



Lombardy, the John Steele House, 1799, 1000 North Lee Str., Salisbury, NC

The oldest house in Salisbury is the John Steele house. It was built in the spring of 1799 in the Federal style. The word “federal” represents the new country, the new America.

The people that started the new America built these types of houses; they were proud of the new America and they tried to have a new style. They built delicate, light and airy buildings – no heaviness to them. Look at the windows. You’ll see the sashes; you’ll see the individual panes – 9 individual panes on top and 9 individual panes on the bottom of the sash. This was very common in the Federal period. The roof was covered with wooden shingles and the siding is beaded, which means it has a little bead running along the bottom like you see in Williamsburg or Old Salem. It indicates a house that predates 1810 in our area.

Early History of Salisbury and Rowan County**1799-1831****“A Brief Chronological History of Black Salisbury Rowan”****Setting prior to 1799:**

In 1754 the estimated ‘Negro’ population was 20,000 (Estimated North Carolina population was 70,000). In 1762, the Apprentices Act required slave holders to teach colored apprentices to read and write. Britain’s highest court frees all slaves living in England in 1772. Phillis Wheatley becomes the first African American to publish a book. In 1774 the Rowan resolves state “...that African trade is injurious to this colony, obstructs the population of it by free men, prevents manufacturers and other useful immigrants from Europe from settling among us and occasions an increase of law balance of trade against the colonist...” & a law was enacted that a person who willfully killed a slave should be imprisoned a year the first offense and suffer death for the second. On August 15, 1774, the Rowan County Committee of Safety recommended to the Continental Congress that slavery be abolished.

1799 – 1st discovery of gold in US on John Reed farm (add five years because he didn’t know what it was – used for doorstep).

1795-1800 – Archibald Henderson Law Office

1800 – Census in North Carolina Counties – Rowan Salisbury: White, 17,221; other free, 35; slaves, 2,839.

War of 1812 – John Steele – leader of Peace Party

1818 – Slaves may be taught to read and write.

1818 – A Bill to prevent all persons from teaching slaves to read and write, the use of figures excepted. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of North Carolina and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that any person who shall hereafter teach or attempt to teach any slave within this state to read or write, the use of figures excepted, shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in this state and upon conviction shall be fined at the discretion of the Court not less than Fifty Dollars (\$50), nor more than One Hundred Dollars (\$100) or imprisoned.

1819 – Judge James Martin House (now part of Rowan Museum)

1820 – Hall House as a school

1820 – Population in the Principal Towns: Salisbury: Whites, 743; slaves, 477; free colored, 14.

1820 – John Fulton House (later Sydney Blackmer)

1821 – The Presbyterian Church of Salisbury was organized on August 4th by Rev. Jonathan Otis Freeman with 13 members.

1823 – The Rev. John Stark Ravenscroft, of Virginia, was elected the first Bishop of North Carolina. He was consecrated to the Episcopate May 23, 1823. On Saturday evening, September 6, 1823, Bishop Ravenscroft preached on Confirmation in the old courthouse in Salisbury (services being held there by request). On the next day he preached, both morning and evening in the Lutheran Church; administered The Holy Communion to about forty persons – one-third of whom were colored.

1825 – November 13, 1825 – the Bishop (Ravenscroft) visited Christ Church, Rowan, where he preached and administered the Holy Communion to fifty-six white and three colored communicants.

July 4, 1826 – Jefferson died morning, Adams died afternoon

1826 – The record for his period reveals that seven colored members had been added to the Presbyterian Church.

1826-1827 – Gold rush – Reed Gold Mine – 1843 Gold Hill (1849-Calif. Gold Rush)

Saturday, February 3, 1827 – the bill to repeal so much of an act, passed in 1762, as requires the Master or Mistress to teach or cause to be taught colored apprentices to read and write was read, and, on motion, postponed indefinitely.

1827 – Exodus

1830 – Rev. Harry Cowan, Father of NC Baptist was converted in 1825, licensed to preach in 1828 by his Master Thomas Cowan, Elder of the Salisbury Presbyterian Church... He was granted his Master's 4 plantations as his field of ministry.

1831 – Peter Stuart Ney settled in Third Creek.

Subsequent Years:

In 1832 County Courts to grant license to slaves and free Negroes to preach...Bill fails. The religious Society of Friends asks for repeal of certain slavery laws.

In 1833, at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, the first Negro was confirmed and during the year three others were baptized.

The 1840 census of North Carolina Counties, Rowan: Whites, 14,460; slaves, 6,201; free persons of color, 135.

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