

¹Abbeville *Press and Banner*, October 26, 1871, W. A. Lee, Editor

PROGRESS OF IMPROVEMENT IN OUR DISTRICT

----- IMPROVEMENTS IN DUE WEST -----

A few weeks since we noticed the progress of improvements in our own town, giving evidence of the public spirit and enterprise of our own people, and now we are pleased to record the evidences of similar progress elsewhere, in our sister town of Due West, affording an exhibition of the same estimable qualities. They show that our people are making the best of the situation, and are addressing themselves to the work of material renovation and development with renewed heart and hope.

Among the recent improvements of the town we may first mention the handsome new residence of Mr. S. W. Agnew, to which he has just given the finishing touches.² He is one of the most energetic and prosperous of our young merchants, and it affords us pleasure to chronicle the evidence of his success. Messrs. Wm. Agnew and Son have also recently completed a handsome new store adjoining the old Post Office, where they are doing a heavy trade.

Rev. J. Galloway has recently erected a commodious store on Main Street, opposite the store of Messrs. Agnew & Son, and is doing a prosperous . . . [?] business. He has also newly painted and otherwise improved the residence, and decorated his front grounds with a flower garden, enclosed with a neat fence.

Our old friend, Mr. A. C. Hawthorn, who had the misfortune since the war to lose by fire his dwelling and furniture, has with characteristic energy raised the means to have erected, one of the neatest and most commodious Hotels in the up-country; and which is supplied with a goodly share of the modern conveniences and improvements.³ We are pleased to learn that the Hotel is liberally patronized, and hope that he and his good lady

¹ I found this article from Lowry Ware's *A Place Called Due West: The Home of Erskine College* (privately printed, hereafter cited as Ware). I transcribed this article by W. A. Lee from the original (microfilm copy). Virtually all of the information in these footnotes came from conversations I have had with Lowry Ware whose encyclopedic knowledge of local history is difficult to comprehend! Jim Gettys. This article highlights one of the most active real estate periods in Due West history. See Lowry Ware, *A Place Called Due West: The Home of Erskine College* 130. During the five years ending in 1885 there were four new churches built in Due West. In a few years after 1871 five new store buildings were constructed. "Of special interest was the fact that four ante-bellum houses, those of Rev. J. N. Young, James Boyce (later the Blackwell place on the road to Donalds), Edwin Cox (later the McCain place), and Capt. James Pratt (later the Bell house), had all had second story editions.

² More than likely the house owned by Mrs. Wanda Mann in 2012, formerly owned by Mrs. Robert Galloway (nee Agnew) and built by Mr. Samuel W. Agnew.

³ Andrew Cowan Hawthorne, a Civil War veteran, owned a house where the Mexican Restaurant stands in 2102. When it burned Miss Elizabeth McQuerns was boarding there, lost all of her belongings in the fire, and escaped by jumping into a sheet held by rescuers. Mr. Hawthorne used that house as a "hotel" and he new home also had room for boarders.

who were our friends in “Lang Syne,” may live to enjoy many prosperous years in their new home.

The Rev. J. N. Young, and J. Boyce, and Mr. E. Cox, have recently had their one story residences changed into large two-story dwellings, and have made to them many additions and improvements.⁴ Prof. Young’s especially with its neat tower and modern improvements, presents a very tasteful and elegant appearance.

Capt. Pratt has also added to the beauty and comfort of his residence by the erection of an addition story, and has built a commodious building adjoining, for the accommodation of boarders.⁵

Dr. O. P. Hawthorne has now a dozen carpenters at work upon his dwelling and will soon have a two-story residence, which will be a credit to himself and an ornament to the town. Prof. Hood is also improving the interior arrangements of his commodious mansion, by enlarging and ventilating its rooms, and perfecting its calinary [cadinary or calinary meaning culinary] conveniences.⁶

Dr. J. L. Miller has made various improvements in his tasteful two-story residence since the war, which surrounded by flowers and evergreens is an ornament to the town.⁷

Prof. J. I. Bonner, President of the Female College, is adding to the beauty of his handsome residence by an improved style of sash windows, and contemplates still further improvements. Mr. Bonner has since the war erected the store in which Capt.

⁴ The J. N. Young home, located on the east side of highway 20/185 at the town limits, has remained in the family. The J. Boyce house was purchased by Mr. Blackwell and his grandson, Dr. Robert Clarke, lives in the home in 2012. It is located on the north side of highway 184 less than a mile from the Due West town limits. The Edward Cox house was sold to Dr. J. D. Neel who, in turn sold it to Dr. J. I. McCain in 1881. James Ross McCain wrote that his mother, Lula Todd McCain, inherited \$1500 from her father and \$900 of that money was used to purchase the house. Four students per year boarded with the McCains. (see Ware, 117, 119, 130). Dr. J. M. Lesesne purchased by Dr. J. M. Lesesne shortly after he joined the Erskine faculty in 1939. Dr. Lesesne’s son, Bill Lesesne, owns the house in 2012. The addition of second floors on these and the other homes noted below marked the first time the village of Due West had homes with two stories. E. Cox was from Alabama and came to Due West as an Erskine student. He married Captain Pratt’s sister and became engaged by giving her his gold Euphemian pin, subsequently lost. One day a farmer was plowing and found a gold Euphemian pin inscribed “E. Cox.”

⁵ Currently owned by Dr. John Carson, this home was, for many decades, the home of Miss Lola Bell who took in boarders. Miss Lola Bell would take care of individuals whose homes burned without being compensated and housed generations of student and faculty boarders. Pratt purchased the house from the Lindsay family who built it, and in 1873, two years after he added the second story (when he also built a large adjoining building for boarders), he advertised the home for sale. Either then or later the home was purchased by the Power family and later by the Bell family. See Ware, 117.

⁶ Oliver Perry Hawthorne’s home is located on the Winona Church Road to the north east of Due West and is still owned by members of the Hawthorne family. Professor Hood’s home became Professor Bradley’s home and still stands on the north side of Main Street.

⁷ In 2012 this home is owned by Mrs. Beck Eleazer and was owned for many years by Professor James Bonner and his wife, Mary. The second story was added by Captain A. W. Clarkson around 1871 and when he returned to Due West in 1885 Samuel Agnew found it strange that the Miller house had “grown to a two storied building.” Agnew Diary, September 24, 1885 taken from Ware, 132.

Clinkscales did a prosperous business until his death. It is now occupied by our young friends, Messrs. McGhee and Bro.⁸

Messrs. Miller, Kennedy & Co., have also built a large and commodious store since the war, where for two or three years past they have done a large business. Here they keep the Emporium of Fashion for Due West.⁹

Mr. Robert W. Haddon is now at work on his splendid new dwelling and will in short time have it finished. By energy and good management he has accumulated quite a competency, and is now investing liberally in a comfortable and well-arranged home.¹⁰

Mrs. Prather has recently purchased, for \$3,500, the large residence of Prof. J. P. Kennedy which is now occupied by Capt. Jas. T. Liddell as a boarding house, and contemplates, we learn various alterations and improvements.

The old house once known as the Norton house, now owned by Mrs. Reed has been rolled to the rear, and in front a beautiful two-story dwelling has been built in its stead.

Mrs. Kennedy has purchased the old Martin house, and has made very great improvements on the place. It is quite a pleasant location, and she there entertains a number of boarders.

The Female College has been completed in excellent style, and is now a neat and tasteful edifice. A commodious Steward's Hall has been erected for the accommodation of boarders, and is under the charge of Prof. Kennedy.

The Faculty at Erskine College are now making the necessary arrangements to put a new roof, a handsome cornice and other decorations upon the college building. They also are about repairing the dome of the observatory of Lindsay Hall, and contemplate still further improvements to the interior, for the accommodation of the large audiences which are always present on commencement occasions.

The fine large Church in Due West has also been repaired, and painted within and without. The seats have also been painted and cushioned.

The colored people of the place have also caught the spirit of improvements, and have erected a neat and commodious frame church. Of this they Rev. Thomas Young is pastor, with one hundred communicants, and it is the only colored congregation, we believe, in the Associate Reformed Church in the United States.

Capt. Cochran contemplates painting his fine residence, and ornamenting his ground with flowers and evergreens, and a handsome picket fence.

Mr. John Cowan has had his fine residence painted and otherwise improved, and we learn that Rev. J. O. Lindsay contemplates similar improvements.¹¹

⁸ The location of this house is unknown but the store referred to was located on the corner of Main Street and Washington Street, across Washington from the McGee House. After Captain Clinkscales died the McGee brothers operated the store and eventually sold it to Mr. Brooks who operated businesses (including caskets) in the commodious structure. Mr. Seawright operated a laundry in the building in the 1950s and it was demolished before Belk Hall was constructed.

⁹ This structure was one of the buildings located in the business section of Main Street.

¹⁰ This house was occupied for decades in the twentieth century by the Watts family and is located on the east side of Bethlehem Church Road, the first house on the left at the top of the hill above Parks' Creek. It is currently owned by Mr. Bryan Farley.

¹¹ John Cowan lived in a house located where the home of Dr. Randy Ruble (built by Dr. Ellis Leslie) now stands.

Prof. Lee has within the past year erected a photographic gallery, where he has been doing a fine business, and making very handsome pictures.¹²

Dr. Henry has now a number of carpenters upon his dwelling, and, designs various improvements, which will conduce [?] to his beauty and comfort.¹³

Among the institutions of the place is the printing office of the Rev. J. I. Bonner, where he prints not only the *Associate Reformed Presbyterian*, but the *Lutheran Visitor*, and the *Little Banner*. He has a well-furnished office, and runs a power press by steam. The office is under the superintendence of Mr. B. C. DuPre. The steam press is quite an improvement upon the old Smith hand press, upon which the *Erskine Miscellany* was printed twenty years ago.

The College, male and female, are the pride and ornament of the town, and under the superintendence of able and experienced instructors, and imparting all the blessings of a thorough and finished education, are rewarded with an extent of public appreciation and patronage of which any of our colleges might be proud.

A large proportion of the work above referred was carried on under the direction of Capt. A. W. Clarkson, and will furnish evidence of his architectural taste and skill.¹⁴

In thus furnishing some of the evidence of the condition and progress of the flourishing town of Due West, we have given the basis of a comparison with our sister town of the upcountry, and we would be glad to be informed whether there are any who can distance her in the march of improvement. We are pleased to note the evidence of prosperity, and especially as they are connected with a town with which we have had so many pleasant associations, as that of Due West.

¹² Professor Joseph Lee purchased this house (built in the early 1830s by Rev. Ebenezer Erskine Pressly and his wife, Elizabeth Agnew Pressly) around 1847 shortly after Elizabeth Pressly's death. The Lee family remained in the house and the children attending college in Due West. In 1911 the house was sold to a speculator who, shortly thereafter, sold it to the Baldwin family. The Baldwin children like the Lee children before them, attended Erskine. Dr. Wofford Baldwin and his sister, Miss Bessie Baldwin lived in the home until their deaths. The home was sold twice since Dr. Baldwin's death and is currently owned by _____ in 2012.

¹³ This home stood somewhere along the south side of Main Street to the east of Strong Circle.

¹⁴ A. W. Clarkson was the first commander of the Helena Artillery, organized t Helena, Phillips County, Arkansas on April 27, 1861. Clarkson was its first commander and served under Colonel Patrick R. Cleburn, initially commander of the 1st Arkansas State Troops, redesigned the 15th Arkansas Infantry, CSA. Clarkson commanded the battery at the Battle of Shiloh (April 6-7, 1862) and resigned on July 2, 1862. See <http://www.couchgenweb.com/civilwar/keysbatt.html>, accessed February 19, 2012. He served as an aid-de-camp to Major General William J. Hardee's Third Army Corps, commanded by General Albert Sidney Johnston, CSA, during the Battle of Shiloh. After the Civil War Clarkson was evidently an itinerate builder who constructed or remodeled homes, often copies of the antebellum Neo-Classical (or Greek Revival) architecture.

[Dr. Lowry Ware found an advertisement in the November 2, 1871 issue of the *Abbeville Press and Banner* entitled "Architecture," for the services of A. W. Clarkson. That advertisement evidently ran at least as early as September 1871 and follows as similar to the original as possible.]

The undersigned would respectfully offer his services as an Architect and Designer, to the citizens of Abbeville and surrounding country, for getting up plans and specifications for all kinds of structures, either public or private on reasonable terms. From an early and thorough course of training and a good amount of practical experience, he hopes to be able to please and make it to the interest of all who may favor him with their patronage.

References as for Architectural skill: Rev. J. N. Young, J. I. Bonner, Dr. Jas. Boyce, Mr. A. C. Hawthorne, of Due West; Rev. H. T. Sloan, of Cedar Springs; and Messrs. Jas. S. Cothran and Hugh Wilson, owners of the Marshall House, J. D. Chambers, Jas. W. Fowler, of Abbeville, S. C.

I am also prepared to construct the **HORIZONTAL LEVER POWERED COTTON PRESS**, for which I claim it has no equals, as to the power of pressure, simplicity of structure, durability and rapidity of operation. Communication should be addressed to me at Due West, or Abbeville C. H. where it will receive prompt attention.

These Cotton Presses have been thoroughly tested by the following persons, Mr. Benjamin Smith, of Donaldsville, E. Cox of Due West, A. B. C. Lindsay, near Calhoun Mills, of Abbeville County. I have a great many engaged and under contract and would respectfully solicit orders for more. They are fully warranted as represented.

Respectfully, &c.,

A. W. Clarkson.

September 7, 1871