

The Historical Society

THE YEAR 2007 IS RACING BY AND WE'RE DOING OUR BEST TO KEEP UP WITH IT

SPRING – WORKDAY

In early April, a very successful work day took place at the Maynard-Pearson House. The team of workers divided into two to accomplish the many jobs that needed to be done. *Inside*, Margaret Francis and Buddy Holland got right to work cleaning the house and putting things in order. *Outside*, Brian McCullough, Pina Maynard, Harry and Shirley Beasley, and Judy Miles took on the daunting task of the yard and gardens. New plants have been added, and we are looking forward to a plant sale next spring. Thanks to all of you who worked so hard to make the Maynard-Pearson House even better than ever.

SPRING – PEAKFEST

The Apex Historical Society again took an active part in the annual Apex Peakfest on May 5. The weather was cool that day, but we had a good number of visitors both to the caboose and to the tent. Sales of historical mementos went well throughout the day.

Special thanks to Buddy Holland and Harry Beasley for putting up the tent.

Special thanks also to our workers in the tent throughout the day: Laraine Benhke, Ann Yeaman, Ginger Bate, Betty Coleman, Barbara Mills, Jan Brooks, Lydia Smith, and Laverne Seagroves.

SUMMER – ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Mark your calendars and save the date: August 19 from 3 to 5 PM at the Maynard-Pearson House. This year we will be featuring home-made ice cream again, and four people have already volunteered to make some. It is a great way to spend a hot summer Sunday afternoon with friends.....and especially when you can also enjoy home ice cream as well.

This year, we will be presenting the Preservationist of the Year Award at the Ice Cream Social.

Come along for a great summer Sunday afternoon at the Historical Society.

AUTUMN – Yes, it will soon be that time too. While you have your calendars out, make sure you mark October 6, and save the date for our annual picnic.

WINTER – Well, it's still really autumn, but it's after Thanksgiving so we can think of it as winter.

Our major fundraiser of the year will take place on December 2. It is our annual Home Tour. Judy Miles is chair this year and is already working on increasing the number of homes from last year. She will need people to chair a number of committees, so be prepared to volunteer your services. Two committees already have chairs: *Reception* will be chaired by Mary Sue and Pete Lane, and the *Sweet Shoppe* will be chaired by Mary Petersen.

We all look forward to the Home Tour and hope that the more people who get involved, the better it will be.

A FEW SHORT NEWS NOTES

- The Maynard-Pearson House has received, from the Eva Perry Library, the Atlas stand that was originally in the Apex Library when it was at the depot.
- The Board is working on a brochure for the Society and hope to have it completed by late summer.
- Some great prints of Apex, including one of the Maynard-Pearson House, are available at The Rusty Bucket on Salem Street.
- Steve Hennessey is still hoping for personal recollections on the Apex "fire" October 2006 to incorporate in an article for the Historical Society. So far one response has been received, but he would like as many as possible to make the article comprehensive and meaningful. He can be reached at spennessey@bellsouth.net.

Heart of Apex Swept by Fire
The Total Loss is Estimated to be From \$15,000 to \$60,000
The Insurance \$21,000
Reprinted by Permission of Denise Rogers, News and Observer

Nine Buildings, Including Merchant and Farmers Bank, are Totally Destroyed by Fire—All Contained Business Enterprises, Except One, This Being the Residence of Postmaster Hudson—Citizens Awakened Early Yesterday Morning to Find Heart of Town in Grip of Fire—Raleigh Department Summoned, But No Water Supply Available—Origin of Fire Unknown—Town Will Be Rebuilt.

(Staff Correspondence.)

Apex, June 12 [1911].—Awakened by the screaming of a locomotive whistle, the population of Apex turned out this morning at 1:30 o'clock to find the heart of the town in the grip of a destructive fire. From windows and doors flames belched forth, to be caught up by the wind and borne onward in their mad pursuit. Buildings yielded, reeled and fell into ruins, while citizens stood by, helpless to check the flames with buckets of water, the only means at their disposal.

There were nine buildings totally destroyed and the total loss by the fire is estimated from \$50,000 to \$60,000, while the insurance on the destroyed property was only \$21,000. Of the nine buildings destroyed eight were occupied by business enterprises, while one was the beautiful residence of Postmaster S. V. Hudson. Besides these, other buildings were damaged by the flames and much property was injured.

The Origin of the Fire Unknown.

The origin of the fire is unknown. It is supposed to have started in the room of Mr. J. W. Jenks, who ran a butcher shop

in a building on the corner of Salem and Chatham streets, owned by the Apex Land and Improvement Company. It is believed by some that the fire was started by matches ignited by rats, while others advance the theory that it was due to a cigar or cigarette stump. So far there is no conclusive evidence of any means by which the fire may have started. Several representative citizens were questioned today as to the probability of the fire's having been started by an incendiary, but all stated that they did not believe there was any foul play connected with it. An investigation, however, will be made by the authorities.

Beyond Control When Discovered.

The fire is supposed to have started about 1:15 o'clock this morning and was beyond control when the citizens were awakened at 1:30 o'clock by the whistle of the engine of a Seaboard Air Line train. The engineer, seeing the flames, blew the whistle long and loud in order to wake up the townspeople.

Citizens Turn Out With Buckets.

When the citizenship turned out a desperate effort was made to check the flames and all worked like Trojans with buckets of water, but this did little or no good. A phone message was sent to Raleigh and Chief Lumsden made preparations to have the Raleigh fire department come out, but it was learned that there were no means of securing water with which to fight the fire. Chief Lumsden, however, came to the scene in his automobile, reaching here about four o'clock.

Fire Spreads Rapidly.

Consuming the frame building in which it originated, the fire swept on to Mr. B. H. Pate's building, next door, in which was located a barber shop; then to the Apex Bottling Works, and on to Mr. W. H. Harward's general store, across the street. Mr. R. J. Bolling's grocery store was the next to catch after which the flames spread to Mr. A. V. Baucom's drug store, then to the Merchants' and Farmers' bank, which was a two story brick building. The vaults containing between five and six thousand dollars in cash were removed from the burning building and taken to the building of the Apex Mule and Supply Company, where the bank resumed business today with Mr. J. R. Cunningham as cashier.

H. C. Olive Co.'s general mercantile store was the next to catch on fire, then Mr. B. V. Hudson's residence across the street. Mr. Hudson managed to save most of his furniture.

All these buildings were totally destroyed, while the fire injured several other buildings.

Summary of Loss in Buildings and Stock.

When seen this afternoon several of the leading citizens estimated the loss as being:

- Building of Apex Land and Improvement Company, \$2,500; \$760 insurance.
- B. H. Pate's building \$1,000; no insurance.
- Apex Bottling Works, \$1,000; no insurance.
- W. H. Harward's general store, \$15,000; \$7,800 insurance.
- R. J. Bolling's store, \$1,500; \$800 insurance.
- A. V. Baucom's drug store, \$8,000; \$5,400 insurance.

- Merchants' and Farmers' Bank, \$2,000; \$1,400 insurance.
- H. C. Olive Co.'s store, \$7,500; \$4,500 insurance.
- S. V. Hudson's residence, \$1,200; \$800 insurance.

Other Damage by the Fire.

Besides the above there was considerable other damage done by the destructive fire. The stock of Pate and Company was damaged to the extent of \$1,760[?], while that of the Watkins-Seymour Hardware Company was damaged to the extent of \$5,000. Mr. S. T. Bennett's stock was damaged by \$1,000, the loss being covered by insurance.

The handsome two-story brick building of Sellars & Mason was damaged to the extent of \$1,000.

The library of Attorney Percy J. Olive was totally destroyed, the loss amounting to \$1,500, there being about \$750 insurance. The fixtures in the office of Drs. R. W. Johnson and J. C. Mann, valued at several hundred dollars were destroyed, the amount being half covered with insurance.

Mr. Percy J. Olive's automobile was burned, also the shed in which it was kept, the loss amounting to \$800.

The Seaboard Airline water tank was also burned.

The Whole Town Threatened.

For a time early this morning it looked like the whole town was going to be swept away by the flames, but the fire was gotten under control about four o'clock.

Three Injured Slightly.

One remarkable fact is that no one was seriously injured during the conflagration. Three, however, were slightly injured [sic] by falling buckets and glass, these being Mr. Harvey McKee, Mr. Jesse Norris and Rev. J. H. Edwards.

Town Records Safe.

The town records were kept in a safe in the store of H. C. Olive & Co., Mr. L. S. Olive being one of the commissioners. The safe was removed, but had not been opened this afternoon. In fact there were numbers of safes strewn about the streets.

Some of the stores destroyed were most up to date and carried big lines of goods, all of which were destroyed.

Desolate Scene.

This afternoon Salem street presented a desolate scene, the destructive fire having dug a huge hole in the very heart of the town. Groups of men stood here and there, discussing the town's loss. The street was strewn with remnants of burned fixtures and fragments of property that had been in the destroyed buildings. Few walls were left standing, as all of the buildings except the bank building and that occupied by Baucom's drug store were of wood. Here and there the fire still burned, while smoke rose from the ruins. In the street lay telephone wires, the poles having been burned down.

Will Rebuild Many Buildings.

Undaunted by their loss, the business men of Apex will proceed at once, it is

said, to rebuild the business section of the city. Many new and better buildings will be erected in the place of those destroyed by the fire. The Merchants and Farmers Bank will at once erect a new building and ere long the town will again take on that progressive spirit which has marked it in the past.

A Progressive Town.

With a population of about 1,500 and situated in Wake county, fifteen miles southwest of Raleigh, Apex is a wide-awake place and very accessible, being on the main line of the Seaboard Air Line and the Durham and Southern. The town is full of progressive people, and it is the commercial centre of the community, with a great future before it. The location is ideal and the town gets its name from its location, being situated on an "apex" sure enough it is high and has good drainage. No doubt the progressive citizens will get together in the near future and have a water supply constructed. One gentleman said today "the loss was enough to build a modern water works for our town."

A Glimpse of New Apex.

The representative of the News and Observer went this afternoon over the residence section of the town. Everywhere were seen plans of progress. Situated in the residence section of the town there is a modern brick graded school surrounded by dwelling houses of modern type. The town is well laid off and has many streets and ideal housing lots. Truly, there is a great future before Wake county's little town of Apex.

The Dispatch...a publication of the Apex Historical Society. Distribution is to all members of the Society. Co-Editors: Stephen Hennessey; Hope Blackford. Articles may be submitted to the editors via e-mail to: <sphennessey@bellsouth.net>.

APEX HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

President, Judy Miles
(362-3268; <annmiles2006@yahoo.com>)
Vice President, John Pearson
(210-3117 <jwpearson@att.net>)
Secretary, Mary Peterson
(363-4817 <mpete427@yahoo.com>)
Treasurer, Marion Smith
(362-6618; <mhsmith@wakemed.org>)

BOARD MEMBERS

Jan Brooks (469-5900 <janbmsu>)
Shirley Fiorentino (303-2939 <frankfiorentino@aol.com>)
Mary Sue Lane (3626318 <mrlane@mindspring.com>)
Diane Long (362-8097; <diane@forestduke.com>)
Mack Thorp (630-5600 <therustybucket@mindspring.com>)

<http://apexhisoc.freesevers.com>

Apex Historical Society
PO Box 506
Apex, NC 27502