

HISTORY OF TRAVELERS REST

MRS. CLAUDE GOODLETT

The territory around Travelers Rest, along with the rest of Greenville County, was a part of the Cherokee Nation until 1777 when the Indians signed a treaty ceding it to the state of South Carolina. That the Indians once inhabited the country around Travelers Rest is evidenced by the arrowheads and other artifacts which have been picked up from time to time. Mr. Terry T. Dill, a civil engineer, who has walked over more territory around Travelers Rest than perhaps anyone else, has observed many signs of early Indian occupancy. He says that Travelers Rest was once the meeting place for five Indian tribes. Several citizens of Travelers Rest remember hearing their relatives say that an Indian trail ran from the mountains through Travelers Rest to Georgia. That the road between the new Dan Manufacturing plant and the property of Mr. Goodlett and now called Hawkins Road was used by the Indians as a path for racing their horses is shown on old deeds of the property which list this as "Race Path Road." It is said to have been used as a racing road by later white settlers also.

The Indians and the few early white settlers had lived in comparative friendship in the early years, the latter trading for valuable furs trapped by the Indians. The white settlers had built a few forts and a group of rough people called cow drivers transported these furs to Augusta down old Augusta Road and to Charles Town, and drove their herds of horses and cattle along the Indian trails which led into the rough roads that connected the settlements and trading posts.

After the Revolution, immigrants from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and other states began to join earlier settlers from the lower part of the state in seeking the advantages of the upcountry. In the year 1784, many land grants were made in this part of the state, mainly to those who had participated in the Revolution. Among these grants are some on Enoree and Reedy Rivers which are near the Travelers Rest area. Among older families receiving grants or making very early purchases were Howard, Dill, Earle, Winn, Hopkins, Goodlett, Anderson, Stiles, Springfield, Benson, Coleman, Smith, Langston, Bradley, Montgomery, Roe, Watson,

Williams, Morgan, McElhanev, Bradley, Cleveland, Edwards, McCauley, Batson, Prince, Tubbs. Among these early settlers was Thomas Springfield who lived near Travelers Rest. He married Dicey Langston, Revolutionary War heroine, and they made their home about two miles from Travelers Rest almost directly across the road from Enoree Baptist Church. Dicey is buried in an old family graveyard a short distance away. Members of another family receiving land grants near Travelers Rest after the Revolutionary War service were William, James, and George Tubbs, who settled near the small mountain which was named for them and is still known as "Tubbs Mountain" by all citizens of Travelers Rest.

From the times of the early cow drivers, the roads through Travelers Rest were used to convey herds of cattle, horses, hogs, sheep, and even turkeys from the grasslands and corn and grain fields of Kentucky and Tennessee to South Carolina and Georgia. In 1840, Tennessee was the greatest corn-producing state in the union and many hogs were produced each year. These drivers continued to within memory of some of the now-living inhabitants of Travelers Rest, who recall having to get out of the road to keep from being trampled by these herds.

The droves of turkeys were of particular interest. There were usually from four to six hundred half-wild birds in a flock led by one old gobbler. The owner rode horseback in front, while two or three drivers followed on each side who kept the turkeys in line with long whips to which were often tied strips of red flannel. The flock made only about six or seven miles in a day, taking to the trees at night. Getting them down from their perches in the morning was something of a problem. According to old timers the old lead gobbler was coaxed down with a breakfast of corn or grain and the others followed. These flocks of turkeys and their drivers were looked forward to every year before Thanksgiving and Christmas by the people of Travelers Rest, who provided roosting places for them in groves nearby.

The droves of hogs, accompanied by hog callers and whip crackers, were equally interesting. Some were driven by professionals, but most of them were brought by their owners who were glad to take the trip from their homes in the back woods to the more exciting towns and cities. Since more than one hog driver was likely to be found camping in the place, each one had his

hogs marked by some distinctive sign such as a notch in the ear. Much ingenuity was displayed in the different patterns of these notches.

Campsites and places of rest had to be provided for these drivers, usually near a tavern and store. The men usually slept on the floor of the inn or tavern and their charges were driven into inclosures built for the purpose. In later years the mountaineers with their covered wagons also stopped at these campsites. There were several stopping places or campsites in and around Travelers Rest. Some of the drovers came across the mountains and down the road from Brevard and Caesars Head by way of the old Jones Gap Road as well as the Buncombe Road. There was a very large well just across the road from the present site of Brown's Feed and Seed Store where hog and cattle drivers and wagoners stopped to refresh themselves as well as their charges, and found camping places nearby.

Many old stories are told of these places. It is said that one family had a barn in which the hogs were driven for the night. The barn had a trap door in the floor, and during the night the owner would open the door and let a couple of hogs fall through to be killed by him later, after the drover had gone on with his drove. Also, it is said this innkeeper would have his colored boys catch a few of the most distinctively marked hogs and weigh them during the night. In the morning when the hog drovers awoke in a jovial mood, betting would be started to see who could come closest to guessing the weight of certain hogs. As these hogs had been previously weighed during the night, the innkeeper always came nearest and pocketed the bets.

Another story told by Mrs. Nora Roe, that on one occasion a horse drover from Tennessee came through the settlement on his way to Aiken to dispose of his fine horses. This accomplished, he returned by the same route carrying the large sum of money he had realized from the sale. He was robbed and killed, but it could not be ascertained by whom. His brothers came from Tennessee to see what was preventing his return. On investigation, they found his saddle hanging on the back porch of a house in Travelers Rest, but were unable to prove how it got there. It was said that at night you could hear his ghost going along the road dragging the chain with which he had been hanged.

Mr. Spurgeon Stroud of Tigerville relates that there was a certain man who was a great gambler and loved to play cards with the drovers and travelers. His son played the fiddle, and while the game was in progress would take his place behind the man against whom his father was playing. By playing in a certain manner he would signal his father as to the kind of hand his opponent had.

MODES OF TRAVEL CHANGE

Following the post-Revolutionary War era modes of travel improved as well as the rough roads. The stagecoaches, often drawn by four horses, began to run from Asheville to Greenville Village and on via the old Augusta Road to Augusta (New Hamburg) and via the old Laurens Road to Charles Town. The following stage schedules were copied from the *Greenville Mountaineer* by Dr. J. J. Lesesne, former president of Erskine College:

[Feb. 6, 1830] Stage to Columbia no good — only once a week over a fairly good road and takes three days to make the trip [only 110 miles].

[Sept. 3, 1831] Mail from Columbia carried on Stage of two horses — a very shaky coach and always late. Letters three days in arriving from Columbia — comes twice a week.

Buncombe Stage to Asheville very bad — two horses once a week to Asheville. Augusta Stage well conducted!

[Oct. 6, 1832] Stages on mail routes lately expedited. Columbia stage now runs three times a week instead of two; to Asheville two instead of one.

[May 11, 1833] Charleston papers get here now in something less than three days by Columbia. If by Augusta, they take seven or eight days.

Two years ago Charleston papers took 10 or 12 days to get here [i.e., to Greenville].

[June 8, 1833] Charleston mail due every Monday, Thursday and Saturday. Asheville mail due every Tuesday and Saturday.

Many have inquired as to how the town of Travelers Rest got its name. Some have thought that visitors from the low country seeking the cool of the mountains gave it this name. Travelers Rest received its name before these visitors began to come, however. From the Post Office Department in Washington, D. C.,

we learn that the Travelers Rest Post Office was established October 10, 1808, and was officially listed by that name at that time. The early cow and hog drivers looking for a resting place for themselves and their tired herds and finding it at the foot of the mountains began to call it "Travelers Rest," and the name was immediately adopted as appropriate. When the first clumsy stagecoaches began to run from Asheville to Augusta or Columbia and vice versa they also paused to allow their passengers to rest here and gladly accepted the name. Later when summer visitors began to come by train or stage from the low country they also thought the name so lovely and suitable.

From the records sent from Washington we learn that the first postmaster appointed to the Travelers Rest office October 10, 1808, was Thomas Edwards and that he was succeeded by his son, Peter, in 1810 and Jesse in 1811. The map of Greenville County published in *The Atlas of the State Of South Carolina* by Robert Mills in 1820 shows the location of the Edwards place at the intersection of Rutherford and Asheville Roads. This spot is at the former Chaney Stroud place now owned by Mr. J. M. Johnson on the Poinsett Highway, six miles above Travelers Rest near its intersection with Highway 14 from Tigerville. Mr. Johnson identifies the small stream near his home as the Panthers Branch mentioned in the old deeds from the Edwards to Chaney Stroud. The first old house or inn and store owned by the Edwards were burned down and Chaney Stroud built the old house which is still standing near the highway. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Spurgeon Stroud of Tigerville say that there was a large enclosure and barns built in the time of the Edwards and used by Mr. Stroud as accommodations for the cow and hog drovers. We do not have official record that the post office was located at the Edwards home but there were no separate post office buildings at that time. The mail was brought by horseback or stagecoach to homes or small stores and we know that the Edwards place was important enough to be shown on Mill's *Atlas* map of 1820 and undoubtedly contained the post office.

The post office was moved a couple of miles down the road to the home or store of Philip Maroney in 1811, also shown on the Mills' *Atlas* map. It was probably about the area of Belleview where a later post office was known to have been located for a number of years. Mr. Maroney, postmaster, was thought to have been a relative

of the Edwards as there is a deed on record showing that he bought land from John Edwards in 1824.

On September 12, 1818, Mr. Joseph Otis was appointed postmaster of Travelers Rest and the post office was again shifted a little further down the Asheville Road to Mr. Otis's home. It is shown on Mills' *Atlas* map of 1820. It was near the later home of Major Lynch. The road bore somewhat to the right touching the Tubbs Mountain area. Deeds in the courthouse show that the Otis property was in this area.

The Major Lynch place was one of the very early stopping or resting places for travelers by foot, horseback or stagecoach. Major Henry Ellis Lynch came from the Charleston area. (He is said to have been of the family line of Thomas Lynch, Jr., of Charleston, one of the four signers of the Declaration of Independence from South Carolina.) He bought 120 acres of land at the corner of Asheville and Tigerville Roads from James Springfield, son of Dicey Langston and Thomas Springfield, on October 9, 1829. With his bride, the former Delia King, Major Lynch is said to have arrived in Travelers Rest driving his fine pair of horses tandem-style. He built the large fourteen-room, three-story house which was used as an inn and also built a store a short distance away and a stable where the horses of the travelers were kept. Enclosures were also provided for the cattle and hogs of the drivers. The old inn, still standing, was remodeled by the Morgans who removed the top story which contained the small rooms opening on long halls which were rented to travelers. This place was known far and wide as a resting place for weary travelers and was most appropriate to the name "Travelers Rest." The Major Lynch place passed into the hands of his son-in-law, Col. S. S. Crittenden, who continued to operate it as an inn for some time but moved to the city of Greenville and eventually sold the place to Rev. D. B. Talley, a Baptist minister.

Stephen Stanley Crittenden, son of Dr. John and Sara Crittenden, met and married Eliza, only child of Major Lynch, in 1855 and made his home in the Travelers Rest area. Col. Crittenden served as postmaster at Travelers Rest for thirteen years and then moved to Greenville where he served as postmaster for several years. He was author of *The Greenville Century Book*, which is very valuable to students of the county history.

After the Crittendens moved to Greenville, the stage coach stop was moved to the home of Col. Robert Anderson about a mile further down the Buncombe Road. The Col. Anderson place had been built by Chevis Montgomery of Spartanburg in 1851. Montgomery, a cousin of Minerva Bradley, purchased a part of the Bradley land and built a large fourteen-room house in 1851, which he operated as an inn during the Civil War years and afterward until 1873 when he sold it to Col. Robert Wright Anderson. The house, now the home of Col. Anderson's grandson, Robert LeRoy Anderson, is still standing in good condition except that the outside kitchen has been torn down.

Col. Robert W. Anderson was born in Laurens District at Waterloo, South Carolina, on August 13, 1828, being one among the sixteen children of Capt. George and Millie Smith Anderson. This family furnished eleven sons to the Confederate Army. Col. Anderson married Mary McCullough, daughter of Col. Joseph McCullough of the Princeton section of lower Greenville County, and they originally made their home near Greenwood. While residing there they became parents of four little daughters. When all four died while quite young, three within three weeks of each other, Col. and Mrs. Anderson decided to leave their home for the more healthful climate of Travelers Rest. They bought the large house which Mr. Chevis Montgomery had built in 1851 and moved into it in 1873. They continued to operate this large and commodious house as an inn, and many people from the "low country", especially from Charleston came up by train and spent from a few weeks to the entire summer there. Mrs. Anderson was noted for setting a splendid table which the guests enjoyed along with the mountain air, good water, and pleasant company. Col. Anderson also operated the Travelers Rest post office for nine years. His inn was also the stage stop. It is said that the stage driver would size up the passenger list and give as many toots on his stage horn as there were to be guests for dinner so that places might be readied at the table. Mr. and Mrs. Anderson were parents of the following children: Mrs. B. F. Goodlett (Fannie), Mrs. Tom Roe (Maude), Mrs. Edward Hillhouse (Minnie), and James Robert Anderson.

After the death of Col. Anderson in 1898, his daughter, Mrs. Minnie Anderson Hillhouse, who had married Edward Young Hillhouse, son of Dr. John Peter Hillhouse, bought out the interest

of the other heirs and increased the capacity and scope of the big house. As there was a fine large spring near the house it was named the Spring Park Inn and the park near the spring was called Spring Park. The Carolina, Knoxville and Western Railway train called "The Swamp Rabbit" passed very near the inn. It made a stop there and passengers who had come from distant points were able to alight near the door. Excursions were run out from Greenville to the picnic grounds and many gay times were had. Seeing the need for more recreational facilities, the railroad built a large pavilion on the Hillhouse property and all manner of outings, church picnics, ball games were enjoyed there, even dancing on Saturday nights. Mr. Ed Hillhouse was always very active in politics and it became an established custom for the political campaign speaking round to begin at the Spring Park. Special trains were run out from Greenville to accommodate those who were not able or did not wish to come by way of horse and buggy. Those activities continued for many years, the inn being full of guests and the park full of pleasure seekers.

Mr. Ed and Mrs. Minnie Hillhouse were well known over the whole of Greenville County. During World War I, Mrs. Hillhouse operated a canteen for the soldiers in Greenville. Later she operated a lunch room and recreation center in the old Record Building for use of the business women of Greenville.

SCHOOLS OF TRAVELERS REST

From early times the residents of the Travelers Rest area were interested in the progress of their community and realized that education was essential to that progress. Before the advent of public school, many families employed private tutors for their children. Present residents remember hearing their parents speak of these tutors. Col. Robert Anderson maintained a small building in his yard to which his children and those of a few of his neighbors repaired for instruction by a tutor.

The first school available to the community was a log cabin of one room in which one teacher labored to instruct children of several grades for a few months each year. This building stood on land donated by Major Henry Lynch, one of the early residents and was located about where the residence of George Coleman, Sr., now stands. It is said to have had slab benches. It was a private school and a small fee was charged. The late Miss Jennie

Coleman said that this school, as well as ones in the nearby communities of Pleasant Retreat, White Horse, Bates Old Field (Near the Coleman Heights development), and others were taught by school masters who did not receive much in the way of salary and who "boarded around" in the homes of the pupils for several weeks at a time. Some of these teachers remembered by Miss Jennie were Mr. John Robert Plyler, father of Dr. John Plyler, former president of Furman University, Rev. A. B. Langston, Mr. T. V. Farrow, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Henry Southern and Squire Billy West.

The school session first ran about four months and later was expanded into six or seven months. The session was terminated in April so that the children could aid in the cultivation of the field crops and was resumed for six weeks in the summer when there was not much work to be done. It did not open again until the cotton had been picked in the fall. Numerous residents of Travelers Rest recall going to private schools used to supplement these short term schools.

TRAVELERS REST ACADEMY

About the year 1883, Mr. Robert Anderson, Col. Stanley Crittenden, Tyre Williams, Thomas B. Benson and J. D. Cooper decided that a larger and better school should be built. They therefore, as trustees, formed a stock company for a school called the "Travelers Rest Academy" and sold stock in the same. Three acres of land was secured from the Crittenden children, heirs of their grandfather, Major Henry Lynch, at the site of the present Peterson Lumber Company.

The trustees mentioned, built a three-room frame structure, having one long room in front with two smaller ones in the rear with adjustable walls. When three teachers were available all three rooms were used, but when only two teachers were employed the walls were pushed back. The school was heated by wood stoves and was considered a very nice building, even having a stage for the Friday afternoon "speeches" of the children.

It was continued as a private school for ten years but began to be called the "T. R. High School" as is shown from an old paper of Mr. Anderson dated 1893, "To Stockholders of Travelers Rest High School." The school was turned over to the board of education of the county in the early part of the century. The first

graduating class to receive certified high school diplomas was that of 1911. Three of these graduates now living in the Travelers Rest and Greenville area are Carrie Goodlett Holtzclaw of Travelers Rest, Roy Hunt of Greenville, and Lula Coleman Talley of White Horse Road.

By 1914 this frame building had become inadequate. It was torn down and a four room brick building was erected. Later more classrooms and a gymnasium were added which provided twelve classrooms and a nice auditorium.

TRAVELERS REST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The building of a much larger and more commodious school was begun and completed in time for the fall session of 1930 to begin. At the time, C. P. Rice was superintendent and Sloan Westmoreland, principal. In 1953 a six-room annex to the school was built for the primary grades. At the present time there are four first grades and four second grades there and on the second floor. In 1951 the schools of Greenville County were consolidated into one district — the Greenville County School District.

In 1956 crowded conditions at the Travelers Rest School necessitated the building of a new high school, and the Travelers Rest School was devoted exclusively to the primary and grammar grades and became officially known as the Travelers Rest Elementary School with Mr. Williams as principal. It has continued to grow. Some changes have been made in the physical plant, the school cafeteria now occupying the former athletic room and the space in the basement formerly used as a cafeteria now being used as a band room and classroom.

HIGH SCHOOL

A handsome new high school was built on Watson Road on a thirty-five acre lot, formerly the Howard property, in 1956. This school has twenty-five rooms in two wings, a modern cafeteria which uses five cooks and two dietitians, a band room, choral room, executive wing, room for full-time counselor, health room, and teachers' lounge. It also has a modern gymnasium, dressing rooms, and splendid football field. It has a good physical education program, efficient business education department, home economics department, agriculture department, science department, and industrial education department. An art department is to be added

next year. It has a good library of which Mrs. Mary Coleman Thomason had charge from 1956 until 1981. Mrs. Margaret Turner is now librarian. The school is now (1966) a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

ATHENS SCHOOL

Greenville County Negro schools prior to consolidation in 1951, with the exception of the one that was known as Travelers Rest Colored School, were all one and two teacher schools. Travelers Rest had five teachers. Athens Elementary, our present school, was built in 1954. The school was named for the old Athens division of Travelers Rest.

The town of Travelers Rest had been issued a charter by the South Carolina legislature in 1891, but due to jealousy between the upper and lower parts of the town as well as a school dispute, the upper portion drew out and formed a separate town called Athens in the year 1893. There were even two railroad stations for the Swamp Rabbit Railroad. Mr. John Plyler, father of the late Dr. J. L. Plyler, was town clerk of the town of Athens and the town council book which he kept is preserved. The differences between the two parts of town were settled and the whole area reassumed the name of Travelers Rest in 1900.

Among the physicians serving Travelers Rest have been Dr. John Peter Hillhouse, Dr. M. L. West, Dr. Charles Benson, Dr. B. J. Goodlett, Dr. S. R. Gaston, Drs. T. E. and Stanley Coleman, Dr. Landrum McCarrell, Dr. John Holliday, and Dr. James Barnett. Of these Dr. Goodlett served the area for fifty years, longer than any other.

The churches of the Travelers Rest area have played an important part in its development. Reedy River Baptist Church is the oldest of these churches, having been established in 1778 at a point about three miles above Travelers Rest. It was the mother of other early Baptist churches, including Euoree, established in 1851, Ebenezer, established in 1835. There have been four church buildings of the Reedy River Church, first 1800; the first one at the present location in 1819; second one in 1873; third one in 1910; present one in 1949. The educational building was added in 1957. The new educational building is just completed. In the early years of the church there were numerous colored members, but most of them left to form churches of their own about 1865.

However, there are several colored people buried in the adjoining cemetery. The original records of the church beginning in 1799 have been preserved and are kept in a vault at the church. A history of the church has been compiled from these old records and other sources by W. Mann Batson.

In addition to the early churches mentioned, others in the area are Jackson Grove Methodist, founded in 1832; Travelers Rest Methodist, founded in 1895; First Baptist, founded in 1913; Trinity Presbyterian, founded in 1933; and Clearview Baptist, founded in 1953.

Travelers Rest has numerous active fraternal and civic organizations including Cooper Masonic Lodge, Eastern Star, Lions Club, Civitan Club, Jaycees, Travelers Rest and Mountain Laurel Garden Clubs, Travelers Rest Study Club, Business and Professional Women's Club, JayceeEts and Travelers Rest Community Club.

There are several industries within the town or adjacent to it, including Renfrew Bleachery, Zonolite Vermiculite Company, Palmetto Garment Company, Dann Manufacturing Company, Emb-Tex Corporation; also, Duke Power Company branch and Southern Bell Telephone branch.

The old town charter having expired, a new one was issued in 1959 with George Coleman as first mayor. Dr. James Barnett is serving as mayor at the present time, 1967, and he and the town council, as well as interested citizens, have great plans for the future development of the town and area. With two water mains running through the town giving access to the unsurpassed mountain water and a sanitary system being commenced soon, there is no limit to the town's possible expansion which should make its future history a fine continuation of its interesting past.