gathered our brother Otha, Ernest Taylor, a neighbor, and me as the pickers. Like Thomas had seen menfolk do, we finished and sat down on the sheet of cotton we had picked to share a cigarette butt he had. Only trouble was, Otha dropped the match; and the cotton burned up just like it was gasoline. All of it. Mr. Clark came running. He saw there was no cotton left to weigh. We were not hurt, but there was no trip to the fair, no pay, and we got a whipping when we got home. I expect Ernest did too.

Miss Edith Clark was partial to Thomas, and when he worked for her at their house, she always fed him a meal. One day she noticed that he

was looking at his food but not eating. So she asked him what was wrong. He hesitated, not wanting to hurt her feelings. When she asked a third time, he mumbled: "Mis' Edith, thar's a fly in my milk." And there was.

But no other childhood act by Thomas ever quite equaled that big watermelon he took from Mr. Nelson's patch. Thomas had walked around and picked the biggest melon out there. He lugged the melon to the trees beside the field, busted it open, and sat down to enjoy his harvest. He talked to himself as he ate. Mr. Nelson happened to come along and discovered what was going on. So he told Thomas he had to eat all of the big melon, not just the heart. Thomas obeyed. That's how he learned that stealing a melon he could have had by asking for it was a painful practice. Mr. Nelson walked Thomas to our house on the farm and told Mama what had happened. She whipped Thomas, and he never ate another bite of watermelon for the rest of his life.

My role in life besides working as a family and raising my own with Bear had been as a nurse for Vaughan people, white and black, who needed help at home through sickness, old age, and death. I started with Mr. Dan Shearin, and the job grew as my reputation for good service and companionship spread. I am not old enough yet to have help myself, having been blessed with good health and harmony in this place where racism and disease never raised their ugly grimace in my face.

As a child in our large family I had learned that an orange, perhaps an apple, and some hard candy made Christmas alright for me. Add some raisins, the kind that came on the dried vine, and I was happy. I also loved the program put on each year at Ashley Grove, now Greater Ashley Grove. I had been baptized there when I was 13, in 1943, and my direction in life has stayed the course. My oldest brother Louis, Jr., we called him Lula, was in World War II at that time, and he came home safely. I still pray for this place.

JOHN WILLIAM SHEARIN, JR.

My life is packed with memories of growing up in Vaughan. The things I remember most are people, animals, sounds, and random events that were neither outstanding nor spectacular—just day to day happenings. These life lessons, where I began, where they have brought me and, perhaps, where I am headed—these things that we never realize fully at the time.

Some of my earliest memories are of trains. The distant sound of trains getting closer and closer as they passed through Vaughan on their jour-

neys east or west. People talked about “taking the local” and “coming back on the Shoe-Fly.” These were passenger trains. Freight trains went through more often. I remember leaning on the back fence in our yard that backed up to the railroad track and watching the troop trains go through with soldiers hanging out the windows and waving. Other memories include feeling sad as I watched new diesel engines go by pulling a long line of old steam engines headed to Norfolk and the scrap yard. Mr. Johnson or someone else hooked the out-going mail bag on the white stanchion beside the track. As the train sped by someone or something on the train would grab the bag off the hook and then toss out Vaughan’s incoming mail bag to be collected and taken to the post office. It was sad to see trains of all kinds stop running in the early ’80s and the tracks being taken up.

People who lived in Vaughan and touched my life are fond memories today. I would peddle as fast as I could by Mrs. Cary Porter’s house to avoid performing some task for her—such chores as threading a needle or fetching something. Her neighbor Wilton Moseley chewed tobacco. I would chew raisins and spit like him. Shaker Browne was always teasing me. He asked me if I ever peed in the spring. I said “No.” Then he asked me how did I hold it until summer. Perry Nicholson was always teasing me about “Daisy Mae” and “Snooks.” He nicknamed me “Sycamore.”

Horace Porter ran a store. I called him once and asked him if he had Prince Albert in a can. He said “Yes.” I said, “You better let him out before he smothers.” Monroe Moseley would roll his cigarette with Prince Albert tobacco and then constantly spit loose tobacco everywhere. I remember listening to the Browne sisters Virgil, Bertha, and Ethleen fuss. They also had lots and lots of cats, both in their house and in the cat house out back. Bertha and then Virgil were postmistresses. They would wear bread bags for boots in snowy and rainy weather.

There were always a lot of young folks to play with around Vaughan. William Walker, James William Clark, Rosamond Johnson, Larry Porter, Carolyn Callihan, Katie Tucker, Gene and Anne Pierce, the Shearin sisters, and many others. Back then everyone lived close enough together so we could do lots of things together such as riding bicycles to Rocky Ford, Walker’s Creek, and Eaton’s Ferry on the Roanoke River. I remember riding Ella, James William’s horse, on the old railroad cut by Greenleaf Pond. We threw rocks: into the Turtle Pond on the main line, at the Nathaniel Macon Historical Marker on the highway, and onto the metal roof of the

old cotton gin on Embro Road. Riding the turntable inside the gin was fun because it was dangerous. I also remember riding the elevator to the top in the Old Hosiery Mill. I could see the water tank in Littleton on a clear day. Harry Fishel, Jr. once took me to ride in a Model-T convertible. There weren't very many cars around then, and I thought that was the neatest car ever. The street in front of our house was still dirt.

I could hear the thunder of poplar blocks being rolled onto flat cars in front of Mrs. Gibson's house by the Fishel brothers. when she lived in the old John Vaughan house. Later a train hit and killed her. I remember hearing the ring of the anvil as George Pugh worked metal in the blacksmith shop. I watched him build wagon wheels and saw my Uncle Jesse run the metal lathe in that same shop. He could make or mend anything. The Clyde Smith Shows that came each fall to the T. R. Walker Fairground in Littleton would bring gears and other parts that no one else could fix to Vaughan for Uncle Jesse to repair—parts of Ferris Wheels, Tilt-A-Whirls, and Loop-O-Planes. He invented a cooling system for cleaning fluid used in dry cleaning and made a separator for Moore Lumber Company. It would feed the dried lumber to the planer and separate into a bin for reuse the sticks that had let in the air to dry the lumber.

There were five sawmill owners on my street—Johnny Shearin, my father; Uncle Roy Pierce; Uncle Jesse Harriss; and Ed and Red Fishel. I recall watching Johnny Tucker saw logs at one of these sawmills. He would chew his tobacco real fast when the carriage backed up and then clinch his teeth when it made the cut. On rainy days the sawmill crews built outhouses. The one-holer sold for \$25.00, delivered. Going in the fall to the Fish Pond Farm with Daddy to weigh the cotton in the evening, I'd get to ride on top of the sheets of cotton in the wagon with Rufus Ivory. Every Sunday I went with Daddy to wherever the sawmill was set up to feed Annie the snaking horse. This feed came in pretty flower patterned cotton sacks. Mama made her everyday dresses and aprons out of this material. She used plain sacks to make diapers, slips, tablecloths, and dishtowels.

Every Saturday night I would go with Mama and Daddy to Littleton. The stores stayed open until 9 or 10, as I remember. We would park in front of Kenyon's first and get some groceries. We'd also get a fountain Coke from Brownings or Threewitts Drug Store. I'd always go to Rose's Five and Dime and get a funny book, then meet Daddy at Mr. Walter Wiggins's store. He was there collecting for stove wood and taking orders

for more. People in the country would leave orders when they came to town to shop because most of them didn't have a phone. Daddy's mill crew made stove wood from cut up outsides or slabs.

In addition to sawmilling, my family owned and cultivated farms. Rufus and Virginia Ivory lived on one of these farms. He worked the land, and Virginia helped Mama every Friday. She was the best cook. I especially remember creamed potatoes and gravy, latticed apple pies, steak and gravy (That was the only way to cook steak in those days; no one even knew what a grilled steak was!) fried chicken, cornbread, fruitcake at Christmas, and turtle. Rufus would catch and clean the turtles. Cleaning one of them was done in a certain way.

First, Rufus had to make the critter very mad by poking it with a stick in order to make it snap. That, in turn, expelled all of its poison. Next he cut off its head and placed the rest of the turtle in boiling water to remove the shell. After that he soaked the meat for the proper amount of time. Then Virginia took over. She parboiled the meat before battering it in flour. Turtle meat comes in all textures and colors. Some of it tastes like chicken, some like beef, and some like ham. Virginia fried all of it like chicken.

Tobacco was one of the main things we grew on our farms. Every spring or early summer while the crop matured, we would work on the tobacco slides, adding new burlap from salvaged fertilizer bags all around each one. We drove short nails through drink bottle caps to secure the burlap to the wooden frame. To bring the tobacco leaves harvested by men and boys to the bush arbor or grove of trees near the curing barns, mules pulled these slides through the fields to the bench where women and girls prepared the tobacco for curing. The bench was usually in a grove of oak trees or under a bush arbor near a curing barn.

The primers, as they were called, usually made about six trips, one each week, through each tobacco field during the mid-July to mid-September harvest season. They began at the bottom of the plants, successively priming off the ripening leaves from the sand lugs to the tips. At the bench, two female handers at each of two or three frames called horses bundled tobacco leaves, three to a bundle, and handed them to another female who wrapped twine from a spool around the bundles to attach them to a tobacco stick that was about five feet long. When a stick was full, one of the handers removed it from the horse and hung it in the wooden rack. When time came to fill the barn with the day's harvest of green tobacco,

the male and female workers passed the sticks from the rack into the barn where it was hung on tier poles to be cured during the following week.

The cooperative spirit of this shared seasonal labor was a cohesive force in the neighborhood and crossed the color line more often than almost any other activity we ever took part in. The stories that live beyond this important experience testify to values transcending the money earned by the workers or realized by my family from the sale of the crop. Even simple reminiscences make the point. One year we fixed the slides and were ready to start putting in tobacco the next day. Our old mule named Maude had just one job anymore, pulling tobacco slides. When Rufus went to get her the next morning, he found her dead in the stable. I always said she knew what was coming and decided she'd rather kick the bucket. Rufus figures in the other tales as well. Our bush arbor was a frame usually made of poles and scrap lumber with cut tree branches laid across the top to keep the sun off the tobacco and the women and girls working at the bench. Another year Daddy told Rufus to build a new arbor, and he did. When Daddy saw it he nearly had a fit. Rufus had built it out of some really good walnut lumber that was to have been used to make furniture.

Before Mayo and Silent Flame oil burners were invented, tobacco was cured with wood, usually logs or split logs. This method required having somebody stay at a barn all night to add or remove fuel to keep the temperature right. Most people just had a shed and a cot beside the barn. Uncle Roy Pierce built what he called a mosquito hut. It was a screened-in room like a screened porch. No one else around Vaughan had one.

I have so many memories about my friend James "Bear" Brown. He could do almost everything and would try anything. I mostly remember him just being there. Anytime I needed help, he was ready. He was good at figuring things out. He worked for Daddy at the sawmill and could do any job. When Daddy stopped sawmilling, Bear worked for Uncle Jesse in his shop. No job there stumped him either—welding, fixing power saws, rebuilding motors—anything. He worked for me from the early '70s until his death in 1999. He farmed with us and later operated and worked on heavy equipment and drove dump trucks in the construction business. He still could learn any job there was to do. Bear was also an avid fisherman and hunter. My sons, Johnny and David, were real buddies with Bear. As they grew up Bear taught them things they would never forget. They have vivid and lasting memories of working, fishing, and hunting with Bear

from their boyhood into adulthood. Both were asked to be pallbearers at his funeral, and neither hesitated to say "Yes." Louis Terry Jr. "Louie Jr." was another good friend. He worked for Daddy in the sawmill, and I learned a lot from him about farming, equipment, and working on things. Bear's wife Elizabeth was Louie Jr.'s sister.

My biggest regret is that I did not make movies back then. I would give anything to have a recording of the sounds and scenes of life as I was growing up. Of the anvil being hit, of the steam engines, of hand hooks clicking as the men loaded train flatcars with pulpwood, of Andrew Brinkley cutting the grass with a sling blade, of Virginia Ivory beating a cake or cream potatoes by hand in a bowl. I miss Wilbur Cheek singing to Annie, the snaking horse, as she piled logs for the swing cart, of Cap'n Jack Walker's crew working together as Major Sellers and Abner and Elvin Brown sang in rhythm to move cross ties and drive spikes. These sounds and sights are gone forever from Vaughan. Lost. My children and grandchildren will just have to imagine what it was like here when I was growing up, just as I have imagined life in Vaughan in the early days when *Fosburgh* and *Greenleaf Johnson* were household words and Daddy was a boy.

LUCY WILSON MILLS

In 1900 my maternal grandparents, Henry Augustus Manning and his wife Mary Louise Thompson Manning, came to Vaughan to live and farm. Gus and Lula, as they were called, had been married in 1888 at Hobgood in Halifax County. Five children were born to them between 1889 and 1903: Elizabeth, Lucy, Mary Estelle, Nathan Augustus, and Arlean who was called Lena. She was my mother. Her mother Lula Manning died at age forty-nine, but Papa Gus lived until June 1955 when he was eighty-six. Their graves are in the Vaughan Cemetery.

In addition to farming the land he owned just east of the home place of Dr. Ridley Browne, Papa Gus opened a small store at the merger of Embro Road with Highway 158 during the Great Depression. As his health failed, he closed his business and gave the building and the surrounding land to his son Nathan and Florence, his wife. She and Uncle Nathan lived in rooms added to the old store building, and she ran the store until 1963. He had a garden, a corn field, and raised a few pigs, which he had done since boyhood when he joined the Pig Club sponsored by Agricultural Extension in Warren County. Kenneth Tucker often hired him as an adult as a house painter. Uncle Nathan was lame late in his life and died in November 1975; Aunt Florence had passed away that August.

When I was five years old Papa Gus took me with him on his little trips. One day we went to this place that sold homemade whiskey. He asked me not to tell anyone. So I didn't, but I told Mama a little girl named Gwen had turned me over in her red wagon. So Mama knew where we had been. Papa Gus had also owned some land he called the Carter place outside of Vaughan. He had traded a race horse for five acres of land. I do not know if this land was the Carter place or not. He also had a road cart that his Texas pony named Billy pulled. Somebody said Billy was forty-eight years old when he died.

I now own the farm Gus and Lula and then my parents called home. My daddy was Bonnie Wilson, son of Josh and Addie Wilson who lived north of Vaughan. She died in 1940. When their house burned in 1945, Daddy built Granddaddy Josh a house in the side yard at our house in Vaughan. Ruth Hunter and her husband had built our house before World War I some distance in front of Papa Gus's house. Granddaddy Josh and his second wife Irene Thompson lived in this house until he died in 1958. The Joe Bobbitt family lived east of us in the Walter Vaughan house.

Mama had married Daddy in December 1928. I was their only child, but Linwood Wall, my first cousin, already lived in my family when I was born May 31, 1936. His mother, Daddy's sister Elva, died that same year. Linwood was just five years old. Two of his older brothers, Emery and Jesse, lived with other family members. Before going to war, Emery was working for Roy Pierce. In case Emery died overseas, he wanted his boss to have his cow. Emery died on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Mr. Pierce got the cow.

I married Julian Johnston in August 1952. We had four children: Hunt, Gus, Pam, and Bonnie Sue. They have given me six grandchildren. Daddy died in March of 1976, Linwood passed away in July 1988, and Mama lived until September 10, 1990. She was eighty-seven years old. At the end of her life she knew more Vaughan history than just about anybody.

MARGIE SHEARIN HARDEE

William Thomas "Squire" Carter was born April 8, 1856, long before this community became Vaughan. My maternal granddaddy, he was married four times, and all of his six children were raised here. His wives were named Leonard, Edelia, Octavia, and Pauline. The Carter children were Willie, Lula, Mae, Bertie, Viola, and Elsie, who was my mother. Besides running a distillery and then a store, Squire was a public official, having served as both mayor and as Justice of the Peace in Vaughan.

My paternal granddaddy was Charlie Adolphus Shearin, born here in 1873. A tenant farmer, he grew cotton and moved from place to place in the area to make a living. He and Grandmother Nita were founding members of Vaughan Baptist Church. At the end of his life he and she lived with his daughter Edna and her husband Tom Taylor in the house built and lived in by the druggist Ridley Browne, grandson of Dr. Ridley Browne. They died there, he in 1946 and she the next year. James and Charlotte Moseley live in that house today.

Aunt Edna was one of nine children raised by Grandmother and Granddaddy Shearin. The others were Will, Robert, Thomas, Elnora, Mamie, "John D" Russell, and Myrtle. Russell married Elsie Carter in July 1934. After serving in the Navy during World War II, Daddy worked for McPherson Bottling Company and then retired from J. P. Stevens in Roanoke Rapids. My siblings were Maxine, Joyce, Carolyn, Russell, Jr., and Donald.

I'll conclude with three stories set in Vaughan.

Charles Newsome would tell Maxine, Joyce, and me to come down to his house and he would take us to ride. We went and along with his sister Helen, Charles drove us back and forth all over their front yard in his mother Addie's late 1940s green Chevrolet. We were just kids, and Charles had no driver's license.

Granddaddy Shearin raised cotton and had sold some one fall. Aunt Myrtle and Daddy, being too small to help pick cotton, were left at home alone. In a drawer they found the paper money from the sale of the cotton. Running to the field where the older family members were working, they stuck the bills on the cotton stalks. When Granddaddy found out, he wore them out good.

When the road in front of the white Baptist and Methodist churches was being paved, the Department of Transportation left its machinery parked on the railroad property. Some of us kids got curious. So Jimmy Johnson started up a machine that smoothed out the tar, but he could not get it turned off. Aaron Callihan came to the rescue, and we were ever so glad to see him.

CORA LOUISE NELSON

I was about two years old when Mother and Daddy moved from Henderson by train and horse-drawn wagon to the Owen Davis Estate lands south of Vaughan. Dal Riggan and others had built a new house for our family. Vella was a baby, and the next year Edith, your mother, would be

born there. Daddy was to manage the farm, and the estate was to split the profits for his management. At times, especially during the Great Depression, there were about thirty people working for him. The estate lands across Walker's Creek had been added to his responsibilities.

Among our neighbors were many black families—including the Johnsons, the Terrys, the Taylors, the Strongs, the Bullocks, and the Ratliffs—and several white ones, especially the Marks family, the Chewnings, and Jack Riggans' crowd. For a while, it appeared that Grandmother and Granddaddy Nelson would leave Henderson and come to the farm, but they finally did not come.

I went to school in Vaughan through the seventh grade. During my second year, the teachers and Mr. Early the principal moved me up into the third grade. My sisters and I walked to school most of the time, but Daddy took us there by car in bad weather. Churchill Brown, Pete Riggan, and Mildred Wemyss and I rode with Mrs. Helen Bell to school in Macon for one year. At that time there was an eighth grade in Vaughan, but it was not part of an accredited high school. So there was some question about good high school credits, as I recall. The idea was that those students who might go on to college needed to begin high school where four years of accredited courses were offered. There were only eleven grades in all in our Warren County schools back then.

Since I started at Macon in the eighth grade, I continued there, riding a school bus that turned down that road off us 158 where Johnny Shearin and his sisters lived. We finally came out in Macon. After graduating there, I was at home for about three years, but I did ride the school bus to Littleton with Vella and your mother and sat in on several classes. In 1937 I went to the Henderson Business College. First I lived with Grandmother and Granddaddy Nelson for a few weeks. Then I moved into rooms in the home of the Page family where I stayed for the next seventeen years. In 1938 I began working in the Industrial Bank just down the street. Next I entered the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where I received my Ph.D. in Economics in 1965. I was already the first woman hired in a tenure track position on the faculty of Davidson College by that time.

In all the years since those growing up days, I recall another man with curiosity. Back in the woods near our cluster of log, wood-fired tobacco barns, lived Charlie Horn. People said he had worked on the Panama Canal when he was young. I never could figure out whether he had helped dig the canal or simply helped operate it.

One more puzzle. Do you know about the Barbado houses built here in

the 1940s? Daddy hauled one of them to our back yard. Mother used it for storage, but during World War II a village of these small one-room houses had been erected on the south side of us 158 just west of Vaughan. In them lived men from Barbados who had been brought to Warren County as migrant farm laborers under a federal program. The shortage of black and white male citizens caused by military service had occasioned this migration, but the migrants were not satisfied with the local working and living conditions. So they left, some returning to Barbados and others seeking work elsewhere in this country. Their village disappeared by the end of the war as the little houses were moved into Vaughan or nearby to serve other purposes. I wonder if anyone still has a Barbado house?

PATSY NICHOLSON UZZELL

I have three responses to your request for reminiscences about Vaughan, our hometown.

As you know, when Mother and Daddy built our new house and your parents bought and moved into the place I was born and raised, I got better acquainted with the John Vaughan house. It was diagonally across the road from the place Marie and I would now call home.

Aunt Myrtice told me this story about the cemetery in the northwest corner of that yard, the corner facing our house. Long after Mr. Walter Vaughan moved to Henderson in 1924, he wrote to Uncle Roy and told him he needed to repair the tombstone he had knocked over and also repair the fence he had torn down around the graves. Uncle Roy did not respond. Mr. Vaughan, the youngest brother of John Vaughan, wrote another letter. It stated that he was going to contact an attorney if something was not done about the desecration. Buried there, in addition to John Vaughan, were his wife, their eldest daughter, and her infant child. So Uncle Roy wrote back and told him that he did not own that land and had never put foot on it, adding that he already had an attorney.

Then Walter Vaughan sent Uncle Roy a very nice letter telling him how much he had always thought of the Harriss and Pierce families. Actually the owner of the John Vaughan place who may have damaged the cemetery was Hank Hardee. He owned the property during his saw-milling days in Vaughan after 1930. Eventually the place was owned by Aunt Mary and Uncle Johnny Shearin. Now it is owned by an African American family from South Carolina who moved to Vaughan from New England. There is still no fence around the single marble shaft that marks the Vaughan family graves.

The second memory I have is of Sylvia Powell, the dear servant woman who took care of me and Marie and lived upstairs in the house you now call home. She was Aunt Syvie to us. Her love and care were invaluable in our coming of age and in our learning to treat people well without regard to race and status.

Aunt Myrtice also reminded me that that house, so dear to your family and to mine, was built for young Dr. Roy Vaughan and his wife Mae by his uncle and father, Mr. Tom Myrick and Charlie Vaughan. Their work was completed in time for the couple to move there in 1910. In a few years Dr. Vaughan would be dead, followed by all three of his brothers, from tuberculosis. His wife had been named Vaughan's post mistress as a means of financial support. Unwilling to remain in the new house, she and her son and daughter moved into an unoccupied house across the road from Aunt Myrtice, who then was just a child herself.

Mother bought the Roy Vaughan house during the Depression and paid local carpenters \$1.00 a day to make repairs and alterations. Before then several other local families had lived there for short periods. When I think of Vaughan I always think of that house. Visiting your family there from time to time has been a homecoming for me. Somehow I never noticed the Queen Anne gingerbread adornments that used to be in the gables. Thank you for reminding me of them.

LIZZIE DUNCAN AND GROVER CLEVELAND "BOBBY" TUCKER

Bobby was born in Odell, and Lizzie was raised between Macon and Churchill. His family moved to Vaughan in 1915 and lived on Evans-Riggan Road at the old Neal place. He and his three brothers, Johnny, Ely, and Eugene, and one sister farmed with their mother and father, Sam and Nora Ellington Tucker. Bobby courted Lizzie by walking through the woods along old pathways, crossing the Eaton's Ferry Road en route. They married in South Hill in November 1934 and moved into the hotel in Vaughan. Other newly married local couples living there were Mary Lois Walker and Bill Pegram, his sister Louise Pegram and Ed Walker, and his sister Dorothy married to Early Callihan.

Bobby and Lizzie's son Thomas Linwood was born at the hotel December 13, 1935. Mrs. Eason came almost immediately to see the baby and asked Lizzie to give Linwood to her and Mr. Eason! They had been unable to have children, and Lizzie had had a very hard delivery, complicated by bouts of St. Vitus Dance. Mrs. Eason died from a stroke within the month, in January 1936.

During Lizzie's spell of sickness, Lula Shearin Lynch had cooked for Bobby, most often a pot of navy beans. She refused payment because Lizzie's mother, Annie Bell Jones Duncan, had been so good to Lula's mother, Mrs. Andrew Shearin. Lula and Fletcher Lynch were living across from Anna Collins's house west of the Baptist Church at that time, and Bobby's work was with the WPA, mainly in Littleton. From the hotel Lizzie and Bobby brought Linwood across the highway to live with Mr. Eason in his house behind the store and service station he had operated for a decade.

Soon Bobby went to work in one of the textile mills in Roanoke Rapids; he also drove a mill bus owned by Herman Hammock of Gasburg, Virginia. It carried workers to and from their jobs for a fee. Cora Mae Johnson was among Bobby's paying customers. Before she and Mr. Johnson moved to Vaughan in 1943, she had ridden a horse or mule to Vaughan and left the animal tied beside the post office before she caught the bus to her job in the mill.

At Vaughan School Linwood had trouble with simple addition. Margaret Leach and Myrtice Pierce were his first teachers. One day one of them asked him if he had two pieces of candy and a friend gave him his three pieces, how many pieces of candy would he have. "Lord, Mrs. Leach," Linwood said, "my mama never would let me have that much candy at one time."

When Bobby went into the Army in 1942, Kenneth Tucker took over his job of driving the mill bus. Lizzie and Linwood continued to live with Mr. Eason. One day he noticed that she was using ordinary string for shoe laces so he gave her a new pair. In September 1945 Staff Sargent Bobby Tucker returned from his military service, and the Tuckers soon moved into the Cobb House behind the Methodist Church. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson plus Jimmy and Rosamond had lived there when they arrived in Vaughan in 1943. Later Bobby and Lizzie purchased this place that became their permanent home where Linwood grew up. Mr. Eason eventually moved into an upstairs room in this house and was living there at the time of his death in January 1951.

Jim and Edith Clark and their three older children had moved into Mr. Eason's house at the end of World War II when Jim took over the operation of Eason's business. For a while Mr. Eason had lived upstairs with them.

When asked to identify a powerful, pleasant Vaughan memory, both Lizzie and Bobby savored the arrival of fresh seafood on train #11 every Saturday morning. For fun Lizzie recalled hearing Bobby say that when

he was still single, Myrtice Harriss ran her late father's store. She sometimes offered a special prize for the lucky customer who caught the tagged hen among the ones she occasionally released.

Years later, on July 10, 1961, the half-acre of land on which the Methodist Church had stood since the 1880s was bought by Lizzie and Bobby for \$10.00, the amount that land had sold for in 1882. Kenneth Tucker dismantled the venerable structure and recycled some of its timbers in the construction of his new residence about a quarter of a mile to the east. The church bell became the property of Courtney Sadler and was displayed for years in his side yard at the intersection of Fleming Mill Road and Eaton's Ferry Road. Bobby's niece Dorothy took possession of the church organ. On the church site Lizzie and Bobby built a store that they operated for years. When they applied for a permit to sell beer there, the resulting controversy made *The News and Observer*. Twenty Vaughan Baptist Church members saw the sale of beer so close to their place of worship as detrimental to their community. Bobby presented a petition with thirty signatures supporting his position, and the permit as issued was upheld in Raleigh.

WHITE AND BLACK PASTORS IN BROWNE'S TURNOUT AND VAUGHAN

With the ending of the active life of Vaughan's dwindling Methodist congregation in 1960–61, members and neighbors searched successfully for the names of all the ministers who had been assigned there. The list also included these names from Pegram's Church beginning in the late 1840s: Junius P. Moore, R. A. Willis, J. R. Griffith, L. J. Holden, and P. S. Herman. They were essentially circuit riders. Other ministers served this relocated white Methodist church after 1880: Latt Harris, Carey Whitticker, H. S. B. Thompson, H. L. Powell, S. W. Taylor, Charles Edwards, D. M. Lay, I. C. Smith, Rev. Trollinger, R. L. Vickery, P. E. Bingham, M. D. Crutchfield, N. M. Harrison, D. D. Boone, E. H. Measamer, Rev. Ledbetter, J. V. B. O'Brien, Rev. Hartzell, Z. V. Cowan, R. C. Stubbins, S. W. Swain, Dr. T. M. Johnson, and, finally, M. Y. Self.

During the period 1959–63, when the Methodist Church was deconsecrated and torn down, the Vaughan Baptist Church was engaged in a building program. The foundation of the new structure was begun in July 1959 directly to the west of the old church. The first service was held in the new sanctuary on July 31, 1960, and the formal dedication of the building and furnishings took place on September 29, 1963.

This successful project later inspired the congregation to discover the names of the ministers who had led the Vaughan Baptist Church during its first century, beginning in 1897. The names on that list are as follows: J. T. Edmundson, Archibald Cree, S. L. Morgan, J. Paul Bowers, A. V. Joyner, J. J. Marshall, R. P. Walker, K. W. Hogan, E. R. Nelson, E. P. West, W. T. Brown, J. B. Mosely, E. C. Shoe, J. O. Walton, Joe F. Roach, Garland A. Hendricks, James F. Potter, John E. McCrimmon, Alvin Pitt, J. M. Teeter, Edward W. Green, Charles Bartholomew, H. Leroy Stewart, Raleigh Carroll, Russell Morris, Joe W. Riggan, Jervais Phillips, Eric Jewett, Richard Green, E. Jeffrey Mask, Carl Graham, Gary Patrick, Charles Nelson, Don Dalton, Jim Guffee, Richard Gaddis, Jon Walker, and Robert Yates.

Although the small salaries paid these Vaughan Baptist preachers increased over the years, many of these men led several churches while also pursuing divinity degrees at Wake Forest College or Southeastern Baptist Seminary in Wake Forest. Others had farm or business interests in addition to their responsibilities as clergy. Rev. Edward W. Green, for example, preached at four or five different Baptist churches in Warren, Vance, and Granville counties in addition to being an active dairy farmer. His pay for preaching one sermon each month at Vaughan from 1947 through April 1957 was never higher than \$34.00.

Rev. Green was given a love offering each Christmas, and he and his family were always invited to have the noon meal with a local family each Sunday he preached. When he conducted funerals, the families of the deceased were likely to give him a donation privately since the average monthly church income during the decade he served Vaughan was only about \$110.00. Members as well as nonmembers had donated this money to the church treasury. For example, in September 1950, three nonmembers sent this note to the church treasurer: "We are paying to the Baptist Church \$7.20 for 1949 and 1950. Sincerely yours, The Privette Sisters." They were Lillie, Etta, and Jenny who had lived in Vaughan since 1916.

The printed history of Greater Ashley Grove Baptist Church lists the ministers who served it between the founding of the church in a brush arbor by Mrs. Lizzie Ash in the late 1870s and the year 1979. They were Lovelace Brown, Sr., W. H. "Billy" Boyd, James Ransom, Jack Mays, Saul Clanton, Charlie Chase, Sam Clanton, Nick Davis, J. W. Boone, J. E. McGrier, Andrew Taylor, W. L. Dilday, and Wayne Welch. The preacher who served between Rev. Ransom and Rev. Mays could not be identified.

No listing of Vaughan Chapel's ministers following Rev. Plummer, the founder, has been found.

Just as timbers and other items from the Methodist church were recycled into a new house in Vaughan, the small clapboard church that sheltered worship for Ashley Grove's congregation between 1912 and 1927 had been salvaged. The lumber became a detached storage building for Tom Henderson's business on Judkins Road. According to Henry Pugh, his father George led this undertaking.

After the new Vaughan Baptist Church building was put into limited service in July 1960, the original 1897 building next door was torn down and discarded except for the piano, the bell, several small tables, and the sturdy pine pews. In one of the new Sunday school rooms the old piano found its new home. Tyree Callihan built a frame to display the bell; it is still on view at the west side of the church. Children in the beginner and primary classes use the old tables. Who purchased one or more of the venerable pine pews is no longer clear, but master craftsmen fashioned fine furniture out of some of them.

Imagine that a comfortable rocking chair in use in our hometown today once was part of those old pews that made worshippers squirm. In similar ways we recollect and preserve people and places that satisfy our individual senses of local history. Remembering, we know for the first time what had previously been simple information. Knowledge of ourselves slowly comes into focus. Following are two examples.

ONE AMONG MANY: REV. JIMMIE MARSHALL

During Vaughan's first boom year, 1910–11, Blind Preacher Jimmie Marshall pastored the Baptist Church. When he died at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem in early May 1937, Helen Thompson wrote this tribute to him, a beloved neighbor, pastor, and friend. She was a local teacher, as legendary in her way as he was in his. Miss Helen's family member Diane Leonard Williams, the final officer to have charge of Vaughan's post office, delivered this inspiring memorial to me:

On the morning of May 6 when word came that Jimmie Marshall had passed away, the first thought that came to the mind of a neighbor of his was, "A faithful standard bearer has fallen in Israel."

There is an interesting but little known circumstance connected with the Marshall burying ground near Vaughan. Mr. Joyner Marshall, a Confederate soldier and father of Jimmie, was the first to be buried there. Not

long before his death there came to the community an old Federal soldier, apparently without kindred or friends. This John Erickson, Co B—65th NY Infantry, spent his last days in the home of a neighbor and made friends with the Marshalls. When he asked them for the privilege of being buried in their little plot, they granted his request. So the bodies of the two soldiers who wore the Confederate gray and the Union blue rest together in peace beneath the common sod.

Now another soldier, enlisted in a higher, greater warfare than that of time and sense, has joined these two. His battle knows no cessation until the Supreme Commander of all the earth orders life's banner to be furled. Jimmie Marshall took orders only from the Captain of the Lord's hosts to wrestle not against flesh and blood but against spiritual wickedness wherever he found it. He never missed an opportunity to serve under his chosen banner. He never made compromise between right and wrong, nor wavered in the discharge of his duty as he saw it. The line dividing right and wrong was to him as a plumb line, neither curving nor circling. The burden of the strife required to bring about a higher order of things in county, state, and nation rested heavily upon him. A few days before this death he told a friend he only hoped to regain sufficient strength to be able to reprove to his face a certain man who had betrayed the moral and political trust that had been committed to him.

The stand he took on political and moral questions often cost him dearly, measured by human standards. He was truly persecuted for the sake of righteousness. But his courage was undaunted to the end.

Jimmie Marshall was very human and possessed many fine qualities. Dearly did he love a joke, a witty story. His shoulders would rise, his body shake in convulsive merriment; then would burst forth that hearty, unforgettable peal of laughter. He also loved to sing. Sometimes in his younger days the thick woods between him and his neighbor were not sufficient barrier to shut out the stentorian measures of some great old hymn.

His energy and industry knew no bounds. His skill and cleverness in performing duties about the house and premises, his travelling about the community unattended, his acuteness and clearness of mind were the constant marvel of his friends. The nice little home for which he worked so hard was convenient and attractive and testified to his resourcefulness and management. He was thoughtful, considerate, and gentle in his attitude toward his mother and his wife. He asked for no pity, no consideration because of his blindness, so far as it was possible to avoid doing so.

In his going we have lost a faithful friend of many years. The county,



Helen Barnes Pierce, Carrie Barnes Phelps, Lillian Barnes, Ruby Chewning, and Birdie Barnes Hale on Front Porch of Yenney / Barnes House
Courtesy Ed and Ruby Thompson

the community, and the church suffer deeply in the loss of this respected, esteemed defender of the faith. He has laid his armor down and gone on to the rest and peace of a new home and a new earth.

We need not worry about his approach to the Heavenly City. Since my childhood I remember Jimmie Marshall walking along the railroad, between the rails, from his house to ours. He counted the cross ties and knew exactly how many there were to be stepped on before he safely walked up our roadway to visit us. I can feel his warm embrace now.

A FINAL ACCOUNTING

The account book Lillie Barnes and her sister Carrie Phelps used in their little store on the new highway during the summer of 1929 was not new. It had been used years before by their father A. T. Barnes in his job at Charlie Vaughan's Feed Store. Somehow this old ledger of local accounts from 1909 and 1910 had been preserved since his death in the latter year. So these two of his daughters kept accounts in it too. Moreover, the

counters and display cases in their business had once been used by Mrs. John Hudson in the store she operated on Main Street during Vaughan's boom times.

This obvious thrift was demonstrated by Lillie and Carrie during the months when, without their knowledge, the Great Depression was forming elsewhere. In their ledger there are signs of other dynamics of village life as well. For example, Cicero Brown, born a slave of Dr. Ridley Browne, had traded with Mr. Barnes in 1909 and 1910 as the steward of the railroad hotel the Peter Skundbergs operated in the remains of *Favonia Haunts*. Such items as meal and flour in addition to hay, oats, and hog feed appear on the Skundberg tab run by Cicero. If he and his wife Lula even traded with Lillie and Carrie, the pages in the 1929 ledger do not indicate it.

Like the old ledger used by John L. Evans and his extended family in Browne's Turnout in the 1850s and '60s, these accounts revealing more recent commerce in Vaughan provide proof of who bought what, when, and at what price from the Barnes sisters. In one sense these ledgers from two different eras are more informative than US Census records because folks shopped every day. The official census is taken every ten years only, and public release of census data comes about seventy years later. In the final accounting, preserving history is always a waiting game, but records of day-to-day life, for example, who rode the school bus or rented a post office box, remind us to keep watching and be patient as the community picture or narrative emerges.

And we can always tell the old stories again.

In a family and local community of love and encouragement, I came of age in Vaughan, North Carolina. Wherever I have lived and travelled since then, the sense of identity and belonging I grew up with has sustained me. I've cherished the Vaughan I knew, but as I grew older I wanted to understand the early history of this special place. Now I share what I have learned from research as well as from the personal narratives offered me by others who also call Vaughan home. Like me, some of these hometown folks have lived and worked elsewhere.

As a faculty member at North Carolina State University, I worked across the state as well as in classrooms and offices on the Raleigh campus. My extension responsibilities also sent me around the nation. Except for the Tien Shan mountain region between Urumqi in western China and Karakol in eastern Kyrgyzstan, I've worked and studied around the world too. Vaughan has always been my mark to steer by.

If finding and keeping our hometown is one result of our growth and development, what, I wonder, is the purpose of a "Lost and Found" service? Must we return everything we find? I believe it depends. A wallet found in the village street belongs to somebody. He or she wants it back. In Vaughan we were taught to turn it in.

When we find our hometown, however, it is ours to keep, for better or for worse. A personal sense of belonging comes from finding our native place, and keeping it is an achievement to celebrate. We feel this most poignantly whenever we go away from home, especially if we meet along the way someone who is not from anywhere.

For hometown folks, history that had been yours or mine becomes ours to share. We love to repeat stories featuring local events and individuals. Legends take shape, and we keep the best of them in our hearts and minds.

Welcome to Vaughan.

James William Clark, Jr.

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