



CCHA Bulletin

January 2025

Caswell County Historical Association
THE OFFICIAL SITE OF THE CCHA & THE RICHMOND-MILES MUSEUM

Enjoying the bit of snow & cold snap in Caswell?

Check out this story from the archives...
The Big 1940 Snow Storm

The Big Snow

Reprinted from the *Live & Times* 2019
by Sandra Aldridge

January normally is the coldest month in Caswell County, with an average low temperature of 28°. It also is the snowiest month, with an average snowfall of 2.7 inches. But January 1940 was not average.

You may have heard county residents talk about the “Big Snow,” as it has become legend. On Tuesday, January 23, 1940, snow flurries began around noon and continued for almost twenty-four hours.

That night a sharp north wind created blizzard conditions resulting in snow drifts of six to eight feet. Regional radio stations warned motorists to avoid Caswell County.

No official measurements of snowfall are known. However, the Caswell Prison and the local Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) both reported 30 inches. Snow depths of at least 20 inches were reported elsewhere in the county.

The massive snowfall blocked the county’s main highways and secondary roads. North Carolina Department of Transportation workers worked long shifts clearing the snow. However, they were severely handicapped by inadequate equipment.



Many workers were stranded and spent most of that first night waiting for help to clear their snowplows. The CCC, established in 1933 as part of the New Deal, employed thousands during the Depression.

The Caswell County CCC camp located on the County Home Road opened in 1935. The Caswell Messenger reported that 200 CCC

workers did much of the work of removing snow from Yanceyville streets and sidewalks (see photograph above). Residents provided trucks for hauling snow.

Most Yanceyville businesses were affected, resulting in late openings and limited hours. But not so the Bank of Yanceyville. Assistant Cashier Earl Jones Smith (1910-1985) trekked from his home through the deep snow to open the bank for normal business hours. Query whether the bank did much business that day.

County mail delivery also was disrupted, with service to more remote areas not resumed until the week following the snow. And Yanceyville's two medical doctors, Dr. Stephen A. Malloy (1872-1944) and Dr. Houston L. Gwynn (1896-1963) were forced to make house calls by muleback. One man whose wife was in labor, fought his way eight miles to Yanceyville for assistance. Dr. Gwynn road a mule and delivered the baby.



It was several weeks before the snow was gone, and life returned to normal.

Photographs: (1) Yanceyville Square looking east before the snow was cleared. Courtesy Louise Moore Atwater Estate; (2) CCC clearing snow from the Yanceyville Square. Courtesy family of John Oliver Gunn; (3) Bank of Yanceyville. Courtesy CCHA.

Friendly reminder that the CCHA hopes to have all renewals in by January 31, 2025 in order to get our budget in place.
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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