

Interesting Facts About Graham

- The first courthouse was built in 1851 at a cost of \$6,400.
- The first court session of Alamance County was held on June 4, 1849 at Providence Christian Church.
- The streets of Graham weren't officially named until 1892. Main Street and Elm Street were originally called Stockard and Mebane Streets.
- The Sesquicentennial Park site was once commonly referred to as "Pugh Corner," in recognition of John R. Pugh who purchased the property in 1872.
- The Graham Presbyterian Church had a cemetery located on W. Harden Street. In 1896, the thirty-five bodies buried there were moved to Linwood Cemetery.
- Local pharmacist Dr. J. C. Simmons owned the first car in town.
- During World War II, Graham's school children raised enough money to purchase a military jeep for the Army.
- Tom Zachary threw the record-breaking 60th home run pitch to Babe Ruth. On "The Ed Sullivan Show," Zachary said that everyone remembers the home run, but no one remembers how many times he struck the Babe out.
- The Courthouse and First Baptist Church were designated as bomb shelters during the Cold War.
- In 1963, Jeanne Swanner won the Miss North Carolina Pageant and went on to be named Miss Congeniality in the Miss America Pageant.
- Dr. Will Long was a fire chief for over 40 years.
- In 1963, the local tax rate was \$1.60 per \$100.00. In 2001 it was \$0.38 per \$100.00.
- In 1880, the town jail was so flimsy that a prisoner cut his way to freedom with a knife.
- The first female jailer in Alamance County and possibly the state was Mrs. Alma Gowens in 1936.
- A cistern was located on the northwest corner of Court Square for fire protection. A hand-operated pump was used to fight second story fires.
- The corners of Court Square were popular places during spring and fall court weeks for horse traders to sell plug horses to gullible purchasers.
- Talmadge Nelson painted "Graham N.C." on the roof of the Travora Mill. The letters were twelve feet high so they could be seen from an airplane.
- The first floor of the Nicks Building was built above street level to keep the pigs and cows out.
- The Thomas M. Holt Lodge 492 met upstairs at Wrike Drug Store.
- During WW II, the Old Christian Church was used as a USO.
- Parker Street was named for Capt. E.S. Parker of the Confederate Army.
- Graham Fire Department's 1930 Seagraves shot a stream of water to the top of the Alamance Hotel in Burlington.
- Sallie Stockard wrote "The History of Alamance" in 1900.
- The Oneida Cotton Mill was named for the textile equipment purchased from Oneida, N.Y.
- Graham High School has won seven state sports championships.
- Alamance County Rescue was organized by the Graham Fire Department in 1955.
- Graham High School played in the Hosiery Bowl in 1948 and 1949.

GRAHAM

NORTH CAROLINA

A City Designed For Living



Important Dates in the History of Graham

- 1792 Providence Christian Church opened the first school.
- 1851 The Town of Graham was officially incorporated.
- 1852 The Christian Churches of North Carolina and Virginia opened the Graham Institute two blocks south of the courthouse.
- 1857 Rail service became available one mile from the courthouse.
- 1875 The *Alamance Gleaner* was founded by Captain E.S. Parker.
- 1876 Gubernatorial candidates Zebulon B. Vance and Thomas Settle held a debate before a crowd of 5,000.
- 1878 E.M. Holt built "Elmhurst" for his daughter, Mary, the wife of Captain James N. Williamson.
- 1882 Oneida Mill was built on West Harden Street.
- 1885 Sidney Mill was built in north Graham.
- 1888 The Christian Church took over the operation of the Graham Normal School and changed its name to Graham College, the forerunner of Elon University.
- 1892 Graham becomes the first town in Alamance County to have a paved street.
- 1892 The *Graham Times* was published for the first time.
- 1898 Sallie Walker Stockard became the first woman to graduate from the University of North Carolina.
- 1902 Helen Williams, daughter of Dr. J.C. Williams, pushed the switch that brought electric lights to Graham.
- 1903 The Vestal Building opened in January.
- 1903 Graham Fire Department Hose Company No. 1 was founded.
- 1905 The first water works was constructed.
- 1906 The last hanging as a form of execution in Alamance County was conducted in the yard of the county jail on Maple Street.
- 1907 Miss Carrie Nation arrived in Graham to denounce alcoholic beverages.
- 1907 The Opera House in the Mont-White Theatre building opened with the play "A Question of Husbands" to a packed house.
- 1908 The Nuggett opened as Graham's first "moving picture show" in a canvas tent downtown.
- 1911 A streetcar line opened that connected Graham with Burlington and Haw River. The line terminated in front of the courthouse.
- 1911 The Graham Firemen's Building was completed on West Elm Street.
- 1914 The monument to honor the men who served in the Confederate Army was erected.
- 1915 W. Earnest Thompson opened the Christo Cola Bottling Works Company.
- 1916 The Chero Cola Bottling Company opened.
- 1919 Green and McClure moved to their present location on North Main Street.

- 1920 The National Guard was called into Graham to protect four men that had been arrested. The guardsmen opened fire in Court Square with machine guns, killing one local citizen. The accused were later found innocent.
- 1923 The old courthouse was razed and construction of the present courthouse was started.
- 1924 Rich and Thompson moved their furniture business into the Mont-White building.
- 1924 Curtis Wrike opened Wrike Drug Store.
- 1928 The Graham Theatre was built.
- 1929 Graham Fire Department Hose Company No. 2 was founded in the Sidney area.
- 1933 The Graham Drug Company opened on North Main Street.
- 1935 The Graham Theatre was gutted by fire and rebuilt as it is today. The feature at the grand opening was "The Little Colonel" starring Shirley Temple.
- 1936 Deputy/jailer Lawrence Gowens was killed in the line of duty on Maple Street
- 1937 Foust Thompson opened the Graham Soda Shop.
- 1945 The *Alamance News* started publication.
- 1954 Hurricane Hazel destroyed the third floor of the Nick's Building.
- 1977 A fire in the Graham Soda Shop building severely damaged the structure, which was later razed.
- 1978 Patrolman William A. "Bill" Robertson was killed in the line of duty on Hanover Road.
- 1980 The Graham City Council approved the Courthouse Square Historic District.
- 1999 The North Main Street Historic District was approved.
- 2000 Public Works employee Bruce Lee McCann was killed on the job.
- 2001 The Sesquicentennial Park and Graham Historical Museum opened.



Streetcar with open sides for summer use, ca. 1911.