

-- The Oldest House

# The Original Section Of The Trevathan

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — This is written by Ruth Smith Williams in collaboration with Dr. Margaret Battle, who made the snapshots of the house and some inherited furnishings owned by Trevathan descendants.)

It is difficult to point to this historic site and have to explain that only a part of the original house remains on Mill Street. A later addition was removed several years ago and made into rental property on Ridge Street. When Stallings Oil Company decided to expand, the original part of the house was moved from the west to the east end of the Mill Street lot where it presently is part of a larger house. The newer addition moved to Ridge Street has been demolished.

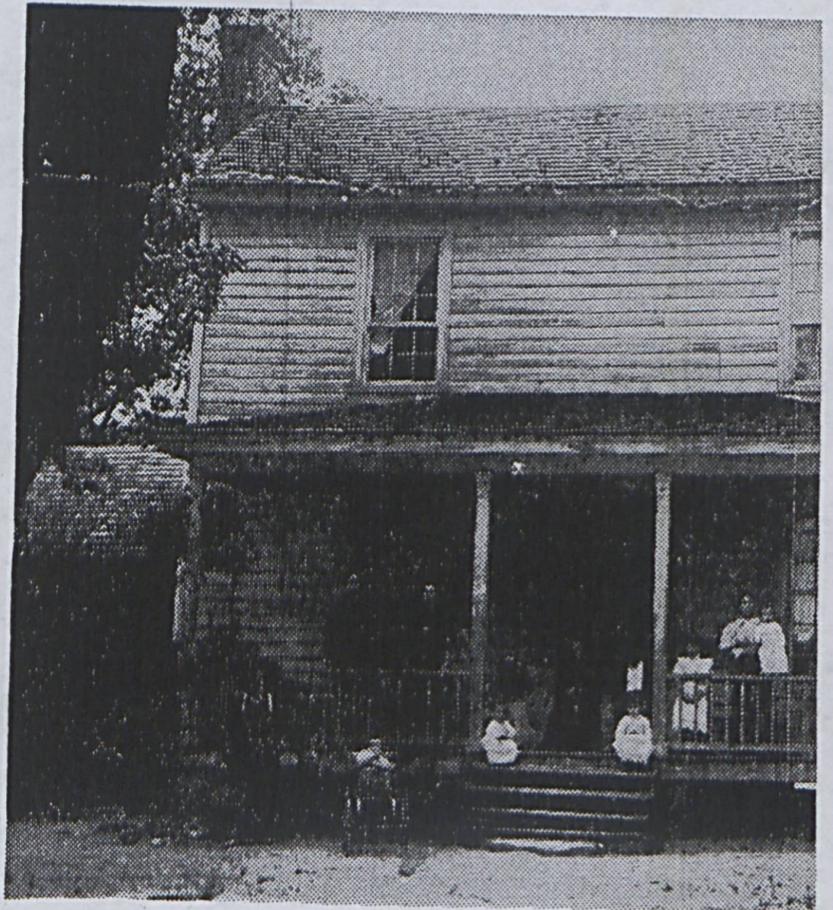
While the date of the building of this house is not of record, it has been said through the years it antedated the old Joel Battle home, which stands adjoining Rocky Mount Mills and is used as offices. It is said to antedate the building of the mills in 1818, and the old Lewis home, which was the seat of the early Bennett Bunn family and the first brick house erected in this section, situated just north of the bridge at the Falls of the Tar and the road to Benvenue Country Club.

The old Trevathan home on Mill Street was the pioneer's idea of an economically built house, with two rooms

up and two rooms down, detached kitchen in yard (later moved up to house.) It did not have an entrance hall but when the family of the first Trevathan grew it was necessary to add space to take care of them. So another two rooms up and two rooms down, with a hall running the width instead of the length of the house. Double its original size, it then numbered eight rooms and the hall.

There were chimneys at each end of the house, and this was the only means of heating at that period. There was a plentiful supply of hardwood, dried oak, with pine lightwood for kindling from the nearby woods. Coals were banked for keeping overnight before matches were a commodity and, like salt, were scarce.

The land on which the house was built had come into the Trevathan family by inheritance through Phoebe Ricks (Mrs. Joseph Price,) daughter of Eley Ricks, whose grandfather had been the early settler (Isaac Ricks), who had numerous grants of land lying along Tar River. The sizable farm which Phoebe Ricks Trevathan inherited from her father is now occupied by



This Old Photograph Shows The Trevathan Home Before

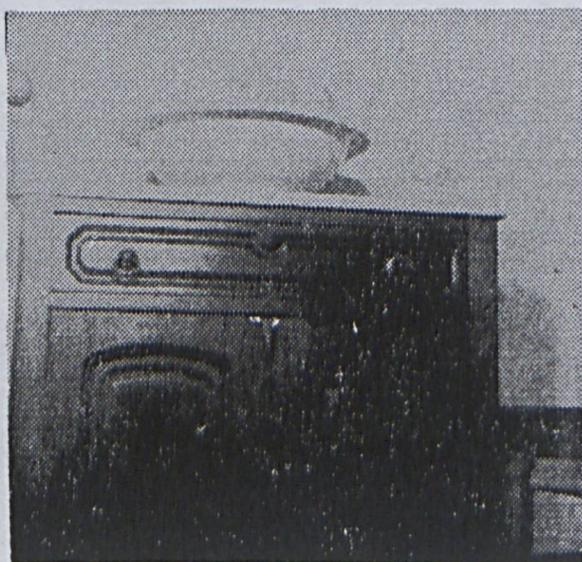
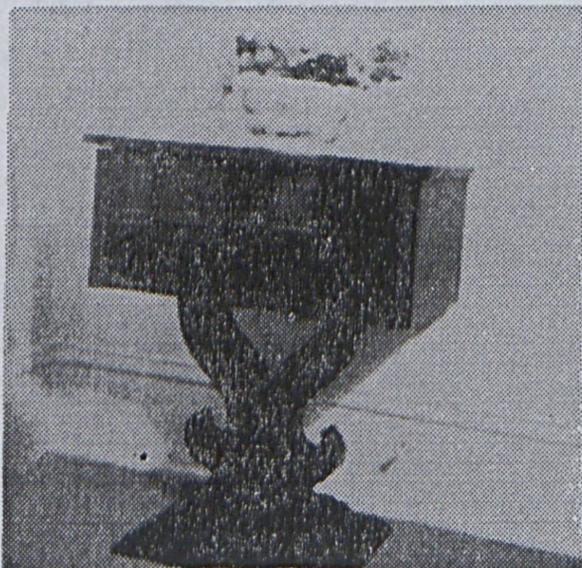
much of the City of Rocky Mount.

Phoebe Ricks Price and her husband Joseph Price had a daughter Sarah Jane, who married William Carter Trevathan (first of that name), and it was this couple who lived in the old house on Mill Street, and from whom the Trevathan family descend. Their farm extended from the river, which included the mills property, to Earl Street;

Park View Hospital, the old Braswell playground (now being renovated for a small park. Braswell Library, Farmers' Warehouse, and other business houses too numerous to mention. They were built on some of this acreage as the new town of Rocky Mount grew. The Trevathan family mention the land on which two churches were built as given by their ancestors. These are the Baptist and the Methodist churches at the Falls. Happy Hill, the Negro settlement, was once a part of the farm which reached to Grooms' Mill and bordered what is now West Haven.

The old families of Ricks, Trevathan, and Nathan Gilbert (one of the early Primitive Baptist preachers of Falls Baptist Church), had a sizable family graveyard on what is now Oakwood Street. The graves were well marked, and for many years cared for, but with the passing of the older ones, it was forgotten. A few years ago an ambitious man saw the advantage of using the ground for a duplex, and the tombstones were ruthlessly discarded with a loss of much valuable data.

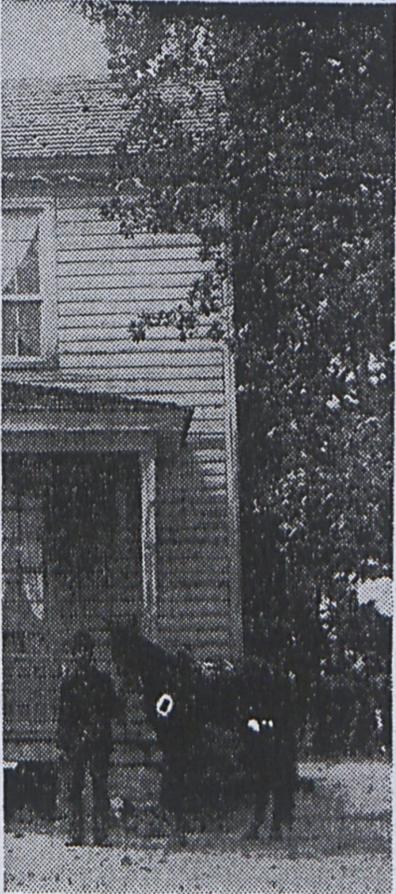
Owners of the property go back to the first Isaac Ricks, then to his son James Ricks, who had a son Eli Ricks, whose daughter Phoebe married Jos-



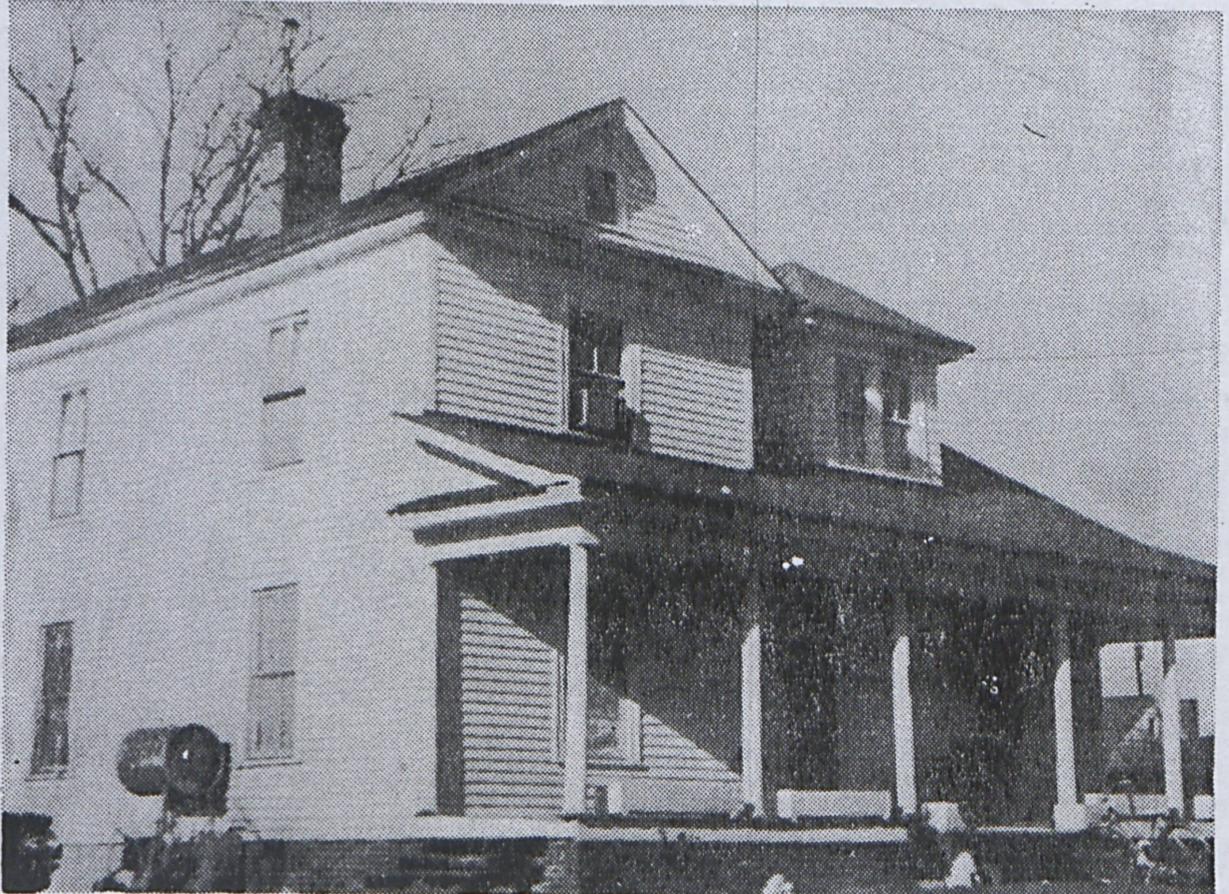
This Furniture Was In The Original Home. The Serving Stand On Left Is Now Owned By Jack L. Shearin. The Wash Stand On Right is Owned By Mrs. H. L. Griffin.

**In Rocky Mount --**

# han Home Remains On Mill Street



Part Of It Was Removed.



824 Mill St. As It Is Today. The Original Trevathan Home Is On The Left Side.

eph Price; their daughter Sarah Jane Price married William Carter Trevathan. There was another Ricks-Trevathan marriage, very early, when the first Dempsey Trevathan married Mary Ricks, a sister to Drusilla and Phoebe.

Dempsey Trevathan, the son of Robert and Grace Trevathan, was born April 13, 1804 in Cornwall, England. He migrated to America with his brother John, via France, arriving 1820-25. He settled in Edgecombe County, and spent most of his life in Rocky Mount. On the 15th of Dec., 1827 he married Elizabeth Sorey (Soary, daughter of William Sorey (Soarey) and died in 1875. Their children:

- (1) Mary Ann Trevathan b. 1828, married Fredrick Dozier May 16, 1848.
- (2) William Carter Trevathan, b. 1830, who married (1) in 1854 Sarah Jane Price, dau of Phoebe Ricks and Joseph Price. Issue:
  - (1) Alice Trevathan, b. 1855 M. William Davis (These were the parents of Arthur C. Davis, better known as Uncle Sam) and several other children;
  - (2) Henry Lewis Trevathan b. 1857, m. Claudia Billups;
  - (3) Mary Adeline Treva-

than, b. 1859 M. Jesse Reid;  
(4) William Augustus Trevathan, b. 1860  
(5) Robert Dempsey Trevathan, b. 1869; author of the Trevathan Family History, married

- (1) Luta Harrel, b. 1899, d. 1903; Had son, oJseph, b. 1901;
- (2) Vicie Edwards in 1906. Issue:
  - (a) Robert Lee Trevathan, 1909, M. Mary Ella Harper;
  - (b) Phoebe Ricks Trevathan, b. 1912,
  - (c) William Joshua Trevathan b. 1914.
- (6) George Gold Trevathan, b. 1875, now 92 years old and living in Pinetops; married Mary Stallings in 1899;
- (3) Martha Trevathan, b. 1832 m. Callie Braswell;
- (4) Joanna Trevathan b. 1834 d. 1953 m. Henry Griffin 1852;
- (5) Elizabeth Trevathan b. 1837. Died Single.
- (6) Robert Trevathan, b. 1846 m. Sarah Petway 1869 Issue: William Wright Trevathan, b. 1871 Mary Elizabeth Trevathan b. 1873.

Most of the children of William Carter Trevathan and Sarah Jane Price were born in the old house on Peach Tree Street. The first two were born north of Tar River.

Most old homes have stories of various happenings, and sometimes ghosts have been known to walk at night. One of the most interesting and awesome happenings that came to the old Mill Street house was the night

the grandfather, William Carter Trevathan, lay dying. His grandson, William Carter Trevathan, 2nd, made his first cry as the old gentleman breathed his last. The old patriarch never knew of the arrival of his namesake.



The Mould, Eye Glasses, Mercury Glass And Celery Holder Are Owned By Miss Phoebe Trevathan.

The Original Section

Of The Trevathan Home

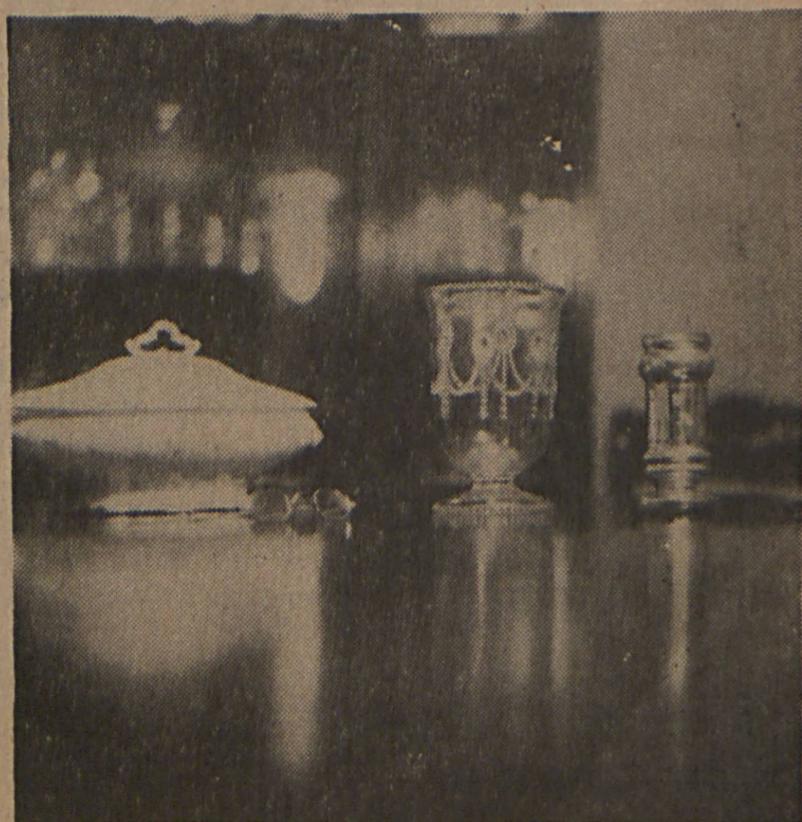
Remains On Mill Street

The Oldest House In Rocky Mount --



This Old Photograph Shows The Trevathan Home Before Part Of It Was Removed.

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