

Museum Around the Corner

The Georgetown County Historical Society Museum

A View of the Future in 1896 ©

A supplement to the Georgetown Times in 1896 offers insight into the dreams and aspirations of the citizens of that day. Without further preamble, here is a small part of their needs and predictions for the future century.

“...with this period of prosperity, there will also be ushered in a series of distinctively municipal improvements, that may well be hoped and expected. Among these may be mentioned the electric light plant for the illumination of the streets, public buildings, stores and residences of the city; the continued grading and macadamizing of our streets; an improved and thorough system of sewage, constructed and operating at a correct hygienic principle; a public park, waterworks for drinking and sanitary purposes and fire protection; a new and modern City Hall, in which there shall be a spacious auditorium equipped with the necessary conveniences for public meetings, addresses, lectures and exhibitions; a Boulevard and sea-wall, encircling the eastern limits of the city, where they are now bathed by the waters of Winyah Bay and the Black and Sampit Rivers; and finally, perhaps, an electric railway.

Then she may go a step further and establish a system of public baths, at which the habits of cleanliness may be learned and cultivated at a nominal charge by her citizens, while the public health will at the same time be promoted. At a minimal charge – at first, afterwards, when our public revenues shall permit it, free as the air we breathe.

Next should come a hospital...at which the destitute sick, of all classes and conditions of society, may obtain free medical and surgical attendance and skilled nursing.

Perhaps next, should come a Free Circulating Library – one of the sorest, saddest needs of the Georgetown of today – a blessing which the written hopes to see soon conferred upon the starving intellects of our people through the benevolence of some of her foremost citizens. The rich men of our city can build no nobler or more enduring monument to themselves...than by erecting a library building in our city with a selection of the best, purest, most instructive and most elevating literature...this storehouse of mental food, this granary of intellectual and moral nourishment, may fitly be said to be of equal urgency.

“Looking Forward – Good businessmen are here to stay and to work, and others just as good are coming and will be welcomed, and these and those are all going to pull together for Georgetown’s prosperity, and are going to spend their capital IN Georgetown and FOR Georgetown. That’s the main factor.

The U.S. Government is still improving the navigability of our waterways, will soon complete the Estherville-Minim Creek Canal, to be one hundred feet wide and seven feet deep at low water, connecting the Santees with Winyah Bay, hence largely increasing our commerce and business.

Winyah Bay Bar is on the continuous contract plan, and nearly \$2,000,000 will be spent in its improvement, and then – deep-water, trans-Atlantic ships, foreign trade relations, cotton and naval stores from the interior rushing to Georgetown for transshipment, new populations, new capital, new

business enterprises – growth – growth – growth – all along the commercial line – improvement – improvement – improvement – all along the municipal line.

Within twelve months a GEORGETOWN steamboat line, on the PeeDees and Santees, will run in the interest of Georgetown; meaning a multiplication of business interests and profits for Georgetown men.

A new railroad connection with Florence, SC and thence with the West – competition between lines, and cheaper freights, and more business, is a bright probability.

Close and quick connection with Pawleys Island will be established by ferry boat to Bannockburn and a dummy line up the Waccamaw to the island.

Rapid and continuous improvement in real estate, new dwellings, new business houses, new manufactories must and will follow, and the values of realty must and will be enhanced.

The electric light is a fixed fact, the contract will soon be signed, and Georgetown will then, for her size, be the best lighted city in the State.

Waterworks will follow, then paved streets, then a trolley line.

Some of these are in sight and absolutely certain, others are coming with the inevitability of a rising sun, for a bright dawn is in the municipal sky, and the rest will come, can be made to come if our people work as they should – together for a common interest, viz: the prosperity of Georgetown. And so working, only another decade will see old Georgetown in full realization of her fondest hopes – a model modern city, full of prosperity, the centre of a vast foreign and domestic trade, and what nature intended her to be in time, the principal South Atlantic doorway for nation's trade."