

Little Villages Fade Away**Smith's Turn Out
Is 100 Years Old**

By SAMMY MENDENHALL

Tomorrow will be the one-hundredth birthday of the little community known as Smith's Turn-Out. It was on January 8, 1853 that a post office was established there with Bernard Lavell as postmaster. Like Rock Hill, Smith's Turn-Out owes its beginning to the Charlotte-Columbia Rail Road which was begun in 1846 and completed in 1852. Smith's Turn-Out was begun as a refueling station for the wood burning locomotives which once traveled this line.

Smith's Turn-Out is today the center of the one-time large Smith plantation from which it receives its name. The Smith plantation was bordered on the east side by the plantation of David Boyd. The railroad ran through the Smith land.

In 1852, John George Smith sold to Barney Lavell a lot of one acre for fifty dollars. In this deed a store is mentioned. Also on a plat drawn of the plantation in the same year, a station marked Smith's Turn-Out is shown.

From what can be gathered, John George Smith died in the middle 1850's and his plantation was divided up and sold. One of the purchasers was John S. Bratton who also started a mercantile business.

After the War Between the States, it was discovered that through the use of a new kind of fertilizer, the soil around Smith's Turn-Out could be made very productive, especially for cotton. In 1878, James Nelson came to Smith's Turn-Out and started the first cotton gin.

Some of the first families to settle in the section were the Rat-terrees, the Guilyards, the Polks, the Johnsons and the Mills. Later came the Carters, the Straits, the Popes, the Chappells, the Andersons, the Wherrys and the Wootens.

As was the case in most communities of any size in the 1870's and '80's, Smith's Turn-Out had its barrooms. But these went with the prohibition law.

Smith's Turn-Out has to its credit the originator of the cotton compress and the rotary plough, Samuel Neely.

Churches

From its beginning the people of Smith's Turn-Out had attended services at Bethesda Church, and probably at Fishing Creek also but about the turn of the century the people began to feel the need for a church in their own community. In 1905, through the efforts of the Rev. J. K. Hall, pastor of Bethesda Church, Smith's Presbyterian Church was organized. A building was erected and services have continued down to the present.

The church has been supplied by different ministers from time to time, but the pastors of Bethesda have been the regular preachers. Rev. J. K. Hall, Rev. F. H. Wardlaw, Rev. P. W. Wilson and Reverend W. G. Sommerville appear as such in the records. Since 1945, the church has been under the able direction of the Rev. Clarence N. Morrison of Bethesda. The present membership is

approximately 50.

Smith's Turn-Out was at the peak of its prosperity in the 1920's.

Today it finds itself sharing the common fate of many rural communities in the South. The coming of industry to the South and improved communications have caused the decline of small villages.

Two stores are still maintained by C. A. Carter, at whose store the post office is located, and G. W. Boulware. A cotton gin is operated by the Wooten Brothers.

From 1946 to 1950 Smith's Turn-Out held the world's record for cotton production per acre. John Harvey Neely was the cotton champion. It is still the center of one of the richest cotton producing sections in the east.

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