

RAMSEUR, NC TOWN HISTORY

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The first recorded history of the **Town of Ramseur, NC** was an article written by Inez McMath, a seventh grade student at Ramseur School, and published in the Asheboro Bulletin on Wednesday, April 28, 1918. Inez's prize winning article was presented at the Randolph County Schools Commencement Exercises of that year. ([The text of the article can viewed by clicking here.](#))

The first inhabitants of Ramseur were the Catawba Indians as evidenced by the artifacts found in the area. The land in and around the present-day Ramseur was owned by William Allen at the close of the American Revolution and remained in the Allen family until 1840. In 1840, Hezekiah Allen and Henry Kivett built a sawmill next to the Deep River and the settlement became known as "Allen's Fall." The two men recognized the waterpower available from the river and built a dam of logs, which was reconstructed several times due to flooding before a rock dam was constructed in 1850.

In 1850, Columbia Manufacturing Company built



a small cotton mill on the Deep River in what is today downtown Ramseur, and Henry Kivett became the mill's first superintendent. Following this construction, the Town became known as Columbia. As the community continued to grow, a bridge was constructed across Deep River in 1875 allowing residents access to the other side of the river without having to wade or row across. Eight new residents and a store managed by Isaac H. Foust Sr. soon followed. In 1879 Mr. William H. Watkins purchased the cotton mill and immediately began renovations and

additions.

The town of Columbia was continuing to grow, and the lack of a local post office became an inconvenience, requiring volunteers to retrieve the mail from either Franklinville or Staley. In 1879, Mr. Watkins petitioned the federal government for a local post office,



and his request was granted. (Ramseur's original post office building is now located behind the Ramseur Public Library on Main Street.) Residents soon realized, however, that packages were being mishandled due to confusion between the post offices in Columbia, South Carolina and the new office in Columbia, North Carolina. In an effort to eliminate the



confusion, Mr. Watkins suggested that the Town be renamed after Major General Stephen D. Ramseur, under whom Watkins had served in the Confederate Army. Ramseur, a native of Lincolnton, NC had lost his life in the battle at Cedar Creek, Virginia late in the war, and Watkins felt that renaming the town after his former officer would be a fitting tribute. On February 20, 1889 the community's name was officially changed to Ramseur.

In 1890, another important milestone was reached when the railroad came to Ramseur. Columbia Manufacturing was the end of the rail line, and the town was eventually serviced twice a day by the train.

The Charter for the Town of Ramseur was ratified on March 13, 1895, and the town continued to grow. By 1895, Ramseur's First Baptist Church had constructed a building at its present location at the corner of Liberty Street and NC Highway 22. The Ramseur Methodist Episcopal Church South, now Jordan Memorial United

Methodist, moved to its present location two years later in 1897. Many more businesses organizations followed, with the first phone system (consisting of 32 telephones) installed in 1907, and the first electric company erected in 1912. Coble Milk got its start here in the 1930s. Although Columbia Manufacturing is no longer in business, the site of the original Ramseur Furniture Company, established in 1905, now operates as CTC Furniture Distributors. Ramtex, currently Ramseur's largest industry, originally opened as 1949 as Woonsocket Woolen Mills.

Town-owned facilities have also expanded and improved over the years to provide services to the citizens of Ramseur. Ramseur's public library was established in 1939, and its present facility on Main Street was completed in 1983. In 1978 the Town of Ramseur completed a two million dollar water project to establish a reservoir capable of furnishing the Eastern half of Randolph County with water. The Municipal Building on Liberty Street was completed the same year. In 1984, the Kermit G. Pell Water Based Recreation Facility opened, providing area residents with access to picnic



shelters, a playground, and fishing piers. Since 1998, the Ramseur Lake has hosted an annual youth fishing tournament which is named after the late Barry Richardson, the former lake warden responsible for initiating the tournament. The facilities at Leonard Park, which opened in 1985, include tennis courts, ball fields, playground, a picnic shelter, and access to the Deep River. The Town's new water and wastewater plants came on line in 1991, allowing Ramseur to meet infrastructure needs for Ramseur residents and to supply water to Franklinville and Coleridge.

The Ramseur police department has grown with the Town, and in 2000 the department moved into the upstairs of the newly renovated Community Building at the corner of Main and Liberty Streets. The fire department has also seen much growth over the years. Formerly an all-volunteer force, the department is now manned by two full-time firefighters in a facility completed in 2004 at the corner of

Coleridge Road and Columbia Avenue. Although a progressive department, the Ramseur firefighters are proud of their heritage as evidenced by the fact that the town's first fire truck, a 1939 Ford Oren is maintained at the station in running condition for its annual appearance in the Ramseur Christmas Parade.

The Town of Ramseur has a rich and varied heritage. The citizens of Ramseur, many of whom are second and third generation residents, are proud of their community. More information about Ramseur's history can be found in the Ramseur Community Museum which reopened in 2006 in on the main floor of the Community Building at the corner of Main and Liberty Streets, at the Ramseur Public Library, and in display cases in the Municipal Building on Liberty Street.

Links:

To view more historic photographs of Ramseur and Randolph County, visit the Randolph County Public Library's Randolph County Historical Photo Collection at <http://www.randolphlibrary.org/historicalphotos.htm>.

Census (2000)=1589

Geographic location

35deg., 44min., 1sec. North latitude

79 deg., 39 min., 14sec. West Longitude

Name changed February 20, 1889

From: Columbia

To: Ramseur