

HISTORY'S CRAZY QUILT

By Louise Pettus

More "odds and ends" of local history from our files.

Both York and Lancaster counties have had a large number of gold mines, with Lancaster County having the largest gold mine in the eastern United States - the Haile Gold Mine. The method used to process gold is entirely different in each county.

In York County the gold is labeled "free gold," meaning that it is found as separate flakes or nuggets.

The Lancaster gold is combined with quartz or another metal, special equipment is needed to process it.

SUED FOR SLANDER

In one of York County's earliest suits for slander, John Davidson sued Oliver Wallace, a tavern keeper. The county court appointed three men to mediate the dispute.

Finding Wallace guilty of slander, the mediators had "acknowledge that what was said of Mr. Davidson was in the heat of passion and that he was sorry for it." The court decided that Davidson and Wallace would each pay one-half of the court costs.

BUSES ROLLED DURING WAR

During World War II, Rock Hill had seven bus routes in operation . . . Club, Stadium, Industrial, Arcade and East Main Street. The Ebenezer bus, for example, left downtown Rock Hill every hour on the hour from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. The return bus left Ebenezer 20 minutes after each hour to 10 p.m. The return bus left Ebenezer 20 minutes after each hour.

On Sundays only buses left downtown at 9, 12 and 2. On weekdays, buses ran at least once an hour on all routes.

SCHOOLS ISSUED RATION BOOKS

When new ration books were issued during World War II, citizens were instructed to go to schools between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. The books were issued by teachers acting as clerks. Each month, armed police carried the ration books to the schools and returned them to locked vaults in the evening.

WINTHROP'S 'ALL GIRLS' BAND

In 1940, Winthrop College had a 90 piece marching band billed as the "largest and most beautiful all girls band in the world. The band represented Winthrop and the state of South Carolina at the New York World's Fair of 1939-40.

LIBRARY ON RAILS

During the 1890s, Seaboard Airline Railway had a car set aside as a circulating library that regularly stopped at Van Wyck in Lancaster County. The library offered books that would interest farmers and provided order blanks for nursery trees (which would be shipped by rail). In 1899 one could buy cherry and pecan trees for 3 cents each.

And speaking of trains, all bridges and railway trestles on the Catawba River were washed out in the Great Flood of 1916. It took months for the Southern to rebuild the trestle bridge between Rock Hill and Fort Mill.

Meantime, all passengers and some freight were carried to the riverbanks by train and placed on rowboats. The railroad crews would row the boats to the opposite side where a transfer was made to a waiting train. Hundreds of people used the shuttle service every day.

YORK 'MARRIAGE MILL' ?

South Carolina did not officially record any marriages prior to July 1, 1911. York county Probate Judge E. Gettys Nunn wrote a bill in 1933 that was adopted by the state legislature allowing counties to officially record marriages that took place prior to July 1, 1911.

Judge Nunn said, "I am constantly receiving inquiries about marriage records that do not exist, these inquiries coming from all parts of the United States."

On Nov. 30, 1947, The Charlotte Observer printed a picture of Judge Nunn performing his 50,000th wedding in his 17th year in office.. The accompanying article written by Harper Gault, stated that weddings were performed around the clock. Nunn's daughter Mildred worked the midnight shift and ha performed more than 10,000 weddings.

By the end of 1963, York County had issued more than 175,000 marriage licenses . Judge Charles Nunn estimated that three quarters of the licenses were secured by couples who lived out of state. York had become a Gretna Green, or a "marriage mill," depending on how one looked at it.