

County Needed Only A Few To Keep Business In Order

By LOUISE PETTUS

The first York County government, beginning in 1785, needed few officials to carry out county business. The



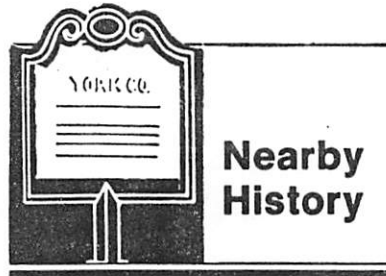
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sheriff, the county clerk, road overseers and a few justices of the quorum (later called magistrates) carried out county business following policies set by the grand jury.

By the 1850s, York District had extended the duties of the county clerk and had established new commissions, so that there was a Commission for the Poor. Each commission made a yearly report of its activities.

In the fall term of 1858, the grand jury received from the Commissioners for the Poor a list of nine York County citizens who had been committed to the state Lunatic Asylum in Columbia, along with a list of 16 paupers who were living at the Poor House on Thorn's Ferry Road between Yorkville and the Catawba River.

The county tax assessment allotted the poor of the county 25% of the general tax, \$2,181.12 in 1857. When the grand jury members inspected the Poor House, they reported the paupers were properly cared for and were comfortably housed, but adequate room



was not available.

Two paupers were living in the upstairs area of the overseer's house. It was suggested that the county build several more cottages.

Since the Poor House was part of a working farm (having on hand about 500 bushels of corn, a good garden, 24 hogs, two cows with calves, and two horses), it was relatively inexpensive to keep up. M.A. Hambright, the overseer, was praised for his good management.

The district paid the state \$50 for the yearly upkeep of each lunatic sent to the asylum.

The Commission for Public Buildings reported that \$1,415.08 was spent the previous year for work done on the courthouse and the jail. This included the cost of constructing a separate room on the courthouse grounds for the grand jury. Additional paper and bookcases were asked for. Increased county business was creating a need for more records.

Of all taxes collected, 15%, or \$1,308.67, was allotted for road

and bridge repair in 1857. Most of that amount went toward bridge repair, but part was for hauling rock, for "blacking milestones," and for "posts and fingerboards."

The road commissioners were elected from districts and were responsible for seeing that local citizens labored on the roads so many days a year or paid others to do so. A contract was awarded for a bridge over Crowder's Creek for \$1,620, almost all the allotment for roads and bridges.

In another matter, the grand jury acted on its own, without consultation with any other body. It prepared a petition for the S.C. legislature asking that body to "appropriate a sufficient amount of money to remove the free Negroes from our limits The free Negroes might be transported to Liberia, or any other point the legislature should dictate"

The grand jury added a strange recommendation: ". . . that the above Negroes be allowed the privilege of either choosing their masters at a certain price, that the amount so accruing for said sales be appropriated to remove the remainder, who may not wish to be sold." The petition was signed by E.A. Crenshaw, foreman, grand jury, York District. It was submitted to the state legislature by York County Rep. Edward Moore. The legislature tabled the motion.

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