

Kershaw 130 Years Ago: A Timeline for 1891

By Miles Gardner

1891 — Kershaw Mercantile moved into its first brick structure, a two-story building with an elevator.

March 1891 — A fire started in John R. Ashe's store from cotton samples but was contained.,

1 April 1891 — Newspaper announced that Warden T.J. Gregory planned to build a new house on North (now Church) Street.

15 April 1891 — "The State" ran an article on "The Magic Town of Kershaw." It announced progress on the railroad from Bishopville to Kershaw, an increase in the cost of lots in town over the past two years from \$20-\$40 to \$150-\$500, plans to erect a \$5,000 hotel and a Presbyterian church, and wrote that the Baptists would begin meeting in their new church building the following Sunday. Over 1,000 bales of cotton were being held in the town's warehouses waiting better prices. "Kershaw—a giant of three years—is building up rapidly."

19 April 1891 — An article in "The State" praised Kershaw as a "good market for naval stores" and noted that the previous week had seen more than a carload of turpentine and rosin consigned (a carload consisting of 60 barrels). A barrel of turpentine sold for \$15 to \$22. The article also noted a new bridge completed over Little Lynches on the road from the Haile and Brewer Mines and the completion of Manager Thies' house at HGM, "as fine a residence as there is between Rock Hill and Camden."

28 April 1891 — "The State" announced that Kershaw planned to erect a town hall.

28 April 1891 — The Knights of Pythias met for the first time in their new "castle" and adopted the historical name of Hanging Rock Lodge, No. 42.

2 May 1891 — A six-month-old twin, child of Kershaw businessman Daniel McDonald and his wife, Julia Alice Sowell, died and was buried in what became Kershaw Cemetery—the only marked grave there for someone who died that year. The child's gender is not known, but its twin, Charlie Maurice McDonald, died on his 20th birthday in 1910. Their younger brother, B.D. McDonald, was an influential businessman in Kershaw for many decades.

5 May 1891 — Kershaw reported two new dry goods stores had opened that week, J.A. Hilton & Co. and C.J. Drye & Co. Twelve bales of cotton had been sold on the previous Saturday, 35 barrels of rosin and 42 barrels spirits of turpentine (still more barrels had been shipped o Charleston merchants on consignment.

19 May 1891 — Lightning ignited a fire in John R. Ashe's turpentine house that destroyed 3,000 gallons of turpentine, a number of barrels of bulk and barreled rosin, and 3 rail cars loaded for market. Losses were valued at \$3,500 for Ashe, excluding the railroad's losses.

27 May 1891 — The naval stores business is thriving despite the recent fire. J.E. Pearce is buying and shipping in carloads to Charleston. J.R. Ashe is buying and holding until he can complete a new tank and warehouse, both rapidly progressing.

29 May 1891 — The Moriah Baptist Union met with Laurel Hill Church at Kershaw (later 1st Baptist). The Rev. John S. Croxton of Heath Springs preached the introductory sermon from Acts 17:11. The Rev. D.P. Montgomery was then pastor at the Baptist church in Kershaw. The Baptists were allowing the Methodists use of their building until the Methodist was completed, and the Presbyterians—then meeting in Ashe's Hall—"expect to build soon, and then Kershaw will have four churches." Heath, Springs & Co. installed a cash carrier in "their mammoth store." "The Kershaw Era" is to be enlarged.

3 June 1891 — A party of young relatives and friends from Westville came to Kershaw for business and pleasure, getting inebriated at Sack's Bar. About a mile south of town on their way home, they began to quarrel, and William S. Talbert killed his cousin, Thomas West.

11 June 1891 — "The State" reported that two Northern men had discovered \$130,000 worth of gold and other valuables that officers of the Camden bank had brought to an old mill near the mouth of Hanging Rock Creek, with the intention of hiding it from Sherman's forces. But they were surprised and captured, and the Federals ended by burying the treasures themselves. For 20 years and more people had dug in the area, but the successful man, a Mr. Rhodes, was brother to the man who had charge of the burial. Among the treasures was a gold pitcher the ladies of Charleston had presented to Calhoun on his death bed.

28 June 1891 — Kershaw reported a school excursion by train to Charleston and noted that the farmers who went with the group returned to a town busily processing naval stores, "so the merchants were as busy as during the cotton season." The reporter also wondered how many pension checks were cashed in the town, indicating that there were many.

1 July 1891 — John W. Hamel became principle owner and editor of "The Era," which was "enlarged to a seven column."

29 July 1891 — A leading Kershaw merchant is planning a twenty-room hotel with two stories, balconies running water and other conveniences and a windmill. "Kershaw must have and is going to have a first-class hotel."

13 August 1891 — B.J. Langley of Kershaw was bitten that morning "on the breast, just over the heart, by a pet hound of his." He rushed to Columbia in a panic to have madstones applied to the wound "in incisions." They "refused to take, thereby showing that the dog could not have been mad. Mr. Langley is much relieved by the result."

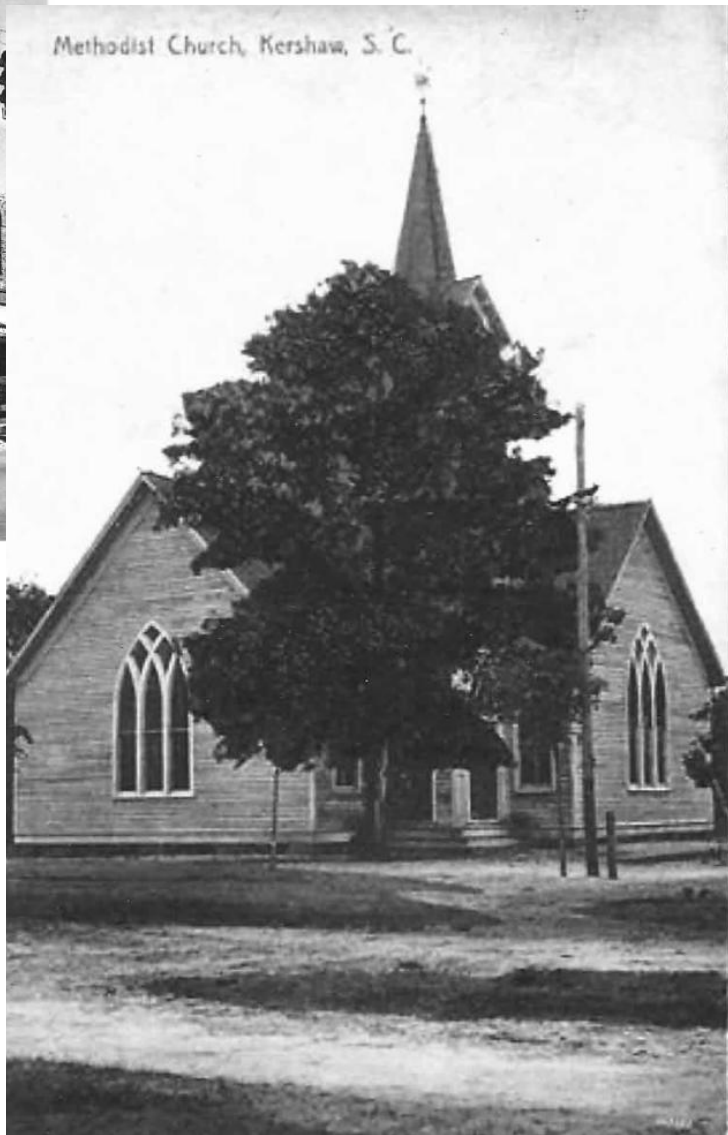
17 August 1891 — "The State" copied an editorial from "The Kershaw Era" complaining that the requirements for admission to the new Clemson College were too stringent for graduates of the state's common



The Ashe Building



John R. Ashe



Methodist Episcopal Church

Below
Thies house at Haile Gold Mine



country schools, whose terms averaged a woefully unsatisfactory three and a half months. "The Era" called for a school year of at least thirty-six weeks a year and local taxes to supplement the two-mill and the poll taxes which currently supported schools.

19 August 1891 — "The Lancaster Ledger" wrote that Kershaw, a pine forest four years earlier, now had a population in the hundreds, 15 or 20 business houses with others going up, two hotels and another under construction, three churches, a good school, a newspaper, a large livery and sales stable, and will soon have a town hall, an opera house, and a \$50,000 bank.

19 August 1891 — Trusted Ashe employee Jim Jones and town employee (lamplighter and "street hand") Allen Dye were caught robbing Kershaw stores when a flash of lightening illuminated their flight. Though they had robbed only two stores that night, those of Ganson and Williams and D.L. Blackwell (goods worth about \$85), they were found to have keys for almost all Kershaw businesses, several of which had noticed unexplained losses over time. The two black men were clapped into the guard house but escaped and were never recaptured.

21 August 1891 — A black turpentine worker employed by J.R. Dabney, killed another, Albert Green, with a barrel stave at a turpentine camp in the Buffalo community. The body was dissected by the Kershaw County coroner in front of a large audience. Belton was later sentenced to three years in prison.

15 Sept. 1891 — (Catherine) Almetta Clyburn Welsh deeded Town of Kershaw four acres, bounded on north by John R. Ashe, east by Mrs. J Jones, south and west by C.A. Welsh. (cemetery? 1st marked burial there Welsh child 1878)

October 1891 — Widower John Rainey Ashe, Kershaw businessman, married Sarah Ciples Niles of Camden.

22 October 1891 — The entire crew of a northbound Three C's train were arrested when they arrived in Kershaw on a charge of kidnapping a sixteen-year-old

white boy, whose father had sworn out the warrant. The boy was discovered to be just an ordinary passenger.

2 November 1891 — The Methodist Church on Church Street (with seating for 400) and a new hotel were nearing completion. Cotton coming in rapidly—147 bales on the previous Friday and about the same number on Saturday. No vacant houses in town and carpenters working feverishly on new ones. A new railway turntable in Lancaster will—when finished—give Kershaw the advantage of a morning train to Columbia.

19 November 1891 — "The Kershaw Era" joined with the "Rock Hill Herald" in asking for an extra train on the Three C's between Columbia and Rock Hill, which would be more convenient to the traveling public and would expedite the mails.

27 November 1891 — In part due to recent rains, which "cause our sand-bed roads to be in excellent condition," 162 bales of cotton came into Kershaw to be sold at a good price—also a number of barrels of turpentine and rosin.

30 November — Kershaw town council met and fixed the liquor license at \$1,000, payable quarterly in advance.

28 December 1891 — About 100 local Masons from five local lodges met in Kershaw for a celebration, featuring distinguished guests the Rev. H.B. Garriss of Columbia (who delivered the lecture in Laurel Hill Baptist Church) and Capt. B.J. Witherspoon, the Deputy Grand Master, of Lancaster. Lodges represented were White Bluff, Flat Creek, Lynchwood, Jacksonham, Flat Rock and Abney. Abney, the town lodge, elected officers B.F. Estridge, W.M.; J.W. Hamel, S.W.; W.F. Rutledge, J.W.; R.L. Blackmon, treasurer; J.F. Gardner, secretary; T.J. Gregory, S.D.; B.A. Hilton, J.D.; C.H. Pack and J.E.W. Haile, stewards.

29 December 1891 — The Democratic voters of the town of Kershaw met in the Academy and re-elected the previous year's town council, viz. J.E.W. Haile, intendant; E.M. Estridge; C.H. Pack, D.L. Blackwell and T.J. Gregory as wardens.