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# TOWN OF SWEPSONVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

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Historical Events, Notable People and More



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Produced by FRESH Carolina, LLC



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## First Settlers

Around 1670, long before Alamance County was formed (1849), German physician and explorer John Lederer wrote descriptions of the trading paths the Native Americans used in the surrounding wilderness at the time. Much later, in 1701, British explorer John Lawson wrote about the Sissipahau people who lived on the bank of what was then well known as the Hau River. Their settlements were generally located near the stony banks of the Hau River in the vicinity of modern-day Saxapahaw, North Carolina. The Sissipahau or Hau tribe may have been part of the Siouan tribe of North Carolina. The Sissipahau are also known as Saxapahaw, and Sauxpa.

The Sissipahau tribe was closely connected with the Shakori and may even have been a branch of the Shakori tribe. It is believed that the Sissipahau spoke Siouan and their totem or animal sign was the bear. Very little is known of the Sissipahau, but archaeological evidence from Alamance County indicates that the Sissipahau, much like the Shakori, lived in wigwam-like dwellings, farmed corn and beans, and hunted the woods for turkey, venison, and bear. There is historical evidence that, before entering adulthood, Sissipahu boys and girls underwent a puberty ritual called husquenawing. In this ritual, the prepubescent boys and girls were given a prepared toxic herb mixture and very little food. It is believed that the ritual was performed to provide insight into the future for the Sissipahau adolescents.

In 1711, when the Sissipahau refused to join Tuscarora Chief Hancock in his plans to make war on the White Carolina settlements, a Tuscarora war party attacked them, destroyed their village, and scattered all the surviving Sissipahau people. It is believed that some surviving Sissipahau warriors joined the invading South Carolina army division of Colonel John Barnwell to fight the Tuscarora, while others may have fled to join the Waccamaw near the Pee Dee River. After the Tuscarora War ended in 1713, the Sissipahau joined with other Native Indian groups in the Yamassee War of 1715 in South Carolina. Reportedly, Sissipahau

survivors of the Yamasee War may have joined the diverse and powerful Catawba Indian Nation.

There is no recorded history of the Sissipahau after the Yamasee War of 1715, but there are references mentioning their participation against the English colonists. It is believed that the last Sissipahau survivors of war and European diseases may have merged with other tribes such as the Shakori and perhaps, as previously mentioned, the Catawba. The existence of the Sissipahau people and their legacy is still felt in North Carolina today in the many local names such as Alamance, Saxapahaw, Haw River, Haw Creek, and Ossipee.

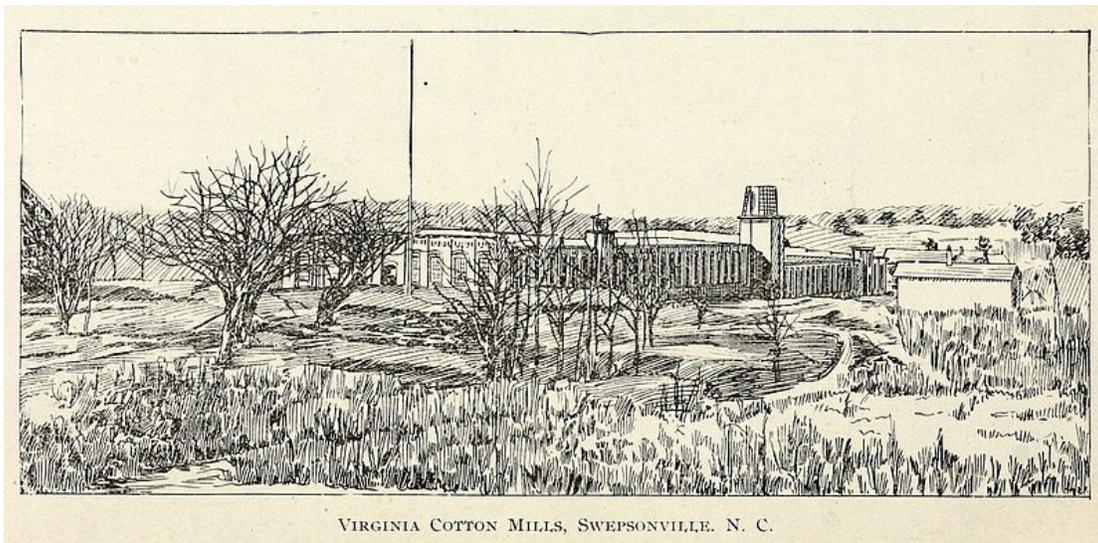


Wygwam Indian Dwellings by the River  
Source: [publications.newberry.org](http://publications.newberry.org)

## Pioneers

Swepsonville is a town located in East-Central Alamance County, North Carolina. Alamance County was formed in 1849 from Orange County to the east. The Native American word “Alamance” was used to describe the mud originating from Great Alamance Creek (Haw River tributary). Alamance County has been the center for many significant historical events, an area of important agricultural industry, and host to the burgeoning textile manufacturing business of the nineteenth century.

Since 1790 Swepsonville has been the site of one type of mill or another. The Haw River was particularly well suited to build dams for harnessing enough energy to move the water wheels that were used in the early mills to power the milling machinery. Several of these dams were built on the Haw River at and around Swepsonville. The first mills in Swepsonville proper were grain gristmills, which were built primarily to grind corn and wheat.



Drawing of Virginia Cotton Mills

Source: 1897 Annual report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of North Carolina

The Town of Swepsonville was named after George W. Swepson (1819-1883). In 1868, George W. Swepson partnered with Raleigh developer George Rosenthal and they built the Falls Neuse Mill to process cotton. Around 1870, the

mill was producing the well-sought-after Alamance plaid color fabric, which caused a trademark infringement lawsuit to be filed by competitor mill owners Thomas Holt and Dolph Moore. In 1876, Dolph Moore was found shot dead near George W. Swepson's home and George W. Swepson was accused of the murder. Although George W. Swepson was later acquitted of all charges, the tragic incident threw a dark shadow of public mistrust towards him and he eventually was forced to move to Raleigh (M. Vacca & B. Briggs, 2002). In 1880, a fire rumored to be caused by arson destroyed the Falls Neuse Mill building. After the fire, there were unconfirmed reports saying that after the fire, George W. Swepson fled in the middle of night with a considerable amount of money to establish another mill somewhere in the North. By the end of 1882, George Rosenthal (George W. Swepson's former partner) had collected the Falls Neuse Mill insurance funds, managed to rebuild the factory facilities, and began to produce cotton fabrics once again.

The number of cotton mills in North Carolina remained small throughout most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1884, there were only 75 mills in operation in the entire state. However, within the next 20 years, more than 200 new mills were constructed in the state of North Carolina. Another large wave of mill building occurred during the World War One (WWI) era, as the number of mills rose from 293 in 1914 to 343 in 1921. During that same period, most cotton mills began to change their technology. The mills slowly left behind the traditional water and steam power sources and slowly began to use a brand new and improved power source called electricity.

In 1883, a 21-year-old man called Ashby Lee Baker bought the newly reconstructed Falls Neuse Mill from George Rosenthal (M. Vacca & B. Briggs, 2002). Nine years later, in 1892, the Falls Neuse Mill burned down once again. This time, its new owner, Ashby Lee Baker, began to rebuild the mill using a new building material known as 'slow burn brick'. Sometime after the mill's reconstruction, Ashby Lee Baker renamed the mill as Virginia Cotton Mills to honor

the memory of his recently departed wife, Virginia Swepson McAden Baker, who died on March 5, 1895.

By 1906, Virginia Cotton Mills had become the first factory of its kind to ever use electricity in Alamance County (M. Vacca & B. Briggs, 2002).

Ashby Lee Baker died on November 25, 1921 at the age of 59. The obituary page in the Alamance Gleaner (issue No. 42) dated December 1, 1921 listed Ashby Lee Baker as Colonel Ashby Lee Baker, Sr. who had served in WWI and was survived by his second wife Minnie Fitch Tucker Baker (1875-1948) and their two sons, Ashby Lee Baker, Jr. (1911-1959) and Julian Tucker Baker (1912-1995).

After Ashby Lee died, one of his nephews was appointed as president of the business and remained in control until 1933, when the economic downturn of the Great Depression forced the factory to close-down. In 1934, the business was restructured and Minnie Fitch Tucker Baker was appointed as the president of Virginia Cotton Mills. Minnie Fitch Tucker Baker became the first woman in the state of North Carolina to lead a million-dollar enterprise. She led the business until she died in 1948. Minnie Fitch Tucker Baker advocated for community development and established the Baker Foundation in 1943.

After Minnie Fitch Tucker Baker died in 1948, her oldest son Shelby Lee Baker, Jr. became president of the business until he died in 1959. Following Shelby Lee Jr.'s death, his younger brother Julian Tucker Baker remained involved in the family business until Virginia Cotton Mills finally closed for good in 1970.

According to historical signs posted on Darrell Newton Drive in Swepsonville, the town was officially incorporated on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1997. The six Swepsonville founding fathers appear on that sign listed as follows:

- Raymond Herrings, Mayor
- Hugh Doss, as Mayor Pro Tem
- Darrell Newton, Council Member

- Marvin Shebester, Council Member
- Hank Kirkpatrick, Council Member
- Elvin Briggs, Council Member

In 1997, the population in Swepsonville is listed to have been 450. As of this publication (January, 2019), the population in Swepsonville is estimated to be 1,200.



Town of Swepsonville Historical Sign

## Churches and Cemetery

More than 110 years ago, a small group of Christians of all denominations begun to meet in the upstairs room of an old grist mill on the banks of the Haw River. Eventually they outgrew the mill facility, separated into different groups, and began building their own meeting places. Around 1880 a group of Methodists began meeting in a small one-room building. They were known as Newlin's Chapel and were part of a 5-point charge along with Salem, Phillips Chapel, Saxapahaw Church, and Clover Garden Church.

Swepsonville Methodist Church became a station charge in 1952 and has had a pastor of its own ever since. A nine-room brick parsonage was built on the present site. The previous 5-room wood-frame parsonage that had been originally built in 1912 was sold and the new fellowship building was completed in 1997.

Swepsonville Baptist Church: The following 1960 historical account is a transcription from an archived document titled HISTORY Swepsonville Baptist Church, by Mrs. Alice Holt, 1960:

"It was September 14, 1883, that a small group of interested people met in the village of Swepsonville, for the purpose of organizing a Baptist church. Those present were: C. Durham, of Durham, Rev. C. E. D. Gowan of Graham, and Rev. W. L. Wright and C. A. Rominger of Hillsboro. After reading the scripture, singing, and prayer, the church covenant and articles of faith were read and adopted by the members. On a motion of Rev, C. E. Gowan the organization was recognized as "The Swepsonville Baptist Church", with Rev. W. L. Wright becoming its first pastor with a salary of \$50 per year.

Plans for a church building were soon underway. The exact date of the building of the church is unknown, but it is thought to have been constructed around 1885, the land upon which it stands being given by Mrs. George W, Swepson [Virginia], who also gave [donated] the church bell. Baptismal services

were held at the river, just a little below the dam, until the Baptistry was added to the church in 1905,

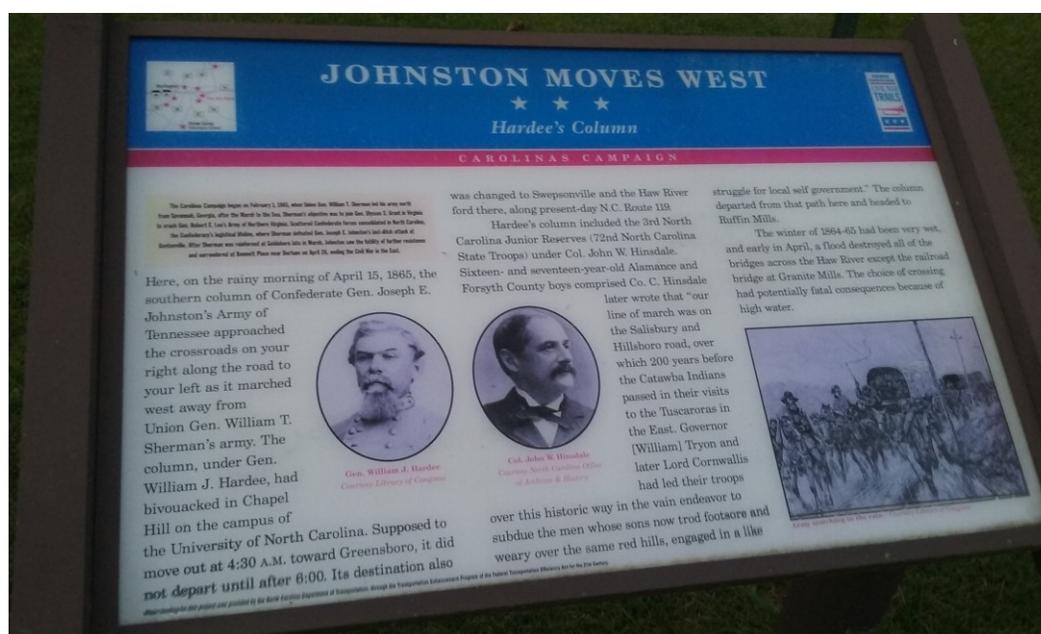
In 1885, Mrs. Virginia [McAden Baker], first wife of A. L. Baker, passed away, leaving in her will an endowment of \$2,000 to the Swepsonville Baptist Church. This money was to be placed in the bank, and the interest from it was to be used for repairs and upkeep of the church. This money is still in the bank today [as of 1960], being placed in bonds several years ago.....” [end of transcription]

Cemeteries: Some sources suggest that an old family cemetery is located close to Swepsonville. The cemetery is located on the farm owned by John M Crawford of Graham, NC. This is the home place of John McCrawford’s parents, W. G. and Jeanette Thompson Crawford. The property is in a section of Alamance County once known as Cedar Cliff. The cemetery was surveyed and documented by Durward T Stokes on May 17, 1969.

## Military Heroes

In Hawfields, NC, at the intersection of Jim Minor Road and Highway 119, there is an important historical monument of the Civil War and an illustrated sign that mentions details of the Haw River crossing at Swepsonville. The sign states that on the morning of April 15, 1865, General J. D. Hardee led a column of the Confederate Army towards Greensboro.

Although no battles took place in Alamance County, the American Civil War (1861-1865) did have a tragic impact on the local people. For example, in April



Civil War Memorial Sign in Hawfields, NC

1865, as the Confederate Army withdrew across North Carolina towards Greensboro, a number of young soldiers in the North Carolina Junior Reserves drowned as they tried to cross the deep waters of the Haw River. Many markers of the Civil War Trails program describe experiences of the soldiers and the effect the war had on the local communities. One of the best known local Civil War veterans from Alamance County was William Henry Bason.

William Henry Bason was born in Mebane in December 1847. He enlisted with his brothers John and Joseph in Company 'B', 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Confederate

Army. After the war, William returned to Swepsonville and on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1889, he Henry Bason married Flora G. Murphey (1866-1948). The couple had two children named Samuel Murphey Bason (1894-1986) and George Stanford Bason (1902-1984). William Henry Bason died in Swepsonville in May 1927 at the age of 79. He is buried at the Hawfields Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

Around 1910, William's elder son Samuel M. Bason attended Burlington High School, where he became the pitcher for the school's baseball team. Thereafter, Samuel M. Bason attended the nearby Oak Ridge Military Academy in Oak Ridge, Guilford County. After graduating from Oak Ridge, Samuel M. Bason served in the United States Army during WWI. At the end of the war, Samuel returned to North Carolina and settled in Yanceyville, Caswell County. (*See more details in the notable people section*).

It is worth mentioning that the Oak Ridge Military Academy was established in 1852 by the Society of Friends (Quakers) as a "finishing school" for boys. From 1875 to 1914 Oak Ridge was led by two brothers, Professors J. Allen Holt and Martin Holt. Under their leadership the "Oak Ridge Male Institute" became one of the best prep schools in North Carolina, boasting business and humanities departments, as well as literature, and debating societies. During the WWI (1914-1918) the Junior Reserve Officer Training Program (JROTC) was admitted to the Oak Ridge Military Academy Campus.

## Post Office & Postmasters

In 1859, George William Swepson (1819-1883) was appointed postmaster in the Haw River Post Office, under the administration of President James Buchanan (1857-1861). During the Civil War, George W. Swepson became a Confederate postmaster (July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1861) under Confederate States president Jefferson Davis.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1878, the first Swepsonville Post Office was established in Alamance County and George Loman served as its first postmaster under the

administration of President Rutherford Hayes (1877-1881). However, this post office was discontinued on July 17<sup>th</sup> of the same year. However, postal records show that the Swepsonville post office was reopened on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1884 and at that time, Arnold Rosenthal had become the postmaster who served for the following ten years. On December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1894, Robert N. Cook replaced Arnold Rosenthal and held the position for the next ten years.

For the new century, Charles W. Newcomb was appointed as the new postmaster on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1904 and served for a couple of years. Robert N. Cook became the postmaster again on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1906 and also served for just a couple of years. Afterwards, William J. Ward replaced Robert N. Cook in that position on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1908 and served for the next five years.

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1913, Charles P. Thompson became the postmaster for the following 23 years. After that, Ella Kate Phillips replaced him on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1937 and, as the first female postmaster in Swepsonville, she held the position for 25 years. On August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1962 Jessie McAdams became the postmaster for three years and Marvin F. Shebester replaced him on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1965 to serve in that position for the next 27 years.

It should be mentioned that over the course of its history since the birth of the United States of America, the United States Postal Service has employed many women as postmasters. Although women postmasters are popularly referred to as "postmistresses," their official title on record has always been "postmaster."

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1992, Barbara C. Schronce was an Officer-in-Charge at the Swepsonville Post Office for a couple of months. On November 27<sup>th</sup>, 1992, Stella L. Fields became the Officer-in-Charge. A few months later, Mary P. "Genice" Akins was appointed postmaster (March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1993) and she served in that position for the following 14 years.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007, Ruth Jones became the Officer-In-Charge of the Swepsonville Post Office for almost five months. After that, Amber Lowman

became the Officer-In-Charge (May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007). Amber Lowman served as the officer-in-charge until January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011 when the Swepsonville postal service was suspended. The Swepsonville Post Office was officially closed on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and the mail is now being processed by the Graham Post Office, in Graham, NC, the County Seat of Alamance County.

## Ballpark

Baseball has been popular in North Carolina since the late 19th century. Rounders, which was the precursor of baseball, was widely played in North Carolina before the Civil War. However, modern baseball may have been introduced to North Carolina by Union troop prisoners when they played the game at the Salisbury Prison. Baseball spread rapidly across the state in the years following the Civil War. By the end of the nineteenth century, virtually every town in North Carolina had one or more amateur or semiprofessional teams and the game became a mainstay on college and high school campuses. Additionally, North Carolina became a hotbed of textile league baseball during the first half of the twentieth century.

The baseball stadium in Swepsonville was originally built by Virginia Cotton Mills in 1926. The grandstands were added by the town in the 1940s. The old-fashioned ball field is home to summer recreation leagues and it is also point of great pride for the town.

One of the most famous local baseball players, who probably practiced often in the Swepsonville ballpark, was James Cecil 'Zip' Payne. Zip was born in Swepsonville on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1909. Although he was one of the best hitters and outfielders in minor league baseball for almost 20 years, for some reason, Zip never advanced to the major leagues.

At least two baseball players born in Swepsonville did reach the major leagues. One of them was Allen 'Dusty' Cooke, who played with the New York Yankees (1930). The other player who reached the major leagues was Don Thompson, who played with the Boston Braves (1949). Both these players were outfielders and became local sport heroes in the town of Swepsonville (*For more details see the notable people section*).

Not so far from Swepsonville, is the home base of the Burlington Royals, which is Burlington's minor league baseball team. The Burlington Royals is a

Rookie-level team in the Appalachian League and has been a farm team of the Kansas City Royals since September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. For the previous 21 years, that same team had been affiliated with the Cleveland Indians and at that time was called the Burlington Indians. As of this writing, the Burlington Royals play home games at the Burlington Athletic Stadium, which was opened in 1960, and seats 3,500 fans.



Swepsonville Ballpark  
Source: Sid Smith

## Fire Department



First Swepsonville Fire House  
Source: To Report Fire Call 7-2720, March 22, 1958

In July 1957, thirty-five of the local men came together to start the Swepsonville Fire Department. Wallace Bennett was the first Fire Chief and the department started with a 1941 Ford pumper truck purchased with funds donated by the local Lions Club. The assigned building for the fire department was a single-story, dirt floor, wood-framed warehouse owned by Virginia Cotton Mills. The first Swepsonville firehouse is believed to have been located on what is known today as the Swepsonville Farmers Market, just between Swepsonville Lake and the FRESH Carolina, LLC warehouse, which is currently being restored to become the Simón Bolívar Hall & Event Facility. The location is right on Darrell Newton Drive, across from where the old Virginia Cotton Mills used to be.

Records indicate that in 1958 the fire department ran a total of 12 calls and by 1961, the fire department had gained an outstanding insurance rating of 9, out of 10.

In 1974, the Swepsonville Fire Department was the first fire department to use pagers in Alamance County. The use of pagers was a big change from the days when firemen pored bags of lime along the road to show any following trucks which direction to take. In 1975, the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program was started and the Swepsonville Fire Department hired its first paid firemen. In 1979, a sub-station was built on Hwy 54 (Fire Station 10) to help cover the expanding fire district.

On October 4, 1989, the old mill building facility known as Virginia Cotton Mills (1868-1970), burned down in what is technically called a “ten-alarm fire”. The massive fire brought fire trucks from all the surrounding counties. The enormous fire was reported in the National news and it was said to be visible from the I-85/I-40 freeway, as far as 3 miles away from its location. The Swepsonville firefighters, with the help of about 200 other firefighters from many surrounding fire departments, spent almost two days battling the intense blaze before bringing the fire under control.

## Corporations

One of the biggest corporations in the world is the Honda Motor Company. In the United States, Honda has held the longest sustained presence of any international automaker. Honda has contributed to the U.S. economy through manufacturing, R&D, sales, finance, and more—all based here in America.

In Swepsonville, the Honda Power Equipment plant was established in 1984. The plant manufactures general purpose engines, walk-behind lawn mowers, snow blowers, string trimmers, water pumps, and tillers. It is currently the main employer in this area.



Honda Power Equipment MFG, Inc. in Swepsonville, NC Celebrates 30 Years  
Source: For Construction Pros

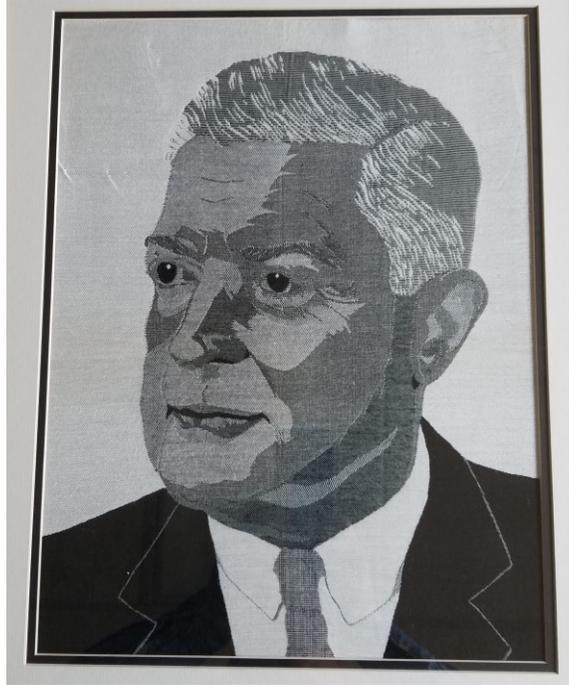
On August 4, 2014, Katie Ancieri of the Triad Business Journal reported that the Honda plant in Swepsonville was celebrating its 30th birthday and, as a reward, Honda Corporate announced an \$8.5 million gift to the facility. "It's a great honor," said J.R. Cunningham, senior manager at the Swepsonville plant. "We've got a great workforce here. The reputation of our company is extraordinary." Honda officials say the monetary investment will also mean more jobs created at the plant.

Another article in the Green Industry Pros magazine stated that in 2014, the Honda Power Equipment plant employed just over 600 workers. The article stated that Honda had not yet determined how many more positions will be added as a result of the \$8.5 million gift, but at the time of this writing in 2019, the building facility had almost doubled its physical size. Back in 2014, Honda Corporate also had another announcement -- that the Swepsonville plant would soon become the first Honda plant in in North America to start manufacturing generators.

Workers like John Thomas Currie, who has been at the Swepsonville Honda plant for more than 25 years, says the corporate commitment demonstrates the faith that Honda Corporation has in the Honda Power Equipment plant. Currie said, "we're striving to be the best in the world."

## Notable People

### **Baker Sr., Ashby Lee, (1862-1921)**



Woven portrait of Colonel Ashby Lee Baker, Sr.  
Courtesy of Roy Newton

Colonel Ashby Lee Baker Sr. was born in Baltimore, Md. on November 5, 1862. His parents were Charles J. Baker (1821–1894) and Elisabeth Bosserman Baker (1825–1891). Colonel Baker had four siblings and he married twice. His first wife was Virginia Swepson McAden Baker (1864–1895) and they had one son named Ashby Baker Jr. (March 1885 – August 1885), who died as an infant. In 1902, Col. Baker married Minnie Fitch Tucker Baker (1875–1948). Minnie had two sons, Ashby Baker Jr. (1910-1959) and Julian Tucker Baker 1912-1995). Colonel Baker died in Raleigh, NC on November 25, 1921, at the age of 59.

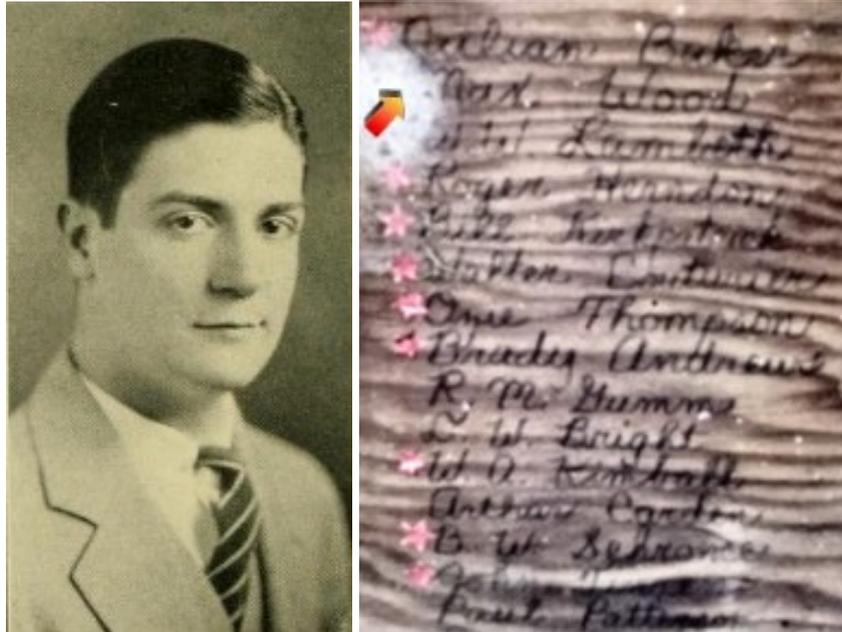
**Baker Jr., Ashby Lee (1910-1959)**



Ashby Lee Baker, Jr.

Ashby Lee Baker Jr. was born in Raleigh, NC on December 5, 1910. His parents were Ashby Lee Baker Sr. (1862-1921) and Minnie F. Tucker Baker (1875-1948). Records indicate that Ashby Lee Baker Jr. never married. After his mother died in 1948, Ashby Lee Baker Jr. became the President of Virginia Mills. Ashby Lee Baker Jr. died in Raleigh on April 27, 1959, at the age of 48.

## Baker, Julian Tucker (1912-1995)



Julian Baker & Section of Historical Name Board

Julian Tucker Baker was born in Raleigh, NC on October 1, 1912. His parents were Ashby Lee Baker Sr. (1862-1921) and Minnie F. Tucker Baker (1875-1948). Records indicate that Julian was involved in the day-to-day operations of the Virginia Cotton Mills in Swepsonville, NC. As a matter of record, Julian's name is the very first name on the list of over 750 names that were hand-written on a large display board. Witnesses say that each star next to the name was used to note individual recognition. Reportedly, Virginia Cotton Mills recognized the notoriety of its employees by placing their names on this display board. This historical 4x8 plywood board is currently kept and displayed for the public at the Swepsonville Fire Station 10, on State Highway 54.

The historical board also lists business names, such as Miles Super Market and K. Lee's Beauty Center. Further research is required to determine what role the listed businesses may have played in the mill and why they were listed on the board.

### **Bason, William Henry (1847-1927)**

William Henry Bason was born in Swepsonville in December 1847. He enlisted in the Confederate Army during the American Civil War (1861-1865). After the war, William married Flora Green Murphey Bason (1866-1948) on December 11th, 1889. They lived in Swepsonville and had two children named Samuel Murphey Bason and George Stanford Bason. William Henry Bason died in May 1927 at the age of 79 and he is buried at the Hawfields Presbyterian Church Cemetery located in Mebane, Alamance County, North Carolina.

### **Bason, Samuel Murphy (1894-1986)**

Also known as Sam Bason, was born in Swepsonville in 1894. His parents were William Henry Bason (1847-1927) and Flora G. Murphy Bason (1866-1948). Sam served in the Army during WWI. After the war, Sam became a banker and insurance agent in Yanceyville, North Carolina. Additionally, Sam served non-consecutively from 1947 to 1959 as a Democrat in the North Carolina State Senate for District 15 in Caswell and Rockingham counties. Sam died in Yanceyville, NC in 1986 at the age of 92.

## Cooke, Allen 'Dusty' (1907-1987)



Dusty Cooke

Source: digitalcommonwealth.org

Allen Lindsey "Dusty" Cooke was born in Swepsonville, NC on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1907 and died on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1987. Dusty was an American outfielder in Major League Baseball who played for three different teams between 1930 and 1938. He played with the New York Yankees for three years (1930-1932), moved to the Boston Red Sox (1933–1936), and later played with the Cincinnati Reds (1938). Dusty is listed at 6 feet 1 inch (1.85 m), 205 lb. Although Dusty batted left-handed, he only threw right-handed.

Following his professional playing career, Dusty joined the United States Navy in 1942 and served in Okinawa during WWII. While serving in the Navy, Dusty received special training in fitness conditioning. After his discharge, he became the athletic trainer for the Philadelphia Phillies in 1946. Two years later, in 1948, he joined the Phillies' coaching staff. Dusty was a coach through June

30, 1952, which included his service on the 1950 "Whiz Kids" team that won the National League pennant. Dusty also was the Phillies' interim manager from July 16–25, 1948, after coach Ben Chapman was fired. During his career, Dusty posted a 6–6 win-loss record (.500) before handing over the coaching reins to Eddie Sawyer. Dusty died in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1987 at the age of 80.

## **Swepson, George William (1819-1883)**



George William Swepson

George W. Swepson was born in Mecklenburg County, Virginia in 1819. His father was a very wealthy business man called William M. Swepson. George W. Swepson moved to Caswell County, NC in the 1840s. There, he married Virginia B. Yancey Swepson (1826-1901), daughter of Bartlett Yancey, a prominent lawyer and congressman. They had no children.

George W. Swepson enjoyed considerable success as a banker, textile manufacturer, and broker. The town of Swepsonville is said to have been named after him due to the influence created by the Falls Neuse (cotton) Mill that George W. Swepson and his partner George Rosenthal built there in 1868. Allegedly, George met his downfall when he begun using other people's money unwisely in order to finance some of his projects. Some historical records say that George was "one of the greatest rascals in the history of North Carolina. He died on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1883 at the age of 63 in Raleigh, NC. George W. Swepson is buried at the Oakwood Cemetery in Raleigh, NC.

### **Thompson, Don (1923-2009)**

Don Thompson was born on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1923, in Swepsonville, North Carolina. On April 24, 1949, Don was 25 years old when he broke into the big leagues with the Boston Braves as a pitcher. He also played for the Brooklyn Dodgers (1950-1954) as an outfielder. Don played with Jackie Robinson and participated in the World Series against the New York Yankees in 1953. After he retired, Don went into the automobile business and later became a real estate agent. Additionally, Don was elected into the Brooklyn Dodgers Hall of Fame in 1997. Don died in Ashville, North Carolina in 2009, at the age of 85.

### **Tucker Baker, Minnie Fitch (1875-1948)**

Minnie F. Tucker Baker was born in Raleigh, NC on January 31, 1875. Her parents were Rufus S. Tucker (1829–1894) and Florence Eugenia Perkins Tucker (1838–1910). Minnie F. Tucker Baker had six siblings who were as follows: Margaret Perkins Tucker Boylan (1857–1922), Lula Sledge Tucker Harris (1861–1886), Florence Perkins Tucker Winder (1862–1916), Churchill Perkins Tucker (1864–1864), William Ruffin Tucker (1866–1899), and Sadie Saunders Tucker Williamson (1872–1919).

In 1902, Minnie married to a wealthy industrialist named Ashby Lee Baker Sr. (1862-1921) in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1934, she became president of the Virginia Cotton Mills in Swepsonville, Alamance County, North Carolina. Minnie F. Tucker Baker was the first female owner and president of a million-dollar enterprise in the state of North Carolina. Minnie also advocated for community development and established the Baker Foundation in 1943.

Her sons Ashby Baker Jr. and Julian Tucker Baker led the Virginial Cotton Mills businesses after she died. Minnie died in Raleigh on March 14, 1948, at the age of 73. She is buried at Oakwood Cemetery located in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Note: No pictures of Ms. Baker were found for the publication of this issue. If anyone has a photo of Ms. Minnie Fitch Tucker Baber that they wish to share, please contact: Jesús A. Sánchez Ohep at 919-880-4868

## Chronological Table

**1715-** Yamasee tribe against the English colonist, also known as the 'Yamasee War'

**1771-** The 'Battle of Alamance' took place during the American Revolution

**1868-** Falls Neuse Mill was established by George.W. Swepson

**1878-** The first Swepsonville Post Office was established in Alamance County.

**1926-** Old Baseball Stadium was built by Virginia Mills in Swepsonville.

**1930-**'Dusty' Cooke became the first Swepsonville native who ever played in the Major Baseball League.

**1934-** Minnie Fitch Tucker Baker became the first female in NC as owner of the Virginia Cotton Mills.

**1984-** Honda Power Equipment established a plant in Swepsonville.

**1989-** Great fire in the abandoned facilities of the old Virginia Cotton Mills

**2006-** Swepsonville River Park was established. This 30-acre park was one of the first on the Haw River Trail.

**2017-** FRESH Carolina, LLC was established on the site of the old wood shop that was part of the Virginia Cotton Mills' facilities and perhaps where the very first Swepsonville Fire Station was located. The 13-acre property is now owned by Jesus A. Sanchez Ohep's family and is the home location for the Swepsonville Farmers Market.

## About the Author



Miguel Chirinos

Miguel Chirinos was born in Caracas, Venezuela in 1967 and he grew up in the heroic city, La Victoria, Aragua State in the northwest of Venezuela. Although Chirinos' career is in Computer Science, he constantly sought out opportunities to visit historical sites in his country of origin, especially those historical sites that are somehow connected with Simón Bolívar.

Even though Chirinos moved with his family to the United States in 1996, his passion for the history of Simón Bolívar's life never ceased. He has taken special interest in Bolívar's trip to the United States in 1807, specifically along the East Coast. As a result of this research, he is the author of the book entitled "*Simón Bolívar in the United States: Bicentennial visit (1807-2007)*." The purpose of that work was to inform in historical details an important episode in the life of Liberator Simón Bolívar, when he visited the U.S. territory.

In 2009, Chirinos participated in a Book Fair in Cary, NC presenting his book in both English and Spanish versions. He also has been traveling and researching about cities and towns named 'Bolivar'; as well as monuments and statues of Simon Bolivar in the United States. In 2011, Chirinos organized an exhibit entitled 'Bolivar Blvd' at Duke University, Durham, NC, to show his extensive Simón Bolívar

collection and the legacy that Bolívar left in the U.S. More recently, Chirinos has been compiling information about U.S. Post Offices called Bolívar.

Currently Chirinos lives with his family in Durham, North Carolina, where he writes articles about notable Latin Americans who have been portrayed on Latin American paper money, including Francisco de Miranda and the Liberator Simón Bolívar. These articles have been published in specialized magazines and journals and some are available online. Chirinos often participates in annual conventions, international congresses, currency shows and educational programs for young people in public schools, libraries and local universities.

## About FRESH Carolina, LLC



Creating Life Balance  
[www.freshcarolina.com](http://www.freshcarolina.com)

FRESH Carolina, LLC is a 5-year, \$5,000,000 project that first began in February, 2016 with the purchase of 13-acres of property. On January 1, 2018, the company launched 500 Corporate Shares for sale and as of January 1, 2019, there are only 120 shares left for sale to the public.

In brief, FRESH is an acronym that integrates elements from five different areas to form the following five separate business units:

F: Food, beverage, and hospitality

R: Recreation (indoor & outdoor)

E: Events, Entertainment and Education

S: Scientific Research

H: Health Services

FRESH Carolina, LLC has only one mission: To create life balance

The FRESH Carolina project plan consists of various elements that comprise a five-year strategy, which is being rolled out in four different phases:

Phase 1 – Identify and secure location (100% complete in 2016)

Phase 2 – Develop basic infrastructure and pilot business model (scheduled for 100% completion by June 2019)

Phase 3 – Activate all five business units (January 2020)

Phase 4 – Business expansion phase (2020 - 2023)

FRESH Carolina, LLC operates using 12 Core Values, which are exactly the same as the 12-points of the Scout Law:

1. Trustworthy
2. Loyal
3. Helpful
4. Friendly
5. Courteous
6. Kind
7. Obedient
8. Cheerful
9. Thrifty
10. Brave
11. Clean
12. Reverent

FRESH Carolina, LLC only has 3 Basic Rules:

1. Be mindful and conscientious at all times, but never break the law
2. Never, ever, do anything to hurt yourself or to hurt anyone else
3. Always follow rules number 1 and 2

For more information about FRESH Carolina, LLC, please visit:

[www.freshcarolina.com](http://www.freshcarolina.com)

For more information about the Swepsonville Farmers Market, please visit:

[www.facebook.com/swepsonvillefarmersmarket](http://www.facebook.com/swepsonvillefarmersmarket)

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