

A House Opened for Worship & Education: Peter Hoskins of Crouse

Crouse Community History & Photo Project

In our thirty-fifth installment we looked at the two churches that stood for nearly fifty years on opposite corners of Pleasant Grove Church Road. This week we turn to a man who lived on what is now Boy Scout Road and opened his own house for worship and, for a time, for school.

People of color lived in Howards Creek Township before Peter Hoskins arrived, yet a 1924 newspaper account called him the first of his race known to settle there and the only colored person then owning land in the township. Whether earlier residents held land is not known. The claim rests on that printed report rather than a surviving deed, but his name appears often enough in local papers, court records, and school funds to show a long and active presence in and around Crouse.

On May 8, 1924, the *Lincoln Times-News* carried a piece titled “Peter Hoskin Colored, of Crouse Enroute to 100 Yrs.” The paper said he would be one hundred the following December. Peter had located at Crouse fifty years earlier and worked on the Seaboard Air Line railway when that road was being built. He

came from near Danville, Virginia, where he had been a slave on a Virginia tobacco farm before he was freed, and had worked for his master in a tobacco factory before the war.

He preached at Union Church at Crouse, described as a house of worship for all people of color regardless of denomination. Union Church services were held in Peter's own home in Crouse on the tract where the current Crouse Community Building sits. Robert Dellinger recalls his mother Margaret talking about those gatherings. She told him that Peter would open all the windows during his service so that everyone, not just the Negro congregation inside, in the community could listen and that white residents of Crouse would stand in the yard to hear the preaching. This Union Church is not to be confused with the Union Church which was located in the Wampum Mill Village in Lincolnton.