

Chester's great cattle improvement project

How city became the 'Wonderful Guernsey Capital of Dixie'

In 1886 Judge J. Lyles Glenn of Chester purchased three purebred Guernsey heifers and a purebred Guernsey bull from David R. Fleniken of Winnsboro. Fleniken, in turn, had purchased from a Chester County, Pa., breeder where the cattle had been imported from the Isle of Guernsey.

In December 1886 the first Guernsey calf was born in the judge's barn yard. He named her Carolina Snowdrop. Others followed, and by the 1920s about a dozen Chester men had bought Guernseys descended from Judge Glenn's purchase. Chester became known as the "Guernsey Center of Dixie."

In 1925, there was a drive to improve all cattle in the county and the "Scrub Sire Eradication Campaign" resulted in the farmers going over the county and purchasing "scrub" (inferior) bulls from farmers. They managed to fill three boxcars and sent them to market. The scrub bulls were replaced by Guernseys.

In 1928 a calf of one of the young members of the "Chester County Guernsey Calf Club" took first place in the National Dairy Show. Ten years later, the Chester County Guernsey Cattle Club was formed. A number of dairies were built. The agricultural agent said that Guernsey cattle were just as important to Chester as cotton or peaches.

And today? Alas, the large dairies are gone. It seems the only vestige left of the days that Guernseys ruled is Chester's radio station, WGCD. The station's call letters stand for "Wonderful Guernsey Capital of Dixie."

Famed courthouse janitor

An obituary in the Yorkville Enquirer, April 30, 1915, began: "J.

NEARBY HISTORY

Louise Pettus



Hannibal Beatty, colored, for many years a familiar figure in Yorkville and known to practically every judge who has occupied the bench in the last 30 years as well as to many lawyers all over the state and to scores of York County people who have attended court during the past forty years as witnesses and jurors, died at his home in Liberia, the colored section of Yorkville ... while on his way to his duties as janitor of the courthouse."

Hannibal Beatty, born Jan. 3, 1835, had been a slave of Col. L.C. Beatty. His duties were office boy and flower gardener. When Beatty was elected to the S.C. legislature, he took Hannibal with him to Columbia to serve as his valet.

When Hannibal Beatty was liberated at the end of the Civil War, he first chose to work as a gardener for many Yorkville families. In 1874, Sheriff R.H. Glenn appointed him courthouse janitor, a post he was to fill for the next 41 years.

Hannibal Beatty was a member of the African Methodist Episcopal church but "almost always" attended the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and his funeral was conducted there with officers of the church and county officials serving as honorary pall bearers.

Tough times for teachers

Before World War II, public schoolteachers had many rules imposed on them in their teaching contracts. The smaller the school district, the more rules, or so it seemed. Commonly, the contract required that the teacher, if single, would not marry during the school year.

Some did not allow the woman teacher to be seen in public with any man other than her father or

brother. The contract might determine the hours that the teacher could be abroad in the evening, such as requiring that they be at their residence by 8 p.m. unless attending a school function. No loitering in drugstores or soda shops was permitted, and smoking a cigarette would have meant being fired immediately.

In the early 1900s the rules required that a skirt be worn no more than 2 inches above the floor. Also, two petticoats were required. Only solid colors and no bright colors might actually be included in the contract.

Partly because of the rules and partly because of very low salaries, Winthrop graduates often wore their college navy and white uniforms in the classroom until they were literally worn out.

Louise Pettus is a retired Winthrop University history professor. Her column appears Sundays.

Sept. 15, 2002