



Military College and Hospital in use during the Civil War.



Looking West on Main Street at about the time Mr. Strother began wholesale operations.



Canal Boat—Mode of transportation across Virginia in the Nineteenth Century.

When the Civil War came Dr. Strother was a well-established pharmacist, a married man with a young son. Nevertheless when Virginia seceded he went off to war with the first contingent, a Lieutenant in the Lynchburg Rifles. The drug business was left in the hands of a clerk. But as the war wore on the shortage of drugs in the South became so critical that Dr. Strother was released from the Army to return to Lynchburg where the military hospitals desperately needed his skill to improvise medicine from all manner of native herbs and substitute materials. Even with this responsibility, he found time to organize and command a home guard company of older men and boys.

The war and its aftermath was a trying period for the Strother firm, but once recovery began it was rapid. Before long Dr. Strother was among the foremost leaders of a city mushrooming with new tobacco manufacturing ventures. He soon developed a number of secret tobacco flavoring mixtures, but beyond this he was a part of the business boom in many ways. In time he became a bank director and was active in a wide variety of philanthropic, civic and social affairs. The fact most to his credit, however, was the abundant affection and respect felt for him by the community.

The year President Garfield was assassinated—1881—Lynchburg was agog with its new horse-car street railway. The town talk was of more telephones and the project for putting electric arc lights on the street corners. That year Dr. Strother's son, William M. Strother, was compelled by an eye injury to leave medical training. He returned to Lynchburg, married, and entered into his father's firm. Soon afterward father and son determined to expand into the wholesale drug business. Their motive was mainly to secure better and fresher drugs for their retail store, and this was possible only by direct purchase from importers and manufacturers. The results exceeded expectations, and as other druggists of the vicinity soon discovered the advantages of Strother wholesale service, this, rather than the retail department, soon became the main concern of the business.

At the time of Dr. Strother's death in 1892, the firm had become a leading drug supplier for Virginia and adjacent areas. The company had also begun manufacturing a number of items such as cologne, tooth powder, and flavoring syrups.

By 1898—the year the Lynchburg Zouaves went out to avenge the sinking of the Maine—The Strother firm had grown to the point that incorporation was required to further expand its facilities. William M. Strother guided this reorganization and was made the first president of the company. The private firm which his father had founded was now prepared to continue on a permanent basis into the quickened strides of the 20th Century. William M. Strother died suddenly a year after the incorporation. The work of the founders was done. By that time the company had six salesmen and thirty-six employees including the laboratory and retail department, and was prepared to supply merchandise and every item of equipment needed by the drug stores of that day. The Strothers, father and son, had lived to establish and perfect the Strother Drug Company, but more than that is the impress of character which they have left upon the organization.