

A Look Back At Mitchell County

Mitchell County's real estate aggregate value in 1870 was \$218,563. Value of land was put at \$217,071, and town property, \$1,492. Acres of land listed numbered 194,307.

Population

County population in 1870 was 4,705, of which 4,472 were white and 213 Negro. Bakersville township, including the town which was the county seat, had 1,101 residents.

County Officials

Gulridge Garland was clerk superior court; J.S. Garland, register of deeds; R.P. Burlison, coroner; C.C. McKinney, sheriff; Virgil S. Luske, 11th district solicitor; T.D. Vance; surveyor; W.A. Wilson, standard keeper, and William Sparks, treasurer. County commissioners were: J.B. Slagle, chairman, E.A. Hall, Spencer Barnett, Thomas C. Buchanan, and S.C. Phillips.

Townships and Post Offices

Townships were: Bakersville, Creed R. Anderson, clerk; Lunville, M. Winters; Grassy Creek, C.D. Steward; Red Hill, Reuben Garland; Snow Creek, Toe River, Cranberry, Little Rock Creek, Harrell's, and Brummet's Creek.

Churches

If every man, woman, and child in the county held membership in one of the churches the average membership would have been 96. Forty-nine churches were divided as follows: Nine Free-Will Baptist, 21 Missionary Baptist, 11 Methodist, and eight Northern Methodist.

Names of the Free-Will Baptist churches were: Red Hill, Toe River, Brummet's Creek, Bean's Creek, Spring Creek, Cub Creek, Squirrel Creek, Lynville, and North Toe River. Missionary Baptist churches were: Buck Mountain, Beech Mountain, Elk River, Yellow Mountain, Lynville, Mt. Pleasant, Brush Creek, Grassy Creek, Beaver Creek, Liberty Hill, Bear Creek, Bakersville, Cane Creek, Roan Mountain, Mine Creek, Lilly Branch, Big Rock Creek, Little Rock Creek, Fork Mountain, Providence, and Big Meadow.

Methodist churches were: Roan Mountain, Little Rock Creek, Big Rock Creek, Shiloh, Silver's, Snow Creek, Phillips, Beaver Creek Pishah, Piney Grove, and Bakersville. Northern Methodist churches included: Shiloh, Spring Creek, Little Rock Creek, Mine Creek, Snow Creek, Hunter's Chapel, Pishah, and Bakersville.

Ministers

Serving the many churches were the following ministers: Missionary Baptists, the Revs. David Ellis, John W. Buchanan, Stephen Buchanan, Wm. S. Buchanan, Leonard Buchanan, Jacob Burlison, S.M. Collis, James Collis, George Cook, J.P. Dickson, J.W. Duncan, J.M. Franklin, S.M. Green, B.M. Hoyle, Wm. D. Mace, Wm. H. Ollis, J.W. Putnam, John Sparks, Jacob Silver, Daniel Wilcox, and M.W. Winters. Open Communion Baptists were: the Revs. John B. Arrowood, S. D. Cox, J.S. Garland, S Hensley, N. Honeycutt, J.L. Ollis, John Ollis Eason Pate, Wm. Parson, and David Simmerly. The only Methodist minister listed was the Rev. Simon Forbes.

Miscellaneous

Only one hotel was operated: Bakersville, S.R. Hensley, proprietor

One manufacturer was listed: Cranberry Iron Co., C.W. Russell and Co., proprietor.

General Stores were owned by: Blalock and Riddle, S.R. Hensley, J.C. Howell, J.C. Keener, McKinney and Co., Simmerly and Son, and Young and Co.

Lawyers and Doctors

Practicing law were: J.W. Bowman and J.H. Green at Bakersville, and S.C. Vance, Grassy Creek.

There were five resident physicians: Drs. J.W. Blackburn, Simon Forbes R.B. Harrison, M.F. Penland, all of Bakersville, and Dr. M. Snipes, Grassy Creek.

Mines

Three mica mines were operated Point Pishah by Heap and Clapp, Buchanan Mica by Joseph K. Irby and Silver Mica by Head and Clapp. It was stated that there were isinglass mines, but names were not listed.

Mills

Four corn and saw mills were listed. They were operated by Bowman and Co., J.W. Bowman, G.D. Bailey, A.Burlison, Thos. Burlison, A.A. Wiseman, Josiah Baker, and L.C. Gouge.

Working Conditions

Owner of an iron and lumber business summarized conditions in this way:

"This company has not yet began operations much, except in lumber. The past year and present one, spent in improvements and getting ready for work. Owns a vast amount of magnetic iron ore and hard wood on 63,000 acres of land. Paid out for labor the past year \$12,000. Employ fifteen men Average wages \$1 per day for 10 hours."

Laborers views on conditions are summarized in this manner:

"Want of schools, low wages and short crops have run the farm laborers down to a low condition; they can't attend school if they had them or church for want of proper clothing."

"In the mica and iron mines in this country good hands get from 80 cents to \$1 per day, but they are not working full time now."

"Wages are low, and the miners are not able to sufficiently clothe their children to send them to school. Two hundred men at work at the (Cranberry) Mine. Work 10 hours per day at 80 cents per day. Lost 60 days last year from work. Have four in family and one at school. Am paid monthly in cash. Accumulated nothing last year."

"Mine hands in this county three years ago were paid from \$1 to \$2 per day; they now receive 75 to 80 cents per day. The Iron and Coal Company at Cranberry pay their ordinary labor but 30 cents per day in scrip, which is shaved by the merchants when cashed at about twenty percent. There are no labor organizations in this county."