History of
Anson County
North Carolina
1750-1976

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WADESBORO, NORTH CAROLINA
1976
The late Lee S. Hart of Wadesboro, a native of Ohio, spent his life in railroading, working up from track layer and brakeman to conductor. He began working at the age of eighteen. By 1910, he had worked with the Norfolk and Western and the Chicago and Alton, later the Gulf Mobile and Ohio, and he was laying tracks for Fries' road at Norwood in Stanly County. He said in an interview in the 1960's that Fries later leased 48% of the road to Atlantic Coast Line, and 49% to Norfolk and Western. The Southbound connected with the Atlantic Coast Line at Florence, South Carolina. This little track would become part of the east-west and north-south connections from Wadesboro with the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard.

At the time of his interview, Hart was the only living member of the second crew that built the road. He recalled Mrs. Annie Rainwater's boarding house, which served railroad personnel and travelers near the station. Many good home-cooked meals were served and enjoyed by railroad workers. He had a tragic experience at the Rainwater place one day, he added. While on the porch, he saw one of his fellow workers, Stamp Stewart of Roanoke, Virginia, drop dead.

Hart was about ready to retire when he talked with the author. He recalled that Francis H. Fries, the banker, was in on the railroad project, but it was Henry E. Fries who went to all the railroad conventions and had a wonderful time. He described H. E. as the one who carried the laboring oar.

Hart also told of finding a grave in Davidson County, while they were excavating for right of way on the farm of H. L. Holmes in Healing Township. A. K. Lookabill ran onto the remains of one Jonathan Conger, one of the earlier settlers, according to the date on the gravestone. The right of way was marked to go 'right through' the old graveyard. The grave was described as six feet deep with a vault. The skeleton was intact, its arms parallel to the body as was the old custom. Its hair was well preserved. The stone stated that the man had died May 8, 1793, 116 years before the grave was discovered. His date of birth was given as January 22, 1732; he died at the age of sixty-one years, three months and sixteen days. The following epitaph was inscribed on the stone:

Remember man, as you pass by
As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now so must you be
Prepare for death and follow me.