

Early Downtown Roseboro - A History of Firsts

From tiny cross-roads, to bustling post war Middle American town, to charming village-like bedroom community, Roseboro, NC has grown through many phases since its small start in 1889.

That year Benjamin Harrison succeeded Grover Cleveland as President. France inaugurated the highest man-made structure on earth, the Eiffel Tower. The odious Adolf Hitler is born. The Starry Night is painted and framed by Vincent van Gogh. And the first issue of The Wall Street Journal is published in New York. There are just 42 states in the Union when the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad built a line between Fayetteville and Wilmington. Starting with just a single store, Roseboro would sprout up like many small towns, near the tracks. In May of 1890 a post office was established in Roseboro, and the town was official incorporated in 1891. In 1909, the Bank of Roseboro opened – the first bank to open in Sampson County, and notably the only bank in Sampson County to survive the Great Depression. Also a first for Sampson County was Tart & West Druggist. The drug store, founded by DW Tart, would later be owned and operated by the West family in Roseboro for nearly 100 years.

Roseboro also lays claim to the first Auto Dealer in Sampson County, Underwood Motor Company. The town grew and so too did its people. A sound education had been an afterthought for many families until the late 1800's. It was about that time that a 50 year old William Street Brewer was named Superintendent of Sampson County Schools. Professor Brewer and his wife Respie would have a son, James Street Brewer, in 1895; and that son would later open and operate what effectively would be Sampson County's first hospital. The Brewer-Starling Clinic opened in 1937. With rooms equipped for overnight stays, trained medical staff 24 hours a day, an operating room, its own X-Ray room, several examination rooms and offices for its two doctors, Roseboro's Brewer-Starling Clinic was the most modern, well equipped medical facility in the county right up to 1950.

Dr. J. Street Brewer graduated from Wake Forest College in 1917 and then attended Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. Dr. W. Plato Starling graduated from UNC and attended the Medical College of Virginia. The two doctors would return home and eventually establish the Brewer-Starling Clinic. The clinic served the needs of the community for nearly 40 years before closing in 1976.

The Bank of Roseboro was managed by beloved C.D. Dubose. During the Great Depression, Dubose managed to keep the Bank of Roseboro open while others closed. At one point, the Bank of Roseboro was the only bank to remain open in Sampson County. One story is that Dubose, concerned for the financial well-being of the community, asked several prominent businesses and families to not withdraw more money than they needed. So trusted was Debose that his personal guarantee to depositors not only kept the bank open, but a second branch was opened in Clinton.

The Bank of Roseboro would later merge with First Citizens Bank & Trust Co, and while the location would change, the town of Roseboro would be continuously served by a bank beginning in 1909 until today.

Roseboro and its people have a wonderful, rich history; first in many respects. And Roseboro also has a bright future ahead. A community that respects it's past and prepares for the future, town leaders and the business community have worked hard to improve many facets of the town.

Nearly 3 years ago the Town of Roseboro and the business community embarked on an ambitious endeavor to improve and promote the community. That hard work has paid off in many ways. Roseboro has emerged a better community and more closely bonded together. If you haven't visited Roseboro recently take a moment to stop by.

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