

City of Winston-Salem Government Meetings Notes

Town of Salem: 1793-1803

HIGHLIGHTS

1793-Building Regulations; Too much strong drink; Road improvements
1794-After school work for boys; Land speculation; Fire engines ; Licenses and Taxes discussed
1795-Upkeep of God's Acre; Storm drainage problems; First street light installed;
1797-Creek names
1798-Drought; Construction of the Salem Church;
1800-Construction of the Girls Boarding School; Notes from the Tavern; Items of Interest-marriages
1801-Salem Square; First case of fraud;
1802-Time to stop work noted; Improvements to Main St; Problems with the water system
1803- Management of the tannery; Land sold for five dollars per acre; new roads and streets discussed;
Construction of the Market and Fire House; Fire Inspector's report.

1793

BUILDING REGULATIONS

January 8, 1793 - "Brethren cannot be prevented from building log houses in town, but it is to be wished that, to avoid fire hazard, the houses might be covered on the outside with plaster, and not with boards. The same applies to the shingle roofs and we wish that gradually all town houses might be covered with tile."

"Recently Br. Transou's bake-oven nearly started a fire, when the wind blew coals from it toward the stable near by. It would be best if there were no outdoor bake-ovens in the town, as it is not always possible to avoid danger from them." (Auf. Col.)

October 28, 1794 -"Br. Vogler plans to build a frame house, lathed and plastered inside and out, and roofed with shingles. We wish he would build a stone house, which would cost no more. No one will bother him if he uses a shingle roof, but he can be told that we would prefer a tile roof.

"It should be stipulated in our building rules that all dwelling houses in town must have tile roofs; also that no front steps may extend more than four feet in the sidewalk." (Salem Board Minutes)

November 28, 1796 - "For the present the Collegium could devise no method whereby iron fire-boxes could be placed in the room-stoves of the town, for they will cost too much at the iron works in this section, and also if they are ordered from Bethlehem." And Later, on December 6th: "For lack of iron fire-boxes brick will have to be used." (Auf. Col.)

TOO MUCH STRONG DRINK

February 19, 1793 - "With deep concern the members discussed the fact that various residents of the town are taking too much strong drink, which is injuring the good name of the Brethren." (Auf. Col.)

ROAD WORK

In March, 1793, work was begun on two roads, "one from the upper and one from the middle of our town, which together will lead to Brooks Ferry at the Yadkin River. We hope this will draw more trade to our town.

"The road, and especially the hill by the tan yard, on the way to Shallowford are very bad, and we believe that the road should be laid with saplings. The road-master should have the rain water led off on both sides of the road."

February 24, 1795 - "Br. Abraham Hauser, the roadmaster, reports that the bridge across the Wach (Salem Creek) must be recovered, and suggests that it might be better to use sawed plank instead of split wood. We think the split wood will last longer and be cheaper. Perhaps the causeway could be repaired with the old planks." (Auf. Col.)

March 31, 1795 - "Abraham Hauser has handed in his written proposal concerning the roadmaster's office. He will undertake to keep it for five years, and during that time will keep in good order all bridges, roads, and fords, provided that each citizen who is liable for road work under the law will pay him one dollar a year; he will also take care of the streets in town for the same period provided that the men who are not legally liable for road work will each contribute something toward the expense." (Auf. Col.)

June 26, 1798 - "We wondered whether it might not be a good thing to send a petition to the Assembly about the building of larger and smaller bridges on post-roads, or during the approaching session of the Assembly to publish an article in the newspaper laying before all eyes the value of uninterrupted progress for the post, for which bridges are of supreme importance." (Auf. Col.)

March 21, 1798 - "Br. John Leinbach has received from the court his appointment as roadmaster." (Auf. Col.)

March 5, 1798 - "Whenever possible the footpaths shall again be covered with tanbark." (Auf. Col.)

1794

AFTER SCHOOL WORK FOR BOYS

January 16, 1794 - "It was noted with concern that after school hours our younger boys are not held to useful employment, but one sees them running about the streets or playing ball. Of course playing, ball playing for example, cannot be forbidden entirely, since it gives them exercise which they need, but to spend all the time between school hours in that way will have a bad effect in the future. It would be much better to give them useful employment after school hours. Generally they are given something in school which they are to do or learn at home, and the parents should see to it that this is properly done or learned. But if they have been given no homework for the school, or if it is quickly finished, parents should have it at heart to find something useful for them to do, which would give them exercise, either splitting wood or some similar household task." (Helf. Conf.)

LAND SPECULATION

February 4, 1794 - "The appointed Brethren have begun to help Br. Yarrell with his inventory. They have found that Br. Yarrell, like others here, has been buying land in the hope of making something by it. We think that Brethren who are in debt should not buy land; and that even if they have the means it would be more brotherly to consult with some of the Brethren before they buy. The desire for profit, which is the cause of it, does the Brethren no good; and it is more than probable that parents who buy land for their children do them harm thereby, and give them opportunity to leave the congregation." (Auf. Col.)

THE FIRE ENGINES

May 21, 1794 - "The time of storms in approaching, and the fire-engines should be tested. No one could answer the question whether all houses were provided with fire buckets. Men sometimes feel too safe from danger, and then when the danger comes it is too late." (Auf. Col.)



This recreation of the second fire engine shows women serving as bucket brigade to fill its tank. This dramatization was held in the 1950's. (Forsyth County Public Library Photo Collection)

October 6, 1796 - "Br. Christopher Vogler has taken the position of Master of the Fire-engines." (Cong. Council)

LOVEFEAST

August 7, 1794 - "It is proposed hereafter to serve only one cup of tea or coffee in lovefeast, and to increase the size of the bun to cover the difference in cost of the second cup. Many persons never take more than one cup." (Cong. Council)

LICENSES AND TAXES

September 9, 1794 - "An act of Congress provided that all persons selling wine and imported liquors must have a license. We cannot decide in how far this applies to us, for there is really no one here who handles imported liquors." (Auf. Col.) The Brethren made their own beer and wine.

January 20, 1795 - "We could get no definite information as to whether the snuff made here was subject to taxation under the act of Congress, so Br. Marshall wrote to Bethlehem (Pennsylvania) to learn how it was being understood there, and was told that they were not paying tax on that kind of tobacco. The excise master here has also asked for nothing on it, so we assume that it may continue as it has been." (Auf. Col.)

September 13, 1795 - "Congress has laid a duty on all carriages which is due this month. If the supervisor of this duty does not come it shall be paid to Br. Blum." (Auf. Col.)

December 18, 1798 - "From Philadelphia newspaper we learn that following the old usage churches, parsonages, and schoolhouses will be free of taxes. To accord with this they must also be free here." (Auf. Col.)

May 23, 1799 - "One week from today the assessor will be here. The length and breadth of each house, the lots, and the out-houses, must be listed. According to the Act, each house must be given in by the actual occupant, and he must pay the tax." (Cong. Council)

1795

UPKEEP OF GOD'S ACRE

April, 1795-"God's Acre has been enlarged and re-fenced, and the green sod placed on the graves has given it in one day a quite new aspect. We again held our Easter service there though not until afternoon because of the many visitors who filled all the space in and around the Saal during the preaching.

"Since the graves in God's Acre have been sodded it would look well to cover the walks with the tan-bark."

STORM DRAINAGE PROBLEMS

June 24, 1795 - "The evening meeting had to be dropped because of a storm, of which we had had many during the day. The last continued all night, and was accompanied by heavy rain resembling a cloud burst. In the morning of the 25th, our creek was several inches higher than it has been since Salem was founded, and was still rising. The hard rain had also done much damage to the roads, gardens, mill dam, and to the former fulling-mill where a piece of a new wall was washed out. Our grist mill, recently repaired, was in no small danger, but escaped, except that a part of the mill dam broke. The water was several feet deep in the mill."(Salem Diary)

January 19, 1796 - "A bend in the Wach (Salem Creek) below the ford hinders the flow of water, and in times of flood causes much damage to the ford and the road beyond. "It would not cost a great deal to straighten the creek here, and we will consider what shall be done about it." (Auf. Col.)

March 29, 1796 - "There was a discussion concerning the carrying off of the rain water, and it will be well if the matter is taken up in detail to determine how this may be done." (Auf. Col.)

FIRST STREET LIGHTS

In December, 1790, the Congregation Council recommended that one lantern should be hung in front of the Gemein Haus to light both steps, and another at the schoolhouse on the side toward the Brothers House.

Apparently nothing was done about street lighting until six years later:

September 5, 1797 - "The two lanterns ordered from Philadelphia for lighting the streets have arrived. We think they should be placed at the two corners of the Square between the Gemein Haus and the Brothers House." (Auf. Col.)

September 12, 1797 - "It was decided first to place one of the street lights, and then we can see where the other should go. We think that the posts should stand about eight feet above the ground." (Auf. Col.)

1797

CREEK NAMES

January 17, 1797-"The names of the various streams in Wachovia have changed in the course of the years, so that many of them are practically unknown. Collegium thinks that on maps and in deed the old names should be retained but the new ones should also appear." (Auf. Col.)

1798

DROUGHT

October 23 and 30, 1798-"We regret that one well after another in the town is going dry, and there is constant complaint about lack of water." Later: "The shortage of water continues, and Brethren and Sisters should use it sparingly until rain fills the springs." (Auf. Col.)

CONSTRUCTION OF THE SALEM CHURCH

Ground was broken for the Salem Church on May 25, 1798, and the foundation was laid on June 12th, with the copper box being placed by the Brethren of the Helfer Conferenz furs Ganze in the foundation stone at the southwest corner of the building.

The outsides of the building measured ninety-two by forty-six feet, with the lower walls being three feet in thickness, and the timbers in the framework of the roof were remarkably heavy. Joseph Essic was paid for "molding and burning" 144,000 brick for the church. The very best available materials and workmanship went into the construction of this building. The new organ made by David Tanneberger of Lititz, Pa., was installed, the bell was hung in the tower, and the town clock was placed in the front gable end of the building. Frederick Marshall prepared the preliminary plans for the church, and the completed structure complied quite closely with his ideas.

On November 9, 1800, the new church was consecrated. The event had been announced all through Wachovia and the surrounding country, and more than two thousand attended.

1800

THE BOARDING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Classes for little girls had been conducted in homes of Salem for sometime before February 10, 1800 when the Congregation Council met in special session to plan the building of the house for the boarding school for girls. It was proposed to construct a brick two story building, between the Gemein Haus and the Sisters House, on Church Street, opposite the Square. The building was to house about sixty daughters, which was considered "the largest number that should be received according to the size of the town." A subsequent building committee decided the structure should be 62 feet long and 40 feet wide.

The foundation stone of the house was laid on October 6, 1803, and Bishop Reichel read the lists which were deposited in the cornerstone. In the course of one year and nine months the building was successfully completed.

The first eight boarding pupils arrived in May, 1804, and they were housed in the Gemein Haus until the school building was ready. To these were added two pupils from town, making a total of ten boarding pupils: Elizabeth Strudwick, Ann Kirkland and Elizabeth Kirkland all of Hillsboro, N.C.,

Mary Philips of Tarboro, Anna Norfleet of Scotland Neck, Felicia Norfleet from Gates County, Anna Staiert of Fayetteville, Rebecca Carter from Caswell County and Anna Pauline Shober and Mary Steiner from Salem.

Ten or so day scholars, added to these, formed three classes. The girls ranged in age from eight to twelve years, which was the established age for admittance to the school.

This Boarding School for girls, later known as Salem Academy and College, is the third oldest school in the United States for the higher education of young women.

NOTES FROM THE TAVERN

May 27, 1800 - "Brother Blum proposes to get a new license from a justice for 40 sh. under the new law. It permits him, as does the present court license, to sell drinks in small quantities; and it is believed that it does not bind him to the ratio established by the court. The word, 'Tavern' must be removed from the sign, and the word 'Entertainment' substituted." (Auf. Col.)

November 23, 1803 - "The proposal of Br. Elrod that no strong drink shall be dispensed in the Tavern on Sunday, except to travelers, is entirely according to the wish of the Conferenz." (Aelt. Conf.)

BRIEF ITEMS OF INTEREST: MARRIAGES

August 14, 1800 - "In the meeting of the communicants at eight o'clock Br. Benzien asked the thoughts and prayers of the congregation for the Single Br. Christian Thomas Pfohl and the single Sr. Elizabeth Fockel (Fogle) whose formal betrothal took place today." (Salem Diary)

August 19, 1800 - "In the evening at eight o'clock Br. Kohler spoke on the Text of the day, and then performed the marriage ceremony for Br. Pfohl and Sr. Elizabeth Fockel."

September 22, 1808 - "The Single Br. Friedrich Christian Meinung, bookkeeper for the congregation, and for the Unity Administration office, was married this evening to the Single Sr. Johanne Elizabeth Praezel, who has taught with much faithfulness in the Boarding School for four years -- it was remarked that this was the first marriage here of two persons who had been born in Salem." (Salem Diary)

October 11, 1809 - "A letter from Bethlehem announces the arrival of Br. Wilhelm Fries after a very quick voyage of five weeks." Fries married Johanna Elizabeth Nissen on October 13, 1811.(Aelt. Conf.)

May 21, 1805 - "Our town physician, Br. Vierling, often finds it difficult to arrange for the lodging of out-of-town patients, and proposes that he might rent the farm now occupied by Br. and Sr. Opiz and establish a hospital there. It was suggested that he might use the still-house." (Auf. Col.)

FIRST LOVEFEAST IN NEW SALEM CHURCH

October 28, 1800 - "Many Brethren and Sisters in the town are very anxious to have a lovefeast for everybody, and after due consideration it was decided that after the preaching there should be a lovefeast with buns and beer. The cost will probably be from 15 pounds to 16 pounds and a collection shall be taken among the married people and the Single Brethren. Br. Schober will lend the necessary tin cups." (Auf. Col.)

1801

THE SALEM SQUARE

June 11, 1801 - "Recently the trees in the Square, in front of the Brothers House, the Sisters House, and the well, have been lopped and hacked in a very ignorant manner. They are for ornament, and also for the health of the town, and no private person has a right to molest them. If trimming was necessary, it should have been left to Brethren who knew how to do it."

March 16, 1802 - "The pine trees in the Square have been so badly mistreated that one after the other is dying. We do not know the author of this mischief, but it sets a bad example for our young people, and may easily encourage children in naughty tricks." (Auf. Col.)

September 14, 1802 - "At several entrances to the Square the posts and rails have been removed, and anyone can ride or drive in. We do not wish the Square to be used that way, and it was decided to leave the entrances open but to make them not more than three feet wide." (Auf. Col.)

January 7, 1806 - "As building has been finished, the fence around the Square should be put into proper order, with only four entrances, namely one in the middle of the north side, a second in the middle of the east side, the third at the southwest corner, and the fourth on the west side at the Market House." (Auf. Col.)

March 21, 1809 - "Next winter the water-beeches in the middle of the Square shall be removed, and their places filled with poplars, which shall be planted to edge walks across the Square."

April 18, 1809 - "The well house in the square is beginning to rot. Instead of building another it will be better to close the top and put a small roof over it." (Auf. Col.)

THE IMPOSTER-SALEM'S FIRST CASE OF FRAUD

December 10, 1801 -"A man, Adelbertus Cimbria, arrived today and asked to remain with us for the balance of his life (he is seventy-six years old.) According to his story he was a preacher in Switzerland, and some years ago, during the way, his wife died and the French robbed him of all he had. He left there, and since coming to this land he has been preaching in Kentucky. We furnished him with support for a few days on a neighboring plantation, and Br. John Wesner of Friedberg offered to take him to his house and care for him. He did not stay there long, but moved some miles to another plantation; and then to another; and so he moved about until January of the next year when he died on a farm not far from Reedy Creek. His behavior and his remarks soon taught us that he was not one of the most honorable of men. From the papers when he left it was learned that he had a wife and children in Charleston and a sister in Virginia." (Salem Diary)

1802

TIME TO STOP WORK

April 13, 1802 -"Br. Schroeter will ring the bell for stopping work when it is too dark to thread a needle." (Auf. Col.)

A FULL DAYS WORK FOR BROTHER MEINUNG

April 13, 1802 -"Br. Friedrich Meinung is now twenty-one years old, and his further employment was discussed.

- (a) "In the morning, under direction of Br. Kramsch, he shall be employed chiefly in copying our reports, for which he shall receive 1/6 per sheet.
- (b) "In the afternoon he will be busy with bookkeeping, for which he shall receive 20 pounds a year.
- (c) "In addition he shall make gravestones and survey land, for which people shall pay him separately." (Auf. Col.)

MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENTS

August 30, 1802 - "The Aufseher Collegium has suggested and the Aeltesten Conferenz has approved that the main street in Salem shall be improved. From the store to the point where Shallowford Road turns from it the street shall be raised, graded, and paved in some way yet to be decided. On each side there shall be a proper gutter, stone paved." (Cong. Council)

October 5, 1802 -"The street will be raised according to the last survey, and the dirt will be taken from the hill between the bakery and the house of the congregation Vorsteher. It shall be somewhat higher in the middle, sloping toward the sides, where there shall be stone gutters. Where the street is filled the most poles can be laid, then the entire fill can be covered with rock with earth over it." (Auf. Col.)

January 29, 1807 - "The bad condition of the roads around our town led to a decision to improve them as soon as possible. A beginning will be made with the road leading down by the Brothers House, and Br. Kreuser promises to cover the lower part with small stones like a turnpike, making a good road of it. The hill will be covered with poles, after the street has been raised a little." (Cong. Council)

WATER WORKS

December 25, 1802 - "Day before yesterday the leak in the old water pipes was found, and as another spring has been added to the supply the great lack has suddenly come to an end, and the Choir Houses and families are again bountifully furnished with water." Apparently this abundance of water was short lived since on October 27, 1803, "...the constant complaints about the pipe water show more and more that our water-works are insufficient."

To supplement the dwindling water supply the Brethren resorted to the digging of cisterns. Cisterns were wells, generally below ground, used for the storage of rain water from the roofs of buildings. During the dry weather seasons this water was drawn from the cisterns in buckets or by pumps, and used for domestic purposes. In March, 1804, it was decided that a cistern should be dug to supply wash-water for the Sisters House; and on August 6, 1805, it is recorded that "the shortage of water grows worse, and it will be well to build a cistern for the Boarding School at the lower end of the new shed."

August 21, 1806 - "The head spring of our water system has been failing more and more for some years and finally gave out entirely, causing a serious lack of water. There was great joy in Salem a week or two ago when it was accidentally found again a little farther down the hill, and as strong as ever."

Clay pipes were being used for conducting water, and the Brethren immediately investigated.

March 18, 1806 - "In a newspaper we have seen high praise of clay pipes from conducting water, and we considered whether they could not be tried here. Br. Christ wishes to get such a pipe from Charlestown on the Ohio, where they are made, so that he can get a clearer idea of them, and will write about it to Br. Heckenwalder." (Auf. Col.)

September 23, 1806 - "Br. Christ has made several earthenware pipes and will put them together so that we can see whether we can make cement that will hold water."

November 3, 1808 - "It was mentioned that a trial was being made with four hundred clay pipes (water), but only time would show their effectiveness"

1803

JOHN VOLGER MOVES TO SALEM

January 19, 1803 - "In the Aeltesten Conferenz permission was given to the Single Society Br. John Vogler, of Friedland, to become a member of this congregation. He has been here for some time, working at gun-smithing with his uncle, Christoph Vogler." (Salem Diary)

On April 3, 1810, John Vogler purchased Br. Eberhard's stock of watch works, faces, and glasses, and later took the boy Traugott Leinbach on trial in his silversmith and watch shops. On February 7, 1816, Vogler received an invitation to move to Bethlehem, PA and there carry on his trade as a silversmith. Vogler stated that he did not wish to live in Bethlehem and refused the offer.

In March of 1816, he offered to buy the lot at the southwest corner of Main and West Streets, on which stood the small frame house which had been built by Reuter, the Surveyor. He proposed to remove the old frame building and to construct a new brick dwelling. On April 8, the Collegium granted his request and gave permission for him to take possession of the property in the following year.

Vogler married Christina Spach on March 7, 1819. During that year he built a two-story brick house on the lot. This brick house still stands, and was restored by Old Salem, Inc. The Reuter house was reconstructed in the rear of the Vogler house.

MANAGEMENT OF THE TANNERY.

March 16, 1803 - "Br. Heinrich Herbst shall remain master of the tannery until April 30 of this year. Beginning May 1, the business shall be conducted jointly by the Brn Heinrich and Jonas Herbst and Johann Christian Fockel under the firm name of Heinrich Herbst & Co. So long as his strength permits Br. Heinrich Herbst will retain general oversight, and nothing of importance shall be done without his advice and approval. Br. Jonas Herbst will look after the buying and selling, hold the cash, keep the accounts, and carry on the correspondence. Br. Johann Cristian Fockel will be master workman, and will look after the workmen, journeyman, and apprentices. Apprentices will be bound to him.

"Br. Fockel will be allowed one shilling a day for each apprentice, giving him breakfast and supper, and one shilling, sixpence for boarding each day laborer. The Brn. Jonas Herbst and Christian Fockel will receive free wood, salt, and lights." (Aelt. Conf.)

LAND SOLD FOR FIVE DOLLARS PER ACRE

April, 1803 - "The unsold land in and outside Wachovia is about 60,000 acres. The best land has long since been sold, and in the balance there is much which is really poor. Br. Marshall did not think it wise to make an appreciable difference in the price, but within bounds allowed the people to make their own selection, and the price has risen slowly, in the years when the price of grain was high, until it is three or four dollars; indeed last fall I was so fortunate as to sell two or three hundred acres fairly near Salem at five dollars an acre." (Report from Christian Ludwig Benzien)

The Wachovia Tract of nearly 100,000 acres was purchased by the Unity of Brethren for approximately \$35,000, or about \$0.35 per acre, so the selling price of \$5.00 per acres was quite an increase in land value.

PROPOSED ROADS AND STREETS

June 1, 1803 - "It was again suggested that an avenue be opened in line with the street in front of the Gemein Haus and Sisters House. It could be used in walking for pleasure." (Aelt. Conf.) (This would be an extension of Church Street south from the Square.)

There was some opposition to construction of the Waughtown-Clemmonsville Road:

January 27, 1807- "The Collegium was not pleased to hear that a Petition was to be presented to court asking for the laying out of a new road from Bagge (Waughtown-the settlement south of Salem Creek) to Clemens (sic). If this should be done the present road through our town to Riddle's Ferry will be less used and our trade will suffer. (Auf. Col.)

February 3, 1807 - "The proposed new road from Clemens to Bagge was fully discussed again, and it was agreed to prepare a petition to be signed by those who would have good reason to oppose it. Among them Br. Benzien was mentioned especially, for it was believed that as Proprietor of the land through which most of the road would run he could most properly object to it, as it would seriously interfere with the sale of the land, and a large part of it would be ruined. The road is the more unnecessary as there are already several roads between the two places and the more new roads are laid out the less the others are kept in repair. We do not doubt that many of our neighbors especially in Friedland and Hope, will sign such a petition as the making of the new road through their own land would fall partly on them." (Auf. Col.)

The next entry indicates that Br. Benzien had a different opinion about the proposed new road, and it appears that he was a far sighted man of good judgment.

February 4, 1807 - "Br. Benzien refuses to sign the petition against the new road from Bagge to Clemmons, as he is convinced that it would further rather than retard the sale of his land." (Aelt. Conf.)

March 17, 1807 - "It was noted that the court had named a jury to see whether a better way could be found for the Shallowford Road above the paper mill." (Auf. Col.)

CONSTRUCTION OF THE MARKET AND FIRE ENGINE HOUSE

The Market and Fire-Engine House was staked on August 18, 1803 on the west side of the Square, the building to be thirty feet long and twenty wide.

June 1, 1804 - "The market and fire-engine house is now ready for the intended use." (This building was reconstructed on the original stone foundation --- below ground level --- by Old Salem, Inc.)

FIRE INSPECTORS' REPORT

December 13, 1803-"The fire inspectors yesterday visited all the houses in town, and report:

- (a) "That a number of houses are not yet provided with fire-buckets;
- (b) "That not all have absolutely safe places in which to keep ashes;
- (c) "That many out-door bake-ovens are not so arranged that one can feel easy about them." (Auf. Col.)