

# Historical Sketches OF Wilkes County

*By*

JOHN CROUCH.

*The principal office of history I take to be this: to prevent virtuous actions from being forgotten.—Tacitus.*

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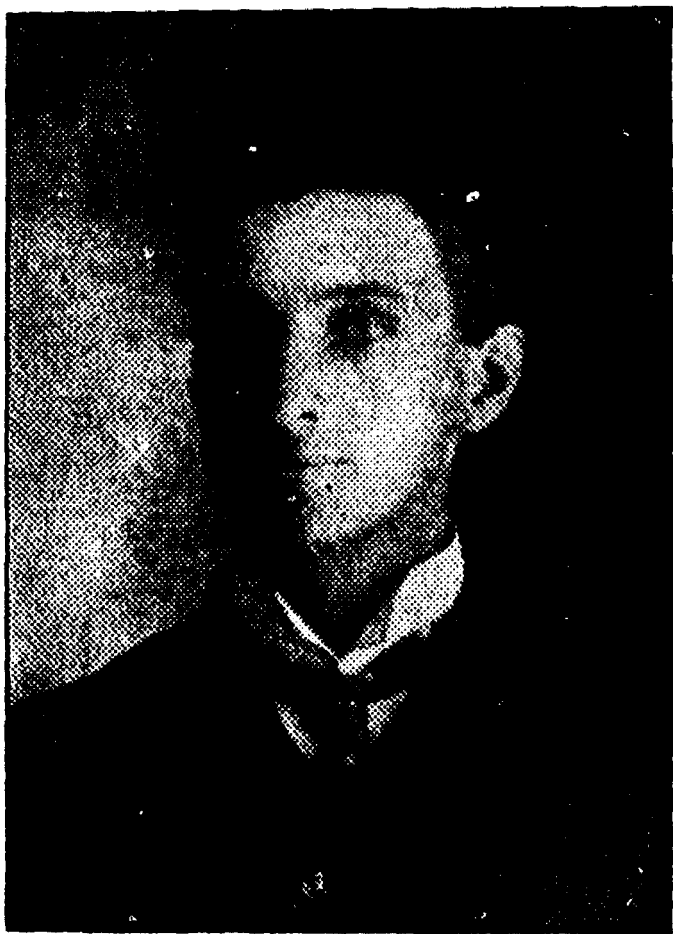
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JOHN CROUCH.



## INTRODUCTION.

**W**ILKES county has been the scene of many historic occurrences. From the time that the Moravians first made their appearance within her borders her inhabitants have been making history by the wholesale. During the Revolutionary struggle I dare say there was not another county throughout the colonies that figured so prominently as Wilkes.

At Kings Mountain, the turning point of the Revolution, about one-half the American forces were from Wilkes. And gallantly they did their country's service until the enemy's commander, who swore he had found a place "where God Almighty could not drive him from," lay dead upon the battle field and his forces either killed or taken prisoners. And when the Tories and Indians needed attention, "Cleveland's Devils," as the Tories called them, were always equal to the occasion, and there always had to be some earnest "cleaning up" on the part of the Tories and Indians or some of their party would dangle from a limb.

In the conflict with Mexico Wilkes furnished a company which did valiant service in behalf of the American cause, and our illustrious Colonel Sidney Stokes was so admired by those under his command that a beautiful sword was presented him as a token of respect and love.

And when it came to the Civil war our record stands without a parallel. Some men from Wilkes made excellent soldiers in the Union army, but most of the men of Wilkes took their stand with the Confederacy. Such leaders as Gordon, Stokes,

## INTRODUCTION.

Barber, Cowles and others, with their brave subordinates, won the esteem and love of the whole Confederate army; and their achievements on the battle fields show the display of such courage and bravery as has never been excelled in the world's history.

In the recent wars with Spain and the Filipinos Wilkes soldiers have served with distinction.

It is a lamentable fact that the history of our county has been so strangely neglected. Any of our school teachers and scholars can tell us about the history of Rome and Greece, but few of them know anything of the history of their own county, not even the date of its formation. The fair records of her early fame are almost forgotten. It is the purpose of this little book to gather such as can be obtained of these records and give them to the people of the county in a shape that they may be preserved, and that future generations may know of and share in the glory of our ancestors. It is more than probable that I have made mistakes in recording these sketches, but all the available information has been obtained, and every statement, according to my view, is as near correct as could be ascertained.

The author does not aspire to be an historian. If, in collecting and compiling and composing this little book, I shall succeed in "rescuing from the dust of age or the obliterating hand of time" only a few of the events and a few of the names of old time persons that so characterized our county in days gone by, my efforts will not be in vain. It is my desire that the people of Wilkes county may read the pages of this book and thereby be prompted to increase their patriotism and take a deeper interest in the history of their own county.

Surely the young people will take an interest in reading this book. If only the youths of North



## INTRODUCTION.

Carolina and Wilkes county could get a foretaste of our history, our records would not be hidden in darkness but our history would be given to the world, that not only ourselves, but all people might know of our achievements and profit thereby. The young people ought to be encouraged to emulate the noble record of our worthy ancestors. We are told by Sallust that Scipio and Maximus, when looking upon the statues of their illustrious countrymen, became violently agitated. He says, "It could not be the inanimate marble which possessed this mighty power. It was the recollection of noble actions which kindled this generous flame in their bosoms, only to be quenched when they, too, by their achievements and virtues, had acquired equal reputation."

"And by their light  
Shall every gallant youth with ardor move  
To do brave deeds."

Free from the shackles of parties and sects I have tried to divest myself of all partialities or prejudices, and present Wilkes county and her sons as Cromwell would have Lely to paint his portrait: "True, as it is." Nothing has been omitted from personal motives, nor have I neglected to express my views and opinions of any man or event sketched in this book because of party affiliations or sectarian principles.

*Wilkesboro, N. C.,  
Dec. 12, 1901.*



# HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF WILKES COUNTY.

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## FORMATION.

WILKES county was formed from Surry county in 1777, and was named in honor of John Wilkes, a distinguished English statesman and member of Parliament. He was ejected by the Ministerial party from Parliament on account of his liberal political views; and as often was returned by the people. He died in 1797.

The county is situated in the north-western part of North Carolina, and is bounded on the north by the Blue Ridge, which separates it from Ashe and Alleghany counties; on the east by Surry and Yadkin counties; on the south by Iredell and Alexander counties, and on the west by Caldwell and Watauga counties. The larger portion of the county lies between two great mountain ranges and the Yadkin river flows between, thus forming a valley of unexcelled fertility and picturesque beauty. Besides the Yadkin there are Mitchell's, Roaring and Reddies rivers and numerous large creeks in the county. These rise in the mountains and flow into the Yadkin, running sometimes through broad and fertile bottoms and sometimes leaping over rocks and breaking through ridges, thus affording immense water power and delightful scenery.

Wilkesboro, the capital, is a beautiful town of about 800 population, situated on the south bank of the Yadkin near the center of the county. It was

founded in 1778 by John Parks, John Barton, Geo. Gordon, Francis Hardgrave, Rowland Judd, George Morris and John Witherspoon, who were appointed by the General Assembly to select a county seat for Wilkes county. It is about 175 miles north-west of Raleigh.

The committee appointed by the General Assembly to survey the dividing line between Wilkes and Surry made the following report of their work, which is the first paper recorded in the county records:

Wilkes County Line, &c.

“A return of the proceedings of the commissioners who were appointed to run the dividing line between the counties of Surry and Wilkes, to wit:

“Beginning on Rowan county line about half a mile below Daniel Rash’s at a white oak standing in the head of a branch of Hunting creek, thence north crossing the Mulberry Field road about half a mile below Hamlin’s old store house, thence through Solomon Sparks’ plantation, leaving the said Sparks’ home in Surry county, thence crossing the Brushy mountain at the head of the north fork of Swan creek, then crossing the Yadkin river a little below Capt. Parks’ and through the lower end of Carroll’s plantation on the north side of said river, thence crossing the Big Elkin at the Long Shoals, thence crossing the south fork of Mitchell’s river about half a mile above Bigg’s road, thence crossing Mitchell’s river a little below John Scott’s, crossing the top of the Poiney Knob to the main ridge of mountains about two miles west of Fisher Peak, thence to the Virginia line; being run exactly 26 miles west of Surry court house, agreeable to act of Assembly, by

Robt. Lanier,	}	Commissioners.
Henry Speer,		
Joseph Herndon.”		

From the best information, the county of Wilkes originally embraced all the territory included in the following boundary lines: Beginning at the white oak mentioned as the starting point in the above report and running west to the Mississippi river, then north with said river to the Virginia line (now the Kentucky line), then east with said Virginia line to the north-west corner of Surry county, then south with the Surry county line—as given in the above report—to the beginning. When the county was formed it included all of the counties of Ashe, Alleghany, Watauga and Mitchell, and a portion of the counties of Iredell, Alexander, (the line ran a mile or so south of where Taylorsville now stands) Caldwell, Burke and Yancey, and probably others, and also a large portion of Tennessee. In what is now Tennessee there were local governments organized, but they were hardly recognized as counties by the State government. The districts of Washington, Watauga and Greene were organized within the borders of Wilkes and later were admitted as counties to the State of Franklin, but until Tennessee was organized Wilkes county was the legal division of all the territory included in the borders of the county.

Wilkes is not near so large now. She has given up her territory and other counties have grown out of her. Like a venerable mother she now nestles between the Brushies and the Blue Ridge with her daughters settled around her. We look upon the meadows of the counties beyond the Blue Ridge, the broad bottoms of the Yadkin in Caldwell, and on beyond the Smokies we see a section well developed and prosperous. Cities have sprung up; railroads have been built, and mines that produce millions of dollars worth of coal, iron, mica, copper, etc., have been developed. They are all the offspring of the old mother county. We look upon them to-day and

bid them God speed in their march of progress.

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## EARLY SETTLERS.

ONE hundred and seventy-five years ago Wilkes county had never been trod by the feet of Anglo-Saxons. All this vast country was inhabited only by savage Indians and the wild beasts of the forest. How little did the Indian think that in a short time he would be driven from his model hunting ground by the whites, who would clear away the giant trees of the forest and the dense jungles in the swamps along the banks of the Yadkin and other streams and cultivate the lands that were the home of the deer, elk, bear, wildcat, fox and other wild animals. But the goodly lands of this section were not intended to be always inhabited by savages and wild animals. A nobler race of people needed the territory in which to live and build homes and churches and schools.

Tradition tells us that the swamps along the Yadkin were the scene of many hard fought battles between different Indian tribes before the whites made their appearance in this section. There is good evidence to sustain this tradition. Indian war implements, such as arrow flints, tomahawks, etc., have been found in large numbers since the lands have been cleared. Also many Indian skeletons have been found. The jungles along the streams furnished excellend hiding places for the savages who would conceal themselves and lay in wait for the whites, and so the swamps were also the scene of many fights between the Indians and the whites. The freshets in the spring of 1901 unearthed several skeletons; minie balls were also found after the

freshet.

Just when the first white settlers came to what is now Wilkes county is not known. As early as 1740 the crack of the white man's rifle had brought the timid deer to the ground and frightened the other animals of the forest. Governor Rowan wrote that, "In the year 1746, I was in the territory from the Saxapahaw (now Haw river) to the mountains, and there were not above one hundred fighting men in all that back country." According to the Colonial Records there were, in 1749, only three hundred taxable men in North Carolina west of Haw river.

About the year 1750 three streams of immigrants began to pour into this section of the State—one from south-eastern Pennsylvania, one from eastern North Carolina and one from South Carolina. But most of the settlers coming within the present borders of Wilkes county came from eastern North Carolina. Among them may be mentioned the Stokes, Greenes, Mitchells, Wellbornes, Browns and others. Most of these were of English descent.

The Moravians were probably the first whites to explore the upper Yadkin valley, but few, if any, of them became permanent settlers. They came, surveyed some land, made some exploration and returned to the Moravian settlements about Salem.

Different motives prompted the first settlers to come here. Some came seeking religious freedom which was not accorded them by the provincial government. Others grasped the opportunity to come and take up the lands, while others came probably to gratify their desire for a frontier life.

The desire for absolute freedom from British rule was spreading all over the colony, and in this section, remote from the seat of the provincial government, the inhabitants could exercise more freedom than other settlers who were in closer proximity to

the British agents. Thus it was that such men as Colonel Cleveland, General Lenoir and others were ready to make their mark when the struggle came on. They cherished the thought of independence and kept adding fuel to the flame.

The early settlers found certain sections clear of timber. The places where Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro now stand were among these sections. The early settlers supposed that the Indians had cleared away the timber, but it is my opinion that the natural state of the land in these sections at that time was barren of trees. There are certain sections in the western part of the State yet where trees will not grow. Among them may be mentioned the Elk Gardens on White Top mountain and several places along the Blue Ridge. There is a small mountain in Trap Hill township called Grassy Knob that used to be barren of trees. J. Addison Spencer, in a recent letter, said that, "In 1854 my father moved from Randolph to Wilkes county and settled on the Elkin near the foot of the Blue Ridge, between two knobs known as Wellsey and Grassy Knobs, in the McCann neighborhood. The oldest man in that section at that time was James McCann, ancestor of the McCann generation. He was then about 30 years old and was one of the first settlers. I have heard him say that when he was young Grassy Knob had nothing but grass on it, from which it derived its name, and that he had seen large herds of deer grazing on it. It is now and was forty-five years ago heavily timbered.

The Cherokee Indians were quite numerous in those days, and where North Wilkesboro now stands seemed to be their capital village. Here the Indians held their annual corn dance, which was their festival of harvest. There they reeled and frenzied and made merry for days and weeks. In the bot-



toms along Yadkin and Reddies rivers, which were then heavily timbered with stately cedars, were hundreds of Indian wigwams.

On the hill where Gus Finley lived and died was erected by the early settlers a kind of fort known as the "Black House." Here the whites, when attacked by the Indians, would flee for refuge. They could spy the approaching enemy in every direction and bring him down with their deadly rifles before he could get close enough to do any injury to the whites. This house, or fort, seems to have been burnt by the Indians, but another was built on the same spot. The last one was called the "Red House." How long the "Red House" stood or how it was destroyed is not known, But it is probable that before it was destroyed the savages had been driven from the Valley of the Yadkin and it was no longer needed as a fort for protection from the attacks of the Indians.

The early settlers had to go nearly two hundred miles to Cross Creek to get salt, sugar, iron and other necessities that they could not produce here. The women of those days were more industrious than the bon tons of the elite of society that we have with us to-day pretending to be wives and mothers. They would work in the fields all day, and at night they had the cotton to seed, flax to spin, carding, weaving, knitting and many other things to do. The meals had to be prepared too, but it required only a short time to do that; the principal articles of food were "hog and hominy," and such other articles as could be produced on the plantation. Coffee and tea were rareties. Tea made from spicewood twigs, sassafras roots and sage leaves and "coffee" made of parched corn or rye was commonly used.

In the spring of the year all the stock was belled

and turned loose in the woods to shift for themselves. Troughs were hewn in logs where the stock was salted about twice a week. These troughs were called "salt licks." In those days there was a kind of wild pea vine that grew abundantly in the woods and the stock would graze upon these pea vines and do well until cold weather. These wild pea vines ceased to grow about fifty years ago.

There is quite a contrast in society then and now. In those days the dwellings usually consisted of two log houses—the kitchen and the "big house," and occasionally the "big house" had "up stairs." The "big house" was the parlor, sitting room and bed room combined. There was no organ nor piano, but the fiddle, banjo, flute and fife were the musical instruments in those days. Courting was carried on in those days, you bet, but the bon tons of to-day wouldn't have recognized the style in those days. There were no drives in costly vehicles nor expensive bridal tours. When the distance to be traveled was too far to walk they rode on horseback. Bride and groom or beau and sweetheart would both ride the same horse and hie away over the rough roads as merrily as the mated sparrows fly about their nest. The courting at home was done in the "big house" in the corner by the fire while the old folks were in bed and pretendedly asleep in the back end of the room. Corn shuckings, quiltings, etc., were great social events. At night after the work was complete, the neighborhood fiddler came in and the fun began. Until an hour or two before day both old and young, male and female, would dance and skip and play keeping step with the music all the while. Everybody believed in helping his neighbors do their work and in turn his neighbors would help him. The whole community would engage in shucking corn, etc., and keep moving about until every

man's work was done, keeping up the frolicks every night. When a man killed a hog or a yearling he would divide with his neighbors who would repay when butchering day came with them.

The principal sports among the men were hunting and horse racing, and in later years, mustering. In those days there was no tax on "grog," as they called it, and from all information it was freely used.

It is peculiarly interesting to study the habits and customs of our fore fathers who first inhabited this country; think of them chasing the deer, elk, bear and other game; their conflicts with the Indians; the every day association with such pioneers as Daniel Boone and Benjamine Cleveland. But the frontier life is a thing of the past; the pioneers have long since passed away, and all that is left is the county which they founded and nurtured in its infancy. Let us honor them by keeping the records of our county spotless and clean.

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## THE MORAVIANS IN WILKES.

LORD Granville was one of the eight Lords Proprietors of North Carolina. He did not sell his interest in the lands of North Carolina back to the King of England as did the other seven Lords Proprietors. In 1752 he granted ten thousand acres of land to the Moravians, who surveyed a part of the ten thousand acres—8778 acres—within the present borders of the county of Wilkes. Two surveys were made, known as the upper and lower Moravian surveys. The lower survey included the site of Wilkesboro and extended down the river to Blair's island, and up the river about a mile above North Wilkesboro

crossing the river and running on the north side, then again crossing the river between the Hackett and Stokes farm, leaving the latter out of the survey. The line crossed the Wilkesboro and Moravian Falls road near where R. C. Lowe now lives, and ran out near Oakwoods and back to the beginning. The upper survey included the sections about Moravian Falls and Goshen. The exact lines of either survey can not now be located.

It is said that the Moravians intended to include in their survey the bottoms on the north side of the Yadkin about where North Wilkesboro now stands, but when the surveyors came to the heights on the south side of the river and looked over and saw so many smokes rising from Indian wigwams they concluded it would be best to leave the savages unmolested, so they went a mile further up the river before crossing.

It is said that the Moravians were in search of potter's clay, and failing to find it in desirable quantities, they failed to pay Lord Granville for the land.

Lord Granville afterwards sold the lands that the Moravians had surveyed to a man in Ireland named Cassart. His son, Christian Frederick Cassart, sold the lands, by power of attorney, to Hugh Montgomery, of Salisbury. Montgomery made a deed of trust to James Kerr, David Nesbit and John Brown, who were to divide the lands to his daughters, Rachel and Rebecca. Rachel married Gov. Montford Stokes and Rebecca married General James Wellborn.

## FIRST COUNTY OFFICERS.

WILKES county was formed in 1777, but it was not organized until in the spring of the next year. Following is a list of the first county officers, who took charge of the affairs of the new county on the 2nd day of March, 1778:

Sheriff, Richard Allen.

Treasurer, Richard Allen.

Entry Taker, Benjamin Herndon.

Surveyor, Joe Herndon.

Register, John Brown.

Ranger, John Brown.

Coronor, Charley Gordon.

Clerk County Court, William Lenoir.

Representatives, Benjamin Cleveland and Elisha Isaacs.

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BENJAMIN CLEVELAND.*Ancestry.*

A STORY has it that a beauty in the time of Charles the First named Elizabeth Cleveland, a daughter of an officer of the palace of Hampton Court, attracted the attention of her sovereign, and an amour was the result. When Oliver Cromwell became the rising star of the empire the same charms won his sympathies, and a son was born unto them. The mother retired from public gaze and subsequently married a man named Bridge. When this illegitimate son grew up he took his mother's name and was the reputed author of a book, "*The Life and Adventures of Mr. Cromwell, Natural Son of Oliver Cromwell,*" published after his

death by consent of his son, first in 1731, a second edition, with a French translation in 1741, and yet another edition in 1760.

Whether or not Benjamin Cleveland descended from this man and from Oliver Cromwell is a matter of conjecture. But whether or not the story is a romance or records a series of facts it is nevertheless true that Colonel Cleveland had a copy of the book and claimed in this way to have descended from the illustrious Oliver Cromwell. Others of the Cleveland family made the same claim.

The Clevelands derive their name from a tract of country in the north Riding of Yorkshire, England, still called Cleveland.

John Cleveland was one of the early immigrants to Virginia. He settled on the since famous Bull Run, and his occupation was that of house-joiner. His son, Benjamin Cleveland, the subject of this sketch, was born there on the 26th of May, 1738; and while yet very young his father moved some sixty miles to the south-west, locating in a border settlement on Blue Run, some six or eight miles above its junction with the Rapidan, near the line of Albemarle.

### *Boyhood.*

When little Benjamin was about twelve years old, some drunken rowdies came to Cleveland's home one day when both parents were away from home. The rowdies commenced throwing the stools in the fire, when little Ben snatched his father's rifle from the racks and simply said, "gentlemen do you see this?" They saw the gun and the determined attitude of the youth, which led them to think discretion the better part of valor, when one of the party said to his fellows: "We'd better be off; we don't know what this excited child might do." So little Ben's conduct caused the rowdies to leave.

Young Cleveland did not "fancy" farm life, but, like Daniel Boone, he preferred a dog and gun and the forest. He spent much of his time from early youth in the wilderness, securing pelts and furs which found a ready market. Fire-hunting at that day was a very common and popular mode of entrapping the deer in warm weather, when they repaired to certain localities at night in shallow streams, where they could find food suiting their taste. The torch lights of the hunters would so dazzle the attention of the deer that he would stand in amazement watching the strange light, while the hunter had only to blaze away at its glaring eyes and bring it down.

There was an old Dutchman in that region who had a good stand for fire-hunting, and young Cleveland wanted it himself. One day he peeled some bark off a tree and placed it in the water to resemble a deer. At night he concealed himself nearby where he could watch operations. In due time the Dutchman made his appearance—fired upon the supposed deer without bringing him down; he repeated his shot but still the deer remained unmoved. The Dutchman became alarmed and exclaimed, "It's de duy-vil," and at once abandoned that hunting ground. Young Cleveland chuckled not a little over the success of his stratagem.

### *Cleveland Marries.*

At length young Cleveland married Miss Mary Graves, in Orange county, whose father was quite wealthy. But his marriage did not reform his wild and reckless habits. He still loved gaming, horse-racing, and the wild frolicking common in frontier life. In company with Joseph Martin—afterwards General Martin—he put in a field of wheat on Pig river, about the year 1767, where he settled some

four years before; but they were too indolent to fence it properly. When harvest time came there was something of a crop. As was the custom at that time, they invited their friends to join them in cutting the grain; for which occasion some liquor and a fiddler were provided, and a good time was necessary before entering upon the work, which ended in a debauch, and the grain was never harvested.

Tradition tells us that Cleveland took an active part in the French and Indian wars, but the facts are lost to history. No doubt he was initiated into the military service in that border conflict, which proved a training school for his Revolutionary career.

### *Cleveland Moves to Wilkes.*

In order to break away from reckless habits and old associations, Cleveland, about 1769, removed, with his father-in-law and family, to North Carolina and settled on the waters of Roaring river, then in Rowan, later Surry, and a few years later Wilkes county. Here Cleveland raised stock and devoted much of his time to hunting. Some time later he located on the noted tract on the north bank of the Yadkin, near Ronda, where Dr. James Hickerson now resides, known as the "Round About," taking its name from the horse-shoe shape of the land, nearly surrounded by the river.

### *Cleveland's Kentucky Experience.*

Daniel Boone, on one of his visits from Kentucky, gave such a charming description of the "Dark and Bloody Ground"—that land of cane and pea vines, abounding with deer and buffaloes—its wild charms, its rich soil, and its teeming game—that Cleveland could not resist the temptation. In the summer of about 1772, in company with Jesse Walton, Jesse



Bond, Edward Rice and William Hightower, he set out to visit the hunting grounds of Kentucky. When they had safely passed Cumberland Gap, and entered upon the borders of the famous Kentucky, with cheerful hopes and glowing prospects, they were unexpectedly met and plundered by a band of Cherokees, who relieved them of their guns, horses, peltry and all that they possessed even to their hats and shoes. An old sorry shot gun was given in turn, with two loads of powder and shot, when they were threateningly ordered to leave the Indian hunting grounds. There was nothing else they could do. On their way home they kept their ammunition as long as possible; with one load they killed a small deer—the other was spent without effect. They were so fortunate as to catch a broken-winged wild goose, and at last had to kill their faithful little hunting dog. In after years Cleveland said that this dog, owing to the circumstances, was the sweetest meat he ever ate. With this scanty supply, and a few berries, they managed to hold out till they reached the settlements, but in a nearly famished condition.

Several months afterwards Cleveland with a party of chosen men wended his way to the Cherokee towns, determined to recover the horses that had been taken from him and his associates. Cleveland applied to a noted Cherokee chief, known as Big Bear, who told him that the Indians who had his horses would be likely to kill him as soon as they should learn the object of his visit. Big Bear sent an escort with Cleveland to several towns to aid him in recovering his property. He succeeded without much difficulty except in the last place. The Indian having the horse showed fight, raised his tomahawk, and Cleveland cocked his rifle, when his friendly escort interrupted, and saved his red broth-

er from a fatal shot by throwing him to the ground; but not before he had hurled his battle-axe at his antagonist, which did no other harm than cutting away the bosom of Cleveland's hunting shirt. Then Cleveland, at the instance of the Indian guide, mounted the horse which was at hand and was riding away when the enraged Indian fired at him wounding the horse but not severely; and Cleveland and party returned with their horses in triumph.

### *Some Hunting Experiences.*

Reuben Stringer was a noted woodsman of the upper Yadkin Valley, and was often Cleveland's associate in his hunting adventures. They took an elk hunt together, in the month of August, when these animals were in their prime. The elks were large and very wild, and gradually retired before the advancing settlements. A few years before the Revolutionary war they were yet to be found at the foot of the mountain ranges on the head waters of New river. Pursuing a wounded elk, Cleveland in attempting to intercept him at a rocky point of the river, where he expected the elk to cross the stream, found himself surrounded by a large number of rattlesnakes, coiled, hissing, and fearfully sounding their alarm rattles on every hand. From this dangerous dilemma his only deliverance seemed to be an instantaneous plunge into the river, which he made without a moment's hesitation, and thus probably escaped a horrible death.

One day while Stringer was busy in preparing a fire to cook some of their wild meat for a repast, Cleveland spread his blanket on the ground under a large oak and lay down to rest himself and soon fell asleep. In a few moments he suddenly awoke in a startled condition—why, he could not tell—

and, casting his eyes into the treetops above, he saw a large limb, directly over him, nearly broken off, hanging only by a slight splinter to the parent tree. He said to his companion, pointing at the limb: "Look, Reubin; and see what an ugly thing we have camped under!" "It has, indeed, an ugly appearance," replied Reubin, "but since it has apparantly hung a great while in that condition, it may likely do so a good while longer." "Ah," said Cleveland, "as long as it has hung there, there is a time for-it to come down, and I will not be in the way of danger," and gathered up his blanket to spread it in a safer place. As he was passing the fire he heard a crack above—the splinter had broken and the limb came tumbling down directly upon the ground where Cleveland but a moment before had lain. They pulled over the limb and found that its prongs had penetrated into the earth to the depth of fourteen inches. Stringer congratulated his comrade on his fortunate awaking and removal, "for," he added, "in one minute more, you would have been inevitably killed." "Ah Reubin," said Cleveland, "I always told you that no man would die till his appointed time; and when it comes there can be no possible escape."

### *His War Record Begins.*

In 1775, when Cleveland's neighbors and friends had occasion to go to Cross Creek to sell their surplus products and buy salt, iron, sugar and other necessities, they were compelled, before they were permitted to buy or sell, to take the oath of allegiance to the King. When Cleveland heard of these tyrannical acts, and attempts to forestall the politics of the people, he swore roundly that he would like nothing better than to dislodge those Scotch scoundrels at Cross Creek. Soon an opportunity

was given him. In February 1776, the Highland Tories of that locality raised the British standard, when Captain Cleveland marched down from the mountains with a party of volunteer riflemen; and, tradition has it that he reached the front in time to share in the fight and in the suppression of the revolt. He scoured the country in the region of Wake Forest, capturing several outlaws, some of whom he hung to trees in the woods; one of whom was Capt. Jackson, who was executed within half a mile of Ransom Southerland's homestead, whose houses and merchandise Jackson had caused to be laid in ashes a few days after the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge. "I don't recollect," said Colonel Southerland in the *N. C. University Magazine* for September, 1854, "after Cleveland had done with them, to have heard much more of those wretches during the war."

In 1776, when the Cherokees were inveigled into hostilities by the British, Captain Cleveland with a company of mountaineers marched into the Indian territory and laid waste their villages and crops, and the hostile Indians had to sue for peace.

### *First Senator from Wilkes.*

When the British invaded Georgia in 1778 Colonel Cleveland and his regiment from Western N. C. served with distinction under General Rutherford. Returning from this service, in 1779, he was chosen to represent Wilkes county in the State Senate, being the first Senator from the county. The year previous he and Elisha Isaacs were chosen to represent the county in the House of Representatives, or House of Commons, as it was then called, as the first Representatives of the county. In 1780 Colonel Cleveland marched with his regiment against the Tories assembled at Ramsour's Mill, but reached that place too late for service as Colonel Bryan's

band was chasing them from the State. He also scoured the New River settlements, checking the Tory uprising in that section, capturing and hanging some of their notorious leaders and outlaws.

### *Cleveland at King's Mountain.*

Then his King's Mountain campaign—the crowning achievement of his life—the wounding of his brother Larkin Cleveland, while on the way, near Lovelady Shoals, on the Catawba river; and then hurrying forward to “grapple with the indomitable Ferguson.” The great service of Cleveland at this fight will be given in another chapter under the heading, “Battle of King's Mountain.” Colonel Cleveland had assigned to him one of Ferguson's war horses which lived to an uncommon old age; he also carried home with him a snare-drum, which he kept as long as he lived, pointing to it with pride as a trophy of King's Mountain.

### *Trouble for the Tories.*

James Coyle and John Brown, two notorious Tory plunderers, passed through Lincoln county and robbed the house of Major George Wilfong of every thing they could carry away, and then made off with a couple of his horses, using the clothes-line for halters. Major Wilfong with a party followed the culprits, overtaking them near Wilkesboro, recovered the horses, but the ruffians made good their escape. Major Wilfong left the halters made of his clothes-line with Cleveland, with which to hang the rascals, should they ever be captured. Not long after, as they were returning to Ninety Six, they were captured by some of Cleveland's scouts and brought to Wilkesboro and Colonel Cleveland had them hung with Wilfong's clothes-line on the oak tree that is yet standing just north of the court house in Wilkesboro.

*Captured by Tories; His Timely Rescue.*

On the South fork of New river in the extreme south-western portion of Ashe county (formerly a part of Wilkes) was a large boundry of land that was clear of timber and heavily set in grass. These lands—called the “Old Fields,” and known by that name to this day—belonged to Colonel Cleveland, and served as a grazing place for his stock in peaceful days.

In 1781, having occasion to visit his New river plantation, Colonel Cleveland rode there accompanied only by a negro servant, arriving at Jesse Duncan's, his tenant, on Saturday, the 14th day of April. Unfortunately for the Colonel, Captain William Riddle, a noted Tory leader, son of Loyalist Riddle, of Surry county, was approaching from the Virginia border with Captain Ross, a Whig captive, together with his servant, now en route for Ninety Six, where, it seems, the British paid a reward for Whig prisoners. Riddle, with his party of six or eight men, reached Benjamin Cutbirth's, some four miles above Old Fields, a fine old Whig and an old associate of Daniel Boone, who was just recovering from a spell of fever. The Tory Captain, probably from Cutbirth's reticence regarding solicited information, shamefully abused him and placed him under guard.

Descending the river to the upper end of the Old Fields where Joseph and Timothy Perkins lived—about a mile above Duncan's—both of whom were absent in Tory service, Riddle learned from their women that Cleveland was but a short distance away, at Duncan's, with only his servant, Duncan, and one or two of the Callaway family there. Every Tory in the country knew full well that Cleveland was probably their worst enemy; how prominently

he had figured at King's Mountain, and had given his influence for the Tory executions at Bickerstaff's and caused the summary hanging of Coyle and Brown at Wilkesboro. Riddle thought that such a prisoner would be a valuable prize to offer to the British at Ninety Six, or it would be a crowning honor to the Tory cause to rid the country of probable their worst enemy.

The prospect was too tempting and he at once set about to capture Cleveland. His force was too small to run any great risk, so he concluded to resort to stratagem. He resolved to steal Cleveland's horses in the quiet of night, judging that the Colonel would follow their trail the next morning, supposing they had strayed off, when he would ambuscade him at some suitable place, and thus take "Old Round About," as he was called, unawares and at a disadvantage. The horses were taken that night, and a laurel thicket, just above Perkins' house, selected as a fitting place to waylay their expected pursuers. During Saturday, Richard Callaway and his brother-in-law, John Shirley, went down from the neighboring residence of Thomas Callaway to Duncan's, to see Colonel Cleveland, and appear to have remained there over night.

Discovering that the horses were missing on Sunday morning, immediate pursuit was made. Having a pair of pistols, Colonel Cleveland retained one of them, handing the other to Duncan, while Callaway and Shirley were unarmed. Reaching the Perkins place, one of the Perkins women, knowing of the ambuscade, secretly desired to save the Colonel from his impending fate; so she detained him as long as she could by conversation, evidently fearing personal consequences should she divulge the scheme of his enemies to entrap him. His three associates kept on with Cleveland some little distance behind,

Mrs. Perkins still following and retarding him by her inquiries. As those in advance crossed the fence which adjoined the thicket, the Tories fired from their places of concealment, one aiming at Cleveland, who, though some distance in the rear, was yet within range of their guns. But they generally shot wild—only one shot, that of Zachariah Wells who aimed at Callaway, proving effectual, breaking his thigh, when he fell helpless by the fence and was left for dead.\* Duncan and Shirley escaped. Cleveland from his great weight—fully three hundred pounds—knew he could not run any great distance, and would only be too prominent a mark for Tory bullets, dodged into the house with several Tories at his heels. Now flourishing his pistol rapidly from one to another, they pledged to spare his life and accord him good treatment if he would quietly surrender, which he did.

Wells by this time having reloaded his rifle, made his appearance on the scene, swearing that he would kill Cleveland; and aiming his gun, the Colonel instantly seized Abigail Walters, who was present, and by dint of his great strength, and under a high state of excitement, dextrously handled her as a puppet, keeping her between him and his would-be assassin. Wells seemed vexed at this turn in the affair, and hurled his imprecations on the poor woman, threatening if she did not get out of the way that he would blow her through as well. Cleveland

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\* Richard Callaway had been seriously wounded on the head, arms, shoulder and hand by Tarleton's cavalry, at Sumpter's surprise, Aug. 18, 1780, and left for dead; yet recovered, though he had a crippled hand for life. In due time his broken limb, so badly disabled by Wells' unerring shot, healed up and he lived many years. He aided in running the boundary line from the White Top mountain to the Mississippi, and died in Tennessee in 1822.



got his eye on Captain Riddle, whom he knew, or judged by his appearance to be the leader, appealed to him if such treatment was not contrary to the stipulations of his surrender. Riddle promptly replied that it was and ordered Wells to desist from his murderous intent, saying they would take Cleveland to Ninety Six and make money out of his capture. The terrified woman, who had been made an unwilling battery, was now released from Cleveland's grasp as from a vice; and the whole party with their prisoner and his servant were speedily mounted and hurried up New river. This stream, so near its source, was quite shallow, and the Tories traveled mostly in its bed to avoid being tracked, in case of pursuit.

After Riddle and his party had called at Cutbirth's on their way down the river, young Daniel Outbirth and a youth named Walters, who were absent at the time returned, and encouraged by Mrs. Outbirth they resolved to take their guns, select a good spot, and ambuscade Riddle on his return, and perhaps rescue whatever prisoners he might have. But on the return of the Tory party the next day, they made so much noise, and gave so many military commands, that led the youthful ambuscaders to conclude that the Tories had received a reenforcement, and that it would be rashness for two single-handed youths to undertake to cope with numbers so unequal. So Riddle and his party reached Cutbirth's undisturbed, and ordered dinner for himself, men, and prisoners. Riddle abused and even kicked one of the Cutbirth girls who did not willingly aid in preparing the dinner. After dinner they proceeded up New river, mostly along its bed, until they came to the mouth of Elk creek, up which they made their way in the same manner. Colonel Cleveland managed to break off overhanging twigs and

drop them in the water to float down as a guide to his friends, who he knew would make early pursuit. From the head of the south fork of Elk they ascended up the mountain to what has since been known as Riddle Knob, in what is now Watauga county, and about 14 miles from Old Fields where he was captured; here they camped for the night.

Early on the morning of Cleveland's capture Joseph Callaway and his brother-in-law, Berry Toney, wanting to see Cleveland on business, called at Duncan's and learned of the missing horses and the search for them; and at that moment they heard the report of the firing at the upper end of the plantation, and hastened in that direction, soon meeting Duncan and Shirley in rapid flight, who could only tell that Richard Callaway had fallen and that Cleveland was either killed or taken. It was at once agreed that Duncan, Shirley and Toney should notify the people of the scattered settlements to meet that afternoon at Old Fields, while Joseph Callaway should go to his father's close by, mount his horse and hasten to Captain Robert Cleveland's, on Lewis Fork, a dozen miles distant. His brother, William Callaway, started up the river and soon came across Samuel McQueen and Benjamin Greer, who readily joined him; and all being good woodsmen, they followed the Tory trail as best they could, till night overtook them some distance above the mouth of Elk creek, and about ten miles from Old Fields. William Callaway suggested that he and McQueen would remain there while Greer should return to pilot up whatever men may have gathered to engage in the pursuit of the Tories.

By night-fall Captain Robert Cleveland and twenty or thirty others, good and tried men, who had served under Colonel Cleveland, had gathered at Old

Fields, determined to rescue their old commander at every hazard, even though they had to follow the Tory party to the gates of Ninety Six. Greer made his appearance in good time and at once they were on the trail of the enemy. They reached William Callaway and McQueen a while before day; and as soon as light began to appear, John Baker joined Callaway and McQueen to lead the advance as spies. A little after sunrise, having proceeded four miles, they discovered indications of the enemy's camp on the mountain. But little arrangement was made for the attack; nine men only were in readiness—the others seem to have been some distance behind. Only four or five of these were ordered to fire on the enemy, the others reserving their shots for a second volley, or any emergency that might happen—of these was William Callaway.

Part of the Tories had already breakfasted, while others were engaged preparing their morning meal. Cleveland was seated on a large log while Riddle had Cleveland's own pistol pointed at him, also Zachariah Wells had his pistol pointed at Cleveland, forcing him to write out passes for the several members of Riddle's party certifying that each was a good Whig—to be used when in tight places, to help out of difficulty by asserting that they were patriots of the truest types. Cleveland's commendations passed unquestioned along the borders of Virginia and the Carolinas. But the Colonel had a strong suspicion that, since his captors were in such haste for the passports, as soon as they were out of his hands his days would be numbered; and thus, naturally but a poor penman, he purposely retarded his task as much as possible, hoping to gain time for the expected relief, apologizing for his blunders and renewing his unwilling efforts. Several of the Tory party were now saddling their horses for an early

start, and Cleveland was receiving severe threats if he did not hurry up the last passport.

Just at this moment the relief party was silently creeping up; and the next moment several guns were fired and the whigs rushed up, uttering their loudest yells. Colonel Cleveland, comprehending the situation, tumbled off behind the log, lest his friends might accidentally shoot him, and exclaiming at the top of his thundering voice, "HUZZA FOR BROTHER BOB! THAT'S RIGHT, GIVE 'EM HELL." Wells alone was shot as he was scampering away by William Callaway in hot pursuit, and supposed to be mortally wounded; he was left to his fate. The rest fled with the aid of their fresh horses, or such as they could secure at the moment—Riddle and his wife among the number. Cleveland's servant, a pack-horse for Tory plunder, was overjoyed at his sudden liberation. Cleveland and Ross were thus fortunately rescued; and having gained their purpose the happy whigs returned to their several homes. William Callaway was especially elated that he had shot Wells who had so badly wounded his brother, Richard Callaway, at the skirmish at Old Fields the morning before.

### *Riddle Captured and Hung.*

A short time after this occurrence, Captain Riddle ventured to make a night raid into the Yadkin Valley, where, on King's creek, several miles above Wilkesboro, they surrounded the house where two of Cleveland's noted soldiers, David and John Witherspoon, resided with their parents. The two were taken prisoners and carried to the Tory camp on Watauga river, where both were sentenced to be shot—blindfolded, and men detailed to do the fatal work. It was then proposed, if they would take the oath of allegiance to the King, return to their home

and speedily return with a certain noble animal belonging to David Witherspoon, known as the O'Neal mare, and join the Tory band, their lives would be spared. They gladly accepted the proposition—with such hesitation as they thought best to make. As soon as they reached home David Witherspoon mounted his fleet-footed mare and hastened to Col. Ben Herndon's, several miles down the river, who quickly raised a party, and piloted by the Witherspools, they soon reached the Tory camp, taking it by surprise, capturing three and killing and dispersing others. The young Witherspools fulfilled their promise of speedily returning to the Tory camp bringing the O'Neal mare, but under somewhat different circumstances from what the Tories expected.

The prisoners were Captain Riddle and two of his associates named Reeves and Goss. They were brought to Wilkesboro and tried by court martial and sentenced to be hung. But in order to gain favor with the Whigs or get them in a condition so that they might escape Riddle treated them freely to whiskey. Colonel Cleveland informed him that it was useless to be wasting his whiskey as he would be hung directly after breakfast. The three Tories were accordingly hung on the notorious oak that is yet standing in the town of Wilkesboro. Mrs. Riddle, wife of the Tory leader, was present and witnessed the execution of her husband and his comrades.

### *How the Tories Hated Him.*

Colonel Cleveland was the Tories' worst enemy in this section. He was determined to break up the Tory bands that infested the frontier. Cleveland and his regiment were known far and near for their courage. They were known among the Whigs as *Cleveland's Heroes*, or *Cleveland's Bull Dogs*,

while the Tories denominated them "*Cleveland's Devils.*" Cleveland himself rated each of his well-tried followers as equal to five soldiers.

### *Zachariah Wells Captured and Hung.*

It was not long until one of Cleveland's men captured Zachariah Wells, who had not yet recovered from the wounds received at Riddle Knob. He was taken to Hughes' bottom, about a mile below Cleveland's Round About residence. Here James Gwyn, a youth of thirteen, with a colored boy, was at work in the field, when Cleveland, who had joined those having the prisoner in charge, took the plow-lines from the horse with which to hang Wells to a tree on the river bank. Young Gwyn, who knew nothing of the stern realities of war, was shocked at the thought of so summary an execution. Being well acquainted with Colonel Cleveland he begged him not to hang the poor fellow, who looked so pitiful and was suffering from his former wound. This excited the Colonel's sympathies, and he said, "Jim-mie, my son, he is a bad man; we must hang all such dangerous Tories, and get them out of their misery." Captain Robert Cleveland, who was present, was cursing the wining Tory at a vigorous rate. With tears coursing down his cheeks, the Colonel adjusted the rope, regretting the necessity for hanging the trembling culprit—remembering very well the rough treatment he had received at the hands of Wells at the Perkins place at the Old Fields; and firmly convinced that the lives of the patriots of the Yadkin Valley would be safer, and their slumber all the more peaceful, when their suffering country was rid of all such vile desperadoes. Wells soon dangled from a convenient tree and his remains were buried in the sand on the bank of the river.

*Other Tories See Trouble.*

Many other Tories fell into the hands of Cleveland's brave troopers and summary punishment was meted out to them in Cleveland's usual way. Once a Tory leader named Tate and eight others were captured and Cleveland and his men had them near old Richmond, in Surry county. When Cleveland was about to execute the leader, Colonel William Shepherd protested against such summary justice. "Why," said Cleveland, "Tate confesses that he has frequently laid in wait to kill you." "Is that so?" inquired Shepherd, turning to the Tory captain. Tate confessed, and Shepherd yielded to Cleveland's plan and Tate soon dangled from a limb. Tate's associates suffered only imprisonment as other prisoners of war.

On another occasion Colonel Cleveland visited Colonel Shepherd at Richmond, where he had two notorious horse-thieves in prison. Cleveland insisted on swinging them to the nearest tree lest they should make their escape and yet further endanger the community—at least one of them, whose crimes rendered him particularly obnoxious to the people. One end of a rope was fastened to his neck when he was mounted on a log and the other end tied to a limb; then the log was rolled from under him and he dangled from a limb in plain view of the prison. The other culprit was shown his comrade swinging from the limb and he was given his choice, to take his place beside him or cut off both his own ears and leave the country forever. The Tory knew it would not do to meddle with old Round About, so he called for a knife. He was handed a case knife, and after whetting it on a brick he gritted his teeth and sawed off both ears. He was then liberated and he

left with the blood streaming down both cheeks and was never heard of afterwards.

*"I'll Show You Perpetual Motion."*

John Doss was the faithful overseer of Colonel Cleveland's plantation while the Colonel was absent from home during the Tory troubles in 1780-81. Bill Harrison, a noted Tory leader in this region, with the aid of his followers, not only stole Cleveland's stock and destroyed his property, but arrested his overseer, took him to a hill-side, placed him on a log, fastened one end of a grape vine around his neck and the other end was fastened to the prong of a stooping dogwood; then one of the party went up the hill so as to gain sufficient propelling power, then rushed down headlong, butting Doss off the log into eternity. It was not long until Harrison was caught and brought to Cleveland's home. Accompanied by his servant Bill and one or two others Cleveland led Harrison to the same dogwood on which he had hung poor Doss.

"I hope you are not going to hang me, Colonel," muttered the trembling wretch. "Why not?" "Because," said the Tory, "you know I am a useful man in the neighborhood—am a good mechanic—have worked for you in peaceful days, and cannot well be spared; besides I have invented perpetual motion, and if I am now suddenly cut off, the world will lose the benefit of my discovery. I, too, have heard you curse Fanning and other Loyalist leaders for putting prisoners to death—where are your principles—where your conscience?" "Where is my conscience," retorted Cleveland; "where are my horses and cattle you have stolen; my barn and fences you have wantonly burned—and where is poor Jack Doss? 'Fore God I will do this deed and justify myself before high Heaven and my country!"



Run up the hill, Bill, and but him off the log—I'll show him perpetual motion!"

### *The Boys Hang a Tory.*

On one occasion when Colonel Cleveland was away from home, a Tory horse-thief was captured and brought and turned over to Cleveland's sons, to await their father's return. The Colonel, not returning as soon as was expected, and fearing if they should undertake to keep the prisoner over night he might escape or give them trouble, they appealed to their mother to know what was best to do under the circumstances. Mrs. Cleveland said to the boys, "What would your father do in such a case?" The boys promptly replied, "Hang him." "Well then," said the old lady, "you must hang him," and the thief was accordingly hung at the gate.

### *Cleveland's Generosity.*

The reader must not suppose that Colonel Cleveland always deemed it the best policy to resort to the severest treatment of Tory thieves brought before him. He was a keen judge of human nature and lost no opportunity nor spared no pains in reforming those who would reform. Once he had a pretty hard case to deal with. "Waste no time, swing him off quick," said Cleveland. "You needn't be in such a d——d hurry about it," coolly retorted the condemned man. Cleveland, who was toddling along behind, was so pleased with the cool retort that he told the boys to let him go. The Tory, touched with such sudden generosity, turned to Cleveland and said: "Well, old fellow, you've conquered me; I'll ever fight on your side," and proved himself one of Cleveland's sturdy followers.

On another occasion he met an old Whig who had been led astray by the Tories and addressed him in

this style: "Well Bob, I reckon you are returning from a Tory trip, are you not?" "Yes, Colonel, I am." "Well," continued the Colonel, "I expect when you become rested you will take another jaunt with them, eh?" "No Colonel, if I ever go with them again I'll give you leave to make a button of my head for a halter." "Well Bob, that shall be the bargain." So he gave Bob a stiff drink of grog, in accordance with the fashion of the times, and a hearty dinner, and started him off home rejoicing on his way and declaring that, after all, old Round About had a warmer heart and a kindlier way with him than any Tory leader he had ever met, and ever after Bob proved himself as true a Whig almost as the Colonel himself.

Besides trying to put down Tory influence the Colonel endeavored to make good citizens as well. Eleven miles above Wilkesboro on the south bank of the Yadkin lived one Bishop, one of a class who tried to shirk the responsibilities of the war, and was wanting in patriotism and energy of character. At heart he was thought to be a Tory. Passing Bishop's on one of his excursions, Cleveland observed that his corn, from neglect, presented a very sorry appearance. He called Bishop out and asked if he had been sick. He said he had not. "Have you been fighting for your country, then?" "No," said the neutral, "I have not been fighting on either side." "In times like these," remarked Cleveland, "men who are not fighting, and are able to work, must not be allowed to have their crops as foul as yours." The indolent man had to "Thumb the Notch" and receive the lashes as a penalty for his negligence. It is not necessary to say that Bishop's corn was, from that time on, in as good condition as any man's in the country.

### *His Last Military Service.*

Cleveland was "all things to all people." His love for the American cause was unbounded. His numerous friends loved and admired him for his bold and fearless simplicity, while his enemies hated him for the same reason that his friends loved him.

But the war was now rapidly drawing to a close. In the autumn of 1781, Colonel Cleveland performed his last military service—a three months' tour of duty on the waters of the Little Pedee, in the southeastern part of the State, under General Rutherford. At this time the British Colonel Craig was confined to Wilmington, while Fanning and other Tory leaders were yet scouring the country, and needed such a force as the mountaineers to successfully cope with them. Cleveland's men routed several of these scattered Tory detachments before returning home.

### *Moves to South Carolina.*

At the close of the war Colonel Cleveland lost his fine Round About plantation on the Yadkin by a better title, when he turned his attention to the region of the Tugalo, on the western border of South Carolina. In 1784 he selected a plantation in the Tugalo valley and moved there the following year. Quite a number of his kinsmen followed him and became his neighbors in the newly settled valley of the Tugalo.

In 1785 the Cherokee Indians were yet troublesome. They stole some of Cleveland's stock and carried it to the Indian village. Cleveland buckled on his hunting knife and went in person to the Indian town and told them unless his stock was promptly returned they would pay the penalty—the last one of them—with their lives. The Indians were greatly surprised at his enormous size, and

judged that it would take a hundred warriors to cope with him single-handed. The stock was promptly restored.

### *Hangs Another Horse Thief.*

Colonel Cleveland did not loose his hatred for the Tories in his new home. Henry Dinkins, a Tory of the Revolution, who had taken refuge among the Cherokees, became a notorious horse-thief. Cleveland learned of their approach in the Tugalo valley and he snatched up his rifle and waylaid their trail and captured Dinkins and two negroes associated with him. Dinkins was promptly hung on the spot. So notorious was Dinkins' reputation for evil that the whole country was overjoyed at his sudden execution without waiting to consider whether or not the mode of his exit was in accordance with the niceties of the law.

### *His Last Days and Death.*

Colonel Cleveland held positions of trust and honor in his new home, but he loved quiet home life best and spent most of his time about his plantation. He continued to increase in weight until he weighed the enormous sum of four hundred and fifty pounds.

For several summers preceeding his death he suffered with dropsy in his lower limbs, and during the last year of his life his excessive fat considerably decreased, and he, at last died while sitting at breakfast, in October, 1806, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. His wife died about six years previous. He left two sons and a daughter, whose descendants are numerous and respectable. Our county man, Esq. R. M. Staley, is a great-grand-son of Colonel Cleveland. Wilkes county has no better citizen and no man a better neighbor than Esq. Staley.

With hardly any education, and little improvements in after life, Colonel Cleveland, with a vigorous intellect, exerted a commanding influence among the frontier people; and though despotic in his nature and severe on the Tories, his patriotic activity did much to preserve the Western portion of North Carolina from British and Tory ascendancy. North Carolina deservedly commemorated his services by naming Cleveland county after him.

The remains of this noble hero sleep in the family burial ground in the valley of the Tugalo. No monument—no tombstone—no inscription marks his silent resting place. The spot is marked by several pines that have grown up since his interment—one of them, it is said, shoots its tall spire from his grave. There he lies in a sister State with not even a grave-stone to mark his last resting place, where scattered bands of Cherokees may look upon the pine that rises out of his grave and wonder among themselves, “Is this the goal of ambition—this the climax of glory?”

How strange are the ways of men!



## THE FIRST WILL PROBATED.

THE first will probated in Wilkes county was probated and recorded in the year 1778, at the December term of the County Court. In the early history of the county wills were only probated during the sessions of the County Court and not before the Clerk at any time convenient as is now the case.

This will, first on record in the county, starts off like this:

“The Last Will and Testament of John Witherspoon, dec’d. Dec. Term, 1778.

“November the first, in the year of our Lord Christ, 1778. In the name of God, amen. I, John Witherspoon, and of Wilkes county, being weak in body but of sound memory, blessed be God, do this day and in the year of our Lord make and publish this my last will and testament in the manner following, that is to say first I appoint—” etc., etc.

The subscribing witnesses are Thomas Harbin, Alexander Holton and Jno. Robison.

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GENERAL WILLIAM LENOIR.

THE subject of this sketch was one of the early pioneers of this section. He did much in building the county of Wilkes and the establishment of law and government in this section of the State. The name of William Lenoir appears oftener in early records of our county than the name of any other person. His life, character and services are recorded in such an able and familiar manner in an extract from the *Raleigh Register*, of June 22, 1889,

that we give the article here:

This venerable patriot and soldier died at his residence at Fort Defiance, in Wilkes county, on Monday, the 6th, of May, 1889, aged eighty-eight years. Perhaps no individual now remains in the State of North Carolina who bore a more distinguished part during our Revolutionary struggle, or who was more closely identified with the early history of our government than the venerable man whose history and public services it is our purpose to sketch.

General Lenoir was born in Brunswick county, Va., on the 20th of May, 1751, and was descended from poor but respectable French ancestry. He was the youngest of a family of ten children. When about eight years old his father removed to Tar River, near Tarboro, N. C., where he resided until his death which happened shortly after. The opportunities of obtaining even an ordinary English education at that day were extremely limited, and General Lenoir received no other than such as his own personal exertions permitted him to acquire after his father's death. When about 20 years of age he was married to Ann Ballard, of Halifax, N. C.—a lady possessing in an eminent degree those domestic and heroic virtues which qualified her for sustaining the privations and hardships of a frontier life which it was her destiny afterwards to encounter.

In March, 1775, General Lenoir removed with his family to the county of Wilkes (then a portion of Surry), and settled near the place where the village of Wilkesboro now stands. Previous to his leaving Halifax, however, he signed what was then familiarly called "The Association Paper," which contained a declaration of the sentiments of the people of the colonies in regard to the relations existing between them and the crown of Great Britian, and which their scattered condition rendered it necessary to

circulate for signatures, in order to ascertain the wishes and determination of the people. Soon after his removal to Surry he was appointed a member of the Committee of Safety for that county and continued to discharge his duties as such, and as clerk to the Committee until their authority was superseded by the adoption of the Constitution of the State. On the commencement of hostilities with Great Britian, General Lenoir very early took a decided and active part. It is well known to all those acquainted with the history of the times that about the beginning of the war of the Revolution the Cherokee Indians were exceedingly annoying and troublesome to the white settlements in the Western part of North Carolina. The Whigs therefore in that section of the country were obliged at the very outset to be constantly on the alert—they were frequently called on to march at a moment's warning, in small detachments, in pursuit of marauding bands of Indians, in the hope of chastising them for depredations committed on the settlements—they were also compelled to keep up scouting and ranging parties, and to station guards at the most accessible passes in the mountains. In this service General Lenoir bore a conspicuous part, which was continued until the celebrated expedition of Gen. Rutherford and Gen. Williamson in 1776, put an end to the difficulties with the Cherokees. In this expedition General Lenoir served as a lieutenant under the distinguished Colonel Cleveland, who was then a captain, and frequently has he been heard to recount the many hardships and sufferings which they had to undergo. They were often entirely destitute of provisions—there was not a tent of any kind in the whole army—very few blankets and those only such as could be spared from their houses for the occasion, and their clothing consisted principally of



ude cloth made from hemp, tow and wild nettle bark—and as a sample of the uniform worn by the General officers, it may be mentioned that General Rutherford's consisted of a tow hunting shirt, dyed black and trimmed with white fringe. From the termination of this campaign until the one projected against the British and Tories under Major Ferguson, Gen. Lenoir was almost constantly engaged in capturing and suppressing the Tories, who, at that time, were assuming great confidence and exhibiting much boldness. Indeed, such was the character of the times that the Whigs considered themselves, their families and property in continual and imminent danger. No man ventured from his house without his rifle, and no one unless his character was well known, was permitted to travel without undergoing the strictest examination. Gen. Lenoir has frequently been heard to say that owing to his perilous situation he has often been compelled, on retiring at night, to place his rifle on one side of him in bed while his wife occupied the other.

In the expedition to King's Mountain he held the position of captain in Col. Cleveland's regiment, but on ascertaining that it would be impossible for the footmen to reach the desired point in time, it was determined by a council of officers that all who had horses or could procure them should advance forthwith.

Accordingly Gen. Lenoir and his company officers volunteered their services as privates, and proceeded with the horsemen by a severe forced march to the scene of action. In the brilliant achievement on King's Mountain he was wounded in the arm, and also in the side, though not severely—and a third ball passed through his hair just above where it was tied. He was also at the defeat of the celebrated Tory, Col. Pyles, near Haw River, and in this en-

gagement had his horse shot and his sword broken. He also raised a company and marched toward Dan river, with the hope of joining General Greene, previous to the battle of Guilford, but was unable to effect a junction in time. Many other services of a minor character were performed by him, which it would be tedious to enumerate.

In the militia of the State he was also an active and efficient officer, having passed through different grades from that of an Orderly Sergeant to a Major-General, in which latter office he served for about eighteen years.

In a civil capacity also General Lenoir discharged many high and responsible duties. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace by the convention which met to form the State Constitution, and was reappointed by the first General Assembly which met under its authority. He continued to discharge the duties of this office until his death, with the exception of a temporary suspension of about two years, whilst he acted as Clerk of the County Court of Wilkes. It is therefore more than probable that at the time he died he was the oldest magistrate in the State, or perhaps in the United States. He also filled at different periods the various offices of Register, Surveyor, Commissioner of Affidavits, Chairman of County Court, and Clerk of the Superior Court for the county of Wilkes. He was one of the original trustees of the University of N. C., and was the first president of the Board. He served many years in both branches of the State Legislature, embracing nearly the whole period of our early legislative history, and during the last five years of his service in the Senate was unanimously chosen Speaker of that body. It may also be remarked that he performed the duties of that important station with as much general satisfaction, probably, as was ever

given by the presiding officer of any deliberate assembly. He was for several years elected a member of the Council of State, and when convened, was chosen President of the Board. He was also a member of both the State Conventions which met for the purpose of considering the Constitution of the United States; and in the discussions of those bodies he took an active and distinguished part—insisting strenuously on the adoption of the amendments proposed to the Constitution, and guarding with great jealousy the rights of the States. Owing to the difficulties which existed among the States in the adoption of the Federal Constitution, an opinion prevailed that another General Convention would be called to revise and amend it. The Convention of North Carolina, acting upon this supposition, proceeded to elect five delegates to represent the State in the proposed General Convention, of which number General Lenoir was one. It is also in honor of him that the respectable county of Lenoir bears its name.

These, together with many other services of a minor character, though important in themselves, or in furtherance of the due execution of the law, constitute the sum of that portion of the public burdens which have been borne by this venerable man, for many of which he declined to receive any compensation. Those who knew Gen. Lenoir will readily concur in the opinion that it is questionable whether any man ever performed a public duty with a more punctilious regard to the promotion of the public welfare or in more strict accordance with the requirements of the authority under which he acted.

For the last several years of his life he devoted much of his time to reading and reflection on public affairs, and manifested great concern and expressed much apprehension lest, from the signs of the times,

our inestimable government, which cost so much blood and treasure, hardship and suffering, was destined, at no distant period, to share the fate of the republics of other days. Indeed, so great were his fears on this subject that it was a source of real disquietude and unhappiness to him.

In private life Gen. Lenoir was no less distinguished for his moral worth and generous hospitality than in public life for his unbending integrity, firmness and patriotism. His mansion was open at all times, not only to a large and extensive circle of friends and acquaintances, but to the stranger and traveler. Although he lived for many years upon a public highway and received and entertained all persons who chose to call upon him, he was never known in a single instance to make a charge or receive compensation for accommodations thus furnished.

In his manners and habits of life he was plain and unostentatious. Steadily acting himself upon principles of temperance and frugality in all things, he endeavored both by example and precept to inculcate similar principles upon others. To the poor he was kind and charitable, and by his will made liberal provisions for those of his own neighborhood. He had long enjoyed almost uninterrupted health which he was careful to preserve by moderate but almost constant exercise either on horseback or in his workshop, of which he was very fond. As evidence of his physical ability, it may be mentioned that he attended the Superior Court of Ashe county, a distance of more than 50 miles from his residence, traveling the whole distance on horseback, and crossing the Blue Ridge, and also attended the court of his own county, a distance of twenty-four miles, not more than three weeks before his death. During his last illness he suffered much pain, and often ex-

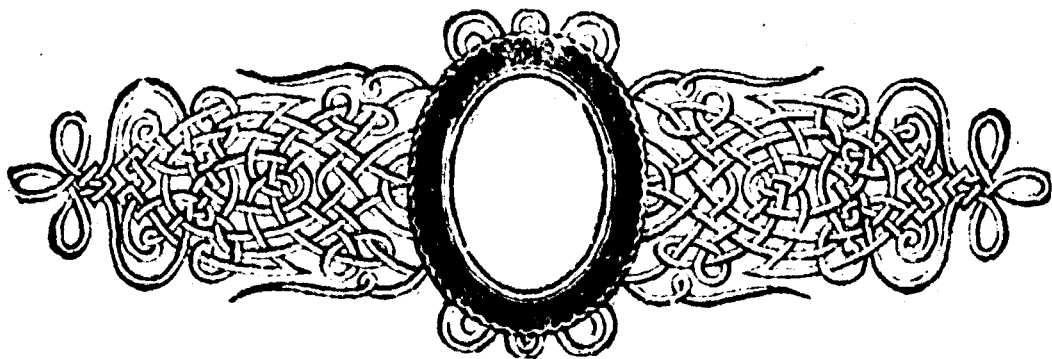
pressed a desire that the Supreme Disposer of all things would terminate his sufferings. He often said "Death had no terrors for him—he did not fear to die." His remains were interred in the family burying-ground, which occupies the spot where Fort Defiance was erected during the Revolutionary war.

S. F. P.

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### ZEBULON BAIRD, GRANDFATHER OF ZEBULON B. VANCE.

ZEBULON Baird Vance's grandfather, Zebulon Baird, was a native of Wilkes county. It was after this Wilkes county ancestor that the noted General, Governor, Senator and Statesman was named. Notwithstanding the fact that he lived nearly a century ago and is very little known at this day, Zebulon Baird should be counted as one of the great men of Wilkes county, for the reason that he was the grandfather of the most beloved man that ever lived in North Carolina.



## FIRST CHURCH IN THE COUNTY.

SURRY county was formed in 1770 from Rowan county, which, until this date, comprehended a large portion of Western North Carolina from beyond the Yadkin to the Mississippi river, including all the upper valley of the Yadkin to the Virginia line. In 1775 Surry was a frontier county. The Mulberry Field Meeting House was the only church in the entire county. This church, or meeting house as it was called, was situated where the town of Wilkesboro now stands. Some of our oldest citizens think this church stood about where the Chronicle building now stands, or probably a few yards further south. It was a Baptist church and the first to be built in this section of the country.

It required no little zeal and Christian energy to prompt our early settlers to expose themselves to great danger and hardship to come to this church, traveling scores of miles through dense forests and jungles and over the rudest kind of roads, knowing that an attack of the treacherous Indians to take their lives was probable at any moment. But it was a gracious privilege to those sturdy Christians to be permitted to worship God according to their own will and as their own consciences directed, even though they did so at the peril of their lives. They knew what it was to be deprived of that privilege by tyrannical rulers and laws, and from such oppressions they had fled to this country and erected the Mulberry Field Meeting House, where they might worship when and in whatever manner they saw fit. The Holy Spirit of Almighty God must have directed them and stayed the tomahawk and arrow in the hands of the treacherous enemy. I admire such faith and zeal, and it is no wonder that these faith-

ful, sturdy, energetic pioneers should build up a section where tyranny cannot reign and tyrants can not live. We cannot too much appreciate the perseverance and patriotism of our ancestors who came to Wilkes to build homes and plant civilization for us.

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## EARLY SCHOOLS.

UNTIL 1839 there were no public schools in North Carolina; and for several years after that date the system of public schools did not reach all the people in all sections of the state. In the early history of the county the opportunity of obtaining an education was scant. There were only two or more private schools, with school houses made of logs, sticks and mud, scattered about over the county.

The following account of some of our early schools is taken from the Report on Education by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for 1898:

“Incorporated Schools—Philomathian Academy, chartered 1804; Wilkesboro Academy, chartered 1810, and again in 1819.

“At a very early period in this century there was a notable ‘Grammar School,’ with John Harrison as principal. It was described as ‘ten miles below the court house.’ Latin and Greek were offered. The tuition was \$10 for ten months, and board could be had at \$25 per year.

“The only teacher of the Wilkesboro Academy whose name I have been able to recover is that of Rev. Peter McMillan, whose tuition was fifty per cent. higher than Mr. Harrison’s, and the board from 75 to 100 per cent. higher.”

## “TO THUMB THE NOTCH.”

REVOLUTIONARY times were indeed trying to the settlers along the frontier. Both Indians and Tories gave much Trouble. The way in which punishment was inflicted in those days was severe and effective. The following account of the punishment of Shade Laws will give the reader some idea of the character of those times:

“The depredations of the Tories were so frequent and their conduct so savage that summary punishment was demanded by the exigencies of the times. This Cleveland inflicted without ceremony. General Lenoir relates a circumstance that occurred at the Mulberry Meeting House. While there on some public occasion, the rumor was that mischief was going on by the Tories. Lenoir went to his horse tied at some distance from the house, and as he approached a man ran off from the opposite side of the horse. Lenoir hailed him but he did not stop; he pursued him and found that he had stolen one of the stirrups off his saddle. He carried the pilferer to Colonel Cleveland, who ordered him to place his two thumbs in a notch for that purpose in an arbor fork and hold them there while he ordered him to receive fifteen lashes. This was his peculiar manner of inflicting the law and gave origin to the phrase ‘to thumb the notch.’ The punishment on the offender above named was well inflicted by Captain John Beverly, whose ardor did not stop at the ordered number. After the fifteen had been given, Colonel Herndon ordered him to stop, but Beverly continued to whip the wincing culprit. Colonel Herndon drew his sword and struck Beverly. Captain Beverly drew also, and they had a tilt which, but for friends, would have terminated fatally.”



The tree in which the notches were cut was still standing in 1850. Wheeler, in his history of North Carolina, says, "There is a tree in Wilkes county which bears the name of 'Shade Laws Oak' on which the notches thumbed by said Laws under the sentence of Cleveland, are distinctly visible." The tree stood about half a mile west of the village of Moravian Falls on the top of the hill just above the old Shiloh church. The tree was cut down several years ago by some one who, probably from personal reasons, wanted the tree destroyed. The stump is still visible.

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## DANIEL BOONE.

DANIEL BOONE was not a native of Wilkes, but it was here he spent a portion of his life, and here it was that he was trained in our forests for the life he afterwards lived. His name is loved and cherished all over the country but nowhere more than in Wilkes county. His history is a part of the county's, and it would be an injustice not to give a sketch of this pioneer in this book. The sketch following is from the pen of John H. Wheeler and is the best short sketch of Boone I have ever seen:

Daniel Boone was born in 1746, in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, near Bristol, about twenty miles from Philadelphia. When he was but a child, his father emigrated to North Carolina, and settled in one of the valleys of the Yadkin. Here Boone was reared and here he married Miss Bryan.

In May, 1769, Boone informs us himself, "accompanied by John Findley, John Stuart, Joseph Holden, James Monay and William Cool," left his home and quiet joys for the "dark and bloody

ground" of Kentucky, then inhabited only by wild animals and savages. But in the boundless forests he seemed to be in his appropriate sphere. Here he pursued the deer, buffalo and wild beasts. After a hard day's hunt, as Boone and Stuart were returning to their camp, they were seized by a horde of savages who made them prisoners: that night they escaped, but what was their surprise when they came to their camp they found their comrades were gone, either prisoners or murdered, for the camp was deserted. But the spirit of Boone knew no despair. He called all his resources into action, husbanded his game and amunition, and prepared to return to North Carolina. At this time Boone's brother, fired by the same ardor for wild excitement, came out to their camp with one companion. This infused fresh joys and new hopes. But soon after Stuart fell in a foray with the Indians, no persuasions could induce their companion to remain, and he left Boone and his brother alone in the vast wilderness. They erected a house to protect them, and supplied plentifully with game, they passed the winter in comfort. But their amunition and salt becoming scant, the brother of Boone returned for a supply, and Daniel Boone was left alone in the wild forests of Kentucky. This voluntary exile was not unpleasant to his temper. In his journal he assures us that his mind was filled with admiration of the boundless beauties of nature. The magnificent forest was clothing itself in the rich attire of spring, the gorgeous flowers were unfolding their glories to his eye alone, the wild deer and buffalo were not fearful of his presence.

He continued in these solitary quarters until the 27th of July, when his brother returned loaded with amunition and salt, to them more precious than the mines of California. They made an expedition to

the Cumberland river, naming the rivers they passed, and making such observations as might be of future use.

In March, 1771, they returned to North Carolina. He was so charmed with the rich soil, the bountiful productions of nature, and the abundant game that he sold his farm on the Yadkin, and by his representations, five families and his own set out for their return to Kentucky, on the 25th of September, 1773; as they passed Powell's valley, then one hundred and fifty miles from the settled parts of Virginia, forty hardy sons of the forest joined them. They pursued their journey until the 10th of October, when they were furiously attacked by a large body of Indians. By their skill, unflinching courage and resolution, the superior force of the savages was beaten off, but Boone's party lost six men killed and one wounded. Among the killed was Boone's oldest son, a youth of much promise and daring.

This repulse forced them to retreat to the settlement on Clinch river. Here he remained with his family until the 6th of June, 1774, when the Governor of Virginia (Dunmore) engaged him and an adventurer by the name of Starer to conduct a party of surveyors to the falls of the Ohio, near eight hundred miles; this he performed on foot in sixty-two days. On his return Dunmore gave him the command of the garrisons on the frontier, which he maintained during the war at this period against the Shawnee Indians.

In March, 1775, he attended, at the request of Judge Richard Henderson, a council of the Cherokees, by which they ceded their lands south of the Kentucky river.

In April he erected a fort at the spot where the town of Boonesboro now stands. The Indians were very much dissatisfied at the erection of this fort.

After it was finished he returned in June for his family on Clinch river. Mrs. Boone and her daughter were the first white women that ever stood on the banks of the Kentucky river.

In December the Indians made a furious assault on this fort, by which Boone lost one man killed and another wounded; but the Indians were repulsed with great slaughter. This defeat was so severe that the Indians treacherously appeared reconciled and seemed to give up all ideas of assaulting the fort or molesting the whites. This caused the inhabitants of the fort to be less guarded, and they made frequent visits and excursions into the forests around. On the 14th of July, 1776—just seven months from their last attack—as three young ladies, two daughters of Colonel Caloway and the third of Colonel Boone, were leisurely strolling in the woods they were pursued by the Indians and caught before they could reach the gates of the fort. At this moment Boone was off hunting, but when he returned, without any aid, he followed alone the tracks of the Indians. He knew that if he waited to collect a force the cunning robbers would be entirely beyond pursuit. With a sagacity peculiar to hunters, he followed their trail without the least deviation, while the girls had the presence of mind to snap off twigs from time to time as they passed through the shrubbery in their route. At last he came in sight of them, and by the aid of his unerring rifle, killed two of the Indians and recovered the young ladies and reached the fort in safety. \* \* \*

The crafty foe now made open war. On the 15th of April, 1777, the united tribes made an attack on the fort, but it was unsuccessful.

In July twenty-five men arrived from North Carolina, and in August Captain Bowman, with one hundred men, arrived from Virginia. By this pow-

erful reinforcement they no longer dreaded the savages, but sallied out and made attacks on the Indians and drove them from the vicinity.

On the first of January, 1778, Colonel Boone with thirty men commenced making salt for the first time in that region at the Blue Licks, on Licking river; and he made enough of this essential of life for all the civilized inhabitants of the infant community.

On the 7th of February, as Colonel Boone was hunting alone, he was surprised by one hundred Indians and two Frenchmen. They took him prisoner. He learned then that a furious attack was to be made by a strong force on Boonesboro. He capitulated for the fort, knowing its weak state, as it had only twenty-seven men, the rest had gone with salt into the settlements in Virginia.

The Indians, according to their treaty, carried their prisoners to old Chili Cothe, the principal town of the Miami, where they arrived on the 18th of Feb. and according to their terms, the Indians used him kindly.

In March they carried Boone to Detroit to offer him for ransom to the Governor; but on the route the Indians became so much attached to him that they refused to part with him; and after leaving at Detroit the other prisoners, they returned with Boone to Chili Cothe. He was adopted as one of the tribe and pretended to be very fond of his new father and mother, and take great interest in their sports and hunting. His plan of escape was hurried by an alarming circumstance; while meditating upon it he was astonished to see an assemblage of four hundred warriors at Chili Cothe. An attack on Boonesboro was planned. On the 16th of June he escaped and reached Boonesboro on the 20th a distance of one hundred and sixty miles, during which

he eat but one meal. He found the fort in bad condition, and set all hands about to repair it. The Indians, finding that he had escaped, postponed the attack.

On the 1st of August, with nineteen men, Boone sets out to attack an Indian town called Paint Creek, on the Sciota. Within four miles of the fort they met forty Indians on their way to attack them. A desperate fight ensues, in which Boone conquered, without the loss of a man.

On the 8th of August the largest force that ever appeared before Boonesboro orders it to surrender. The assailants were four hundred and forty-four Indians and eleven Frenchmen, commanded by Captain Duquesne. Boone requests a parley of three days during which he made every preparation for an active and vigorous defense.

On the 9th Boone informs the French commander that "he would defend the fort as long as a man could raise a rifle."

The wily Frenchman, knowing the prowess of his opponent, seeks to effect by stratagem what he dares not attempt by arms. A treaty is agreed to. Boone with the required number go forth to sign the document. He is informed, after signing, that it was an Indian custom from time immemorial, for two Indians to shake the hands of one white man. This he reluctantly consented to, and the moment the savages took hold of each white man they endeavored to hold him fast. Boone feels the sinewy grasp of two athletic Indians, and his companions are betrayed into a like perilous condition. Now arose the mighty struggle for liberty and for life.

"Now gallant Boone! now hold thy own,  
No maiden arm is round thee thrown;  
That desperate grasp thy frame would feel,  
Through bars of brass and triple steel."

Fortune favors at this moment of peril her gallant son; the knife of Boone finds a bloody sheath in one of his opponents; the other is thrown down, and Boone and his men escape to the fort.

His name can never die. The memory of this chivalric exploit, and the name of Boone will live as long as the Kentucky river rolls its troubled tribute to the "Great Father of Waters;" and when the marble in our National Capitol,\* which commemorates this deed, shall have crumbled to its original elements.

The Indians, after an unsuccessful attack, raised the siege, after a loss of several killed and wounded.

During the absence of Colonel Boone in captivity among the Shawnees, his wife, thinking her husband was killed, returned with her family to her father's, on the Yadkin, in North Carolina. Boone came to North Carolina after them.

He returned with them in about two years to Boonesboro, during which time many battles had been lost and won.

As he and his brother were returning from the Salt Licks, they were attacked by the Indians; his brother was killed by a shot from the Indians. Boone only escaped by rapid flight, killing the dog the Indians had sent on his trail.

Such was the life Boone led until the defeat of the Indians by Wayne (1792) introduced peace and quiet in this dark and dangerous country.

Between this time and the time (1792) the new territory came into the Union, Virginia had enacted so many laws, which Boone in the simplicity of his nature had failed to comply with, or his business

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\*In the rotunda at Washington, in sculpture, over the door as you enter the House of Representatives, is this scene, by an eminent sculptor.

was done so loosely, that the very land he had bought and paid for, in the sacrifices of himself and the blood of his son and his brother was wrested from him. How sad a commentary upon human nature. How mournfully true the Latin adage, *homo homini lupus* (man is a wolf to man).

In 1798 he shouldered his rifle and goes to the wilds of Missouri. Here was a country as wild and unclaimed as his heart desired. The republic was that of the forest, the rifle and the hunter; and Boone was commander-in-chief. He never sighed for what was lost. He said Kentucky was too crowded, he wanted more elbow-room. Here he lived until 1818, when he lost his wife; the faithful companion of all his trials and troubles exchanged this for a brighter world. This was the severest blow Boone ever received. He left Missouri and came to his son, Major Nathan Boone, where he lived, employing his leisure with his favorite rifle and trapping beavers, until 1818 when he calmly and resignedly breathed his last, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, surrounded by affection and love. It was stated in the papers at the time of his death that he was found dead at a stand, watching for a deer, with his rifle sprung, and raised ready to fire. In the Indian idea he had gone to the hunting ground of the warrior above, where his spirit would be happy when the stars would cease to give their light.

The Character of Boone is so peculiar that it marks the age in which he lived; and his name has been celebrated in the verses of the immortal Byron:

———of all men———

Who pass for in life and death most lucky,  
Of the great names which in our faces stare,  
Is Daniel Boone, backwoodsman of Kentucky.

Crime came not near him—she is not the child  
Of solitude. Health shrank not from him, for



Her home is in the rarely trodden wild.

—*Don Juan, Canto VII, LVI.*

And tall and strong and swift on foot were they,  
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,  
Because their thoughts had never been the prey  
Of care or gain; the green woods were their portion;  
No sinking spirits told them they grew gray,  
No fashions made them apes of her distortions:  
Simple they were, not savage; and their rifles,  
Though very true, were not yet used for trifles.

Motion was their days, rest in their slumbers,  
And cheerfulness the handmaid of their toils;  
Nor yet too many, nor too few their numbers;  
Corruption could not make their hearts her soil:  
The lash which stings, the splendor which encumbers,  
With the free foresters divide no spoil;  
Serene, not sullen, even the solitudes  
Of this unsighing people of the woods.

In North Carolina was Boone reared. Here his youthful days were spent; and here that bold spirit was trained, which so fearlessly encountered the perils through which he passed in after life. His fame is a part of her property, and she has inscribed his name on a town (Boone) in the region where his youth was spent.

I am indebted to a sketch in the National Portrait Gallery, by W. A. C., for the leading facts and dates in the life of Boone.

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It was on a farm near Holman's ford that Boone's early life was spent. There are objects still existing in that locality which were associated with him in his hunting expeditions and travels. There are trees standing to this day bearing marks which indicate that at or near the spot Daniel Boone killed a bear. Boone's Gap in the Brushy mountains, near Boomer, is so called because it was in Boone's route across the mountain on his hunting expeditions. A short distance from this gap, on a tributary of War-

rior creek, is a beautiful waterfall which owes its name—Boone's Falls—to this great hunter.

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## KING'S MOUNTAIN.

THE battle of King's Mountain is very closely connected with the history of Wilkes county. Nearly, or probably more than, half the American soldiers engaged in this famous battle for the freedom of the American people were from Wilkes county, as her boundary lines were at that time. Wilkes furnished three distinguished leaders for this battle—Col. Benjamin Cleveland, Col. John Sevier and General Isaac Shelby. The forces assembled at Watauga, in Wilkes county (now in Carter county, Tenn.) and decided to attack the British forces under Maj. Ferguson.

At that time the Western part of North Carolina was a stronghold for the Tories and many of the men in the British ranks at King's Mountain were Tories.

Following is a circular letter issued by Major Ferguson to the Tories just seven days before the battle of King's Mountain:

Donard's Ford, Tryon Co., Oct. 1, 1780.

Gentlemen:—Unless you wish to be cut up by an inundation of barbarians, who have begun by murdering the unarmed son before the aged father, and afterwards lopped off his arms, and who by their shocking cruelty and irregularities, give the best proof of their cowardice and want of discipline; I say if you wish to be pinioned, robbed and murdered, and to see your wives and daughters, in four days, abused by the dregs of mankind—in short, if you wish or desire to live and bear the name of men,

grasp your arms in a moment and run to camp.

The backwater men have crossed the mountain; McDowell, Hampton, Shelby and Cleveland are at their head, so that you know what you will have to depend upon. If you choose to be p——d upon forever and ever by a set of mongrels, say so at once, and let your women turn their backs upon you and look out for real men to protect them.

PAT. FERGUSON, Maj. 71st Regiment.

Ferguson was expecting an attack from the Americans and directed a letter to Lord Cornwallis at Charlotte, soliciting aid. At this time Ferguson and his division of the army were at Gilbert town, from which place he began his march to King's Mountain. He camped the first night at Cownens (soon to become famous for the success of our arms over Tarleton, Jan. 17, 1781). On the 5th of October he crossed Broad river at Deep Ferry and marched sixteen miles; on the 6th he marched up the ridge road, until he came to a right hand fork across King's creek and through a gap towards Yorkville, about fourteen miles; and on the summit of King's Mountain he encamped. Here he declared was "a place where God Almighty could not drive him from."

About 8 o'clock on the 7th of October, 1789, after being in the saddle for thirty hours, without rest, and drenched by a heavy rain, the fearless Americans approached King's Mountain.

This mountain is in Cleveland county, on the borders of North and South Carolina; it extends East and West and on the summit is a plateau about five hundred yards long and sixty or seventy broad. On this summit was Ferguson posted. The Americans were divided into three wings. The right wing was under the command of McDowell, Sevier and Winston; Campbell and Shelby commanded the center, while the left wing was under the command of

Cleveland and Williams. The plan of battle was to surround the mountain and attack each side simultaneously. The center commenced the attack and marched boldly up the mountain. The battle here was fierce, furious and bloody. The center gave way, but rallied, and reinforced by Campbell's regiment, returned to the charge. Towards the latter part of the action the enemy made a furious onset from the eastern summit and drove the Americans to the foot; there they rallied and in close column returned to the attack, and in turn drove the enemy. They gained the summit and drove the enemy before them to the western end, where Cleveland and Williams had been contending with another part of their line. Campbell now reached the summit and poured on the enemy a deadly fire. The brave Ferguson, like a lion at bay, turned on these new adversaries and advanced with fixed bayonet. They gave way for the moment, but rallied under their gallant leaders to the attack. "The whole mountain was covered with smok. and seemed to thunder." Attacked on all sides, the circle becoming less and less, Ferguson in a desperate move endeavored to brake through the American lines, and was shot dead in the attempt. This decided the day. The British flag was lowered, and a white flag raised for quarters.

One hundred and fifty of the enemy, including their commander, lay dead on the field, 810 wounded and prisoners, 1500 stands of arms, and the American authority restored, were the fruits of this victory.

This was the turning point of the fortunes of America. This decisive blow prostrated the British power for the time, vanquished the Tory influence, and encouraged the hopes of the patriots.

Lord Cornwallis left Charlotte and fell back to Winnsboro, deeming any proximity to such fearless

men unsafe for the main army, nor did he advance until reinforced by General Leslie with troops from the north.

The total loss on the American side was twenty-eight killed and sixty wounded.

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## THE SIAMESE TWINS.

THE celebrated Siamese Twins, Chang and Eng, after traveling over all the world and seeing the advantages and disadvantages of every country, chose the quiet glens of Wilkes as the loveliest spot for retirement and repose.

They were born in May, 1811, at Maklong, Siam, and died in Wilkes county, near Hays postoffice, about the year 1880.

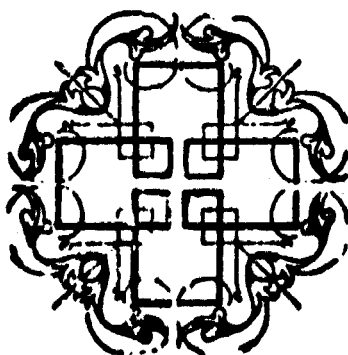
In 1829 they left their country for America, and since they have traveled over the whole of this continent, England, France and other countries, exciting the admiration of the crowd, and the investigations of the scientific Sir Ashley Cooper, of London, Dr. Samuel L. Mitchell, of New York, and others, who have reported upon this singular phenomenon in the natural world.

They were united together as one by an ensiform cartilage from the side. The blood vessels and nerves of each communicated. There seemed to be a perfect sympathy, for when one was sick so was the other. They went to sleep at the same moment, and woke at the same. Both died on the same day, only a few moments intervening between their deaths.

A time or two was appointed to separate the twins but the scientific doctors decided that such an operation would terminate their lives.

They were wealthy, well settled, and both happily married and had interesting families around them. They married twin sisters named Yates, sisters of Austin and Jesse Yates, late of this county. Ex-County Commissioner, Robert Yates, who lives near Boomer, is a nephew of the wives of the Siamese Twins. Several of their descendents yet live in Surry county and they have adopted the name Bunker as their surname. The house now owned and occupied by Ambros Wiles was built by the Siamese Twins, and there they lived and died.

They differed widely in appearance, character and strength. One was sober and patient; the other intemperate and irritable. It is said that they frequently fell out—generally about their movements—whether they should or should not go somewhere—and sometimes fought like dogs. In 1870 Chang was stricken with paralysis from which he died a few years later. In a short time—probably about 80 minutes—Eng followed him to the great beyond. They were the most interesting persons that ever lived in the county. In the natural history of the world there is not another case like them.



## THE SHOW FIGHT.

BETWEEN the years 1855 and 1860, in Wilkesboro, occurred one of the most remarkable fights in the history of the county. Robinson's Show had pitched their tents in the vale on the north side of Main street, just opposite where the new Methodist church now stands. The show people had a stand where they sold candy, lemonade, etc. It was at this stand that the trouble arose. George Johnson went up to the stand to buy some candy; the showman wanted to charge him about three times the usual price of candy in the stores at that time, when finally Johnson told him to take the candy and go to h—l with it. This insulted the showman who in turn insulted Johnson, who was something of a fighter, and he at once began the fight. The showman's partners came to his aid, armed with sticks, singletrees and such other weapons as they could get their hands on. Johnson's friends came to his aid about as fast as the showmen to the aid of their comrade. A desperate battle followed.

Among Johnson's friends who engaged in the fight may be mentioned the following: Ellis Anderson, Andy Porter, "Bill" Transou, Wesley Nicholls, Peter Johnson, Jones Transou and others.

Such weapons were used as were most convenient and several on each side were badly hurt, but no one killed.

Sheriff Staley was informed of the fight and he soon had the participators under arrest and under guard. After the showmen who had engaged in the fight had been arrested, a party who were absent with the horses during the fight, came up. They were attacked by the Wilkes party, who by this time had procured sticks, axes and other deadly

weapons, and were prepared to do some fatal execution. The showmen told them they knew nothing of the trouble and were not concerned in it, but the enraged citizens were not disposed to hear them. About that time Sheriff Staley appeared on the scene and informed the citizens that the showmen who had engaged in the fight were under arrest; then the citizens calmed down and another bloody fight was averted.

The showmen under arrest were marched to the court house and a preliminary trial was held before Dr. R. F. Hackett, who was a Justice of the Peace at that time. The trial lasted until about midnight when the whole party was bound to court. The showmen did not want to go to jail and the jail was not sufficient to hold them, so they were kept in the court house, under guard, until morning, when, after the showmen had paid him \$500, Gen. James B. Gordon stood surety for their appearance at court. They never appeared and finally the case was dismissed upon payment of the cost by Gordon. The cost in the case amounted to about \$180, so Gordon cleared about \$370 in the transaction.

After the ones engaged in the fight were arrested the show proceeded and a large crowd witnessed the exhibit.



## JAMES HENRY SPAINHOUR.

BY FRANK B. HENDREN.

JAMES HENRY SPAINHOUR was born in Burke county in 1835, and came to Wilkes county in 1858. New Hope Academy, in Lewis Fork township, had just been completed and was in quest of a principal. Maj. Jas. H. Foote recommended Mr. Spainhour to the position and he was elected. He remained in this position until the outbreaking of the war, when he enlisted in Company B., Capt. Stokes, which company was attached to the First Regiment N. C. Volunteers. Mr. Spainhour being a licensed minister of the Baptist church, was appointed Chaplain of this Regiment in which capacity he served until his death at Fredericksburg, on the 17th day of October, 1861.

It was under Prof. Spainhour's principalship, that New Hope Academy enjoyed its brief period of ascendancy among the schools of this county and had its career not been cut short by the war it would doubtless become one of the leading institutions in the western part of the State. It was located in what was justly considered at that time the most progressive community in the county. The Academy was burned during the war and after that unhappy struggle still-houses took its place and the community long suffered from their blighting influence. Recently, however, the Academy has been rebuilt and the community, which contains some of the best people in the county, is regaining some of its old time activity and progress.

The late Maj. H. Bingham, as well as many of the leading citizens of this county of the older class, received their education at New Hope Academy.

## COL. W. H. H. COWLES.

[For the leading facts in this sketch the author is indebted to Jerome Dowd's sketch of Col. Cowles in "Sketches of Prominent Living North Carolinians," and to the sketch by W. W. Barber, which appeared in *The Wilkesboro Chronicle* Jan. 8, 1902.]

COLONEL COWLES, the subject of this sketch, was born at Hamptonville, in Yadkin county, April 22, 1840, and spent his youth in his father's store and on his farm. He attended the common schools and academies of his county. He was fond of outdoor exercise and delighted in hunting.

In 1861 he volunteered as a private in a cavalry company being formed by T. N. Crumpler, but upon the organization of the company he was elected First Lieutenant. Much caution was used in selecting the company; every member was strong and soldierly.

In the latter part of 1861 Col. Cowles' company marched to Centerville, then the seat of war, where the First N. C. Cavalry became a part of the First Cavalry Regiment of the Confederate army, and was connected with the army of Northern Virginia until the surrender. Cowles was promoted to Major and later to Colonel of his Regiment. His dashing bravery and courage won the admiration of his superior officers so much that in the First Maryland raid he was put in command of the extreme advance guard of the cavalry by Stewart. On return he was placed in command of the extreme rear guard.

At Auburn, where Col. Thomas Ruffin fell, Cowles rallied the men and continued the charge. At Brandy Station he led the charge that drove the 10th New York Cavalry out of line and to the rear. He followed them up for several miles toward Kel-

ly's Ford, capturing Maj. Forbes, Maj. Gregg's commissary and Wm. Buckly, private correspondent of the New York Herald, and others, whom he successfully brought out, though at the end of the charge he was entirely within the enemy's lines. In the beginning of the charge, Preston Hampton, son of Wade Hampton, joined Cowles for a short distance but his horse was shot from under him and when he had obtained another horse he found that his squadron had passed ahead and that Gregg's entire column was moving down the road in the direction that Cowles had just gone. (As Hampton could not rejoin his squadron, he returned to the Confederate lines and reported that Cowles was surely captured. When Cowles attempted to retrace his steps he was met by a Confederate coming at full speed with the news that a large body of Federal cavalry were in the road a short distance off, coming in that direction. Cowles passed with his men and prisoners through the field and across a deep stream where there was no ford; he crossed safely and just in time to witness the advance of General Gregg's column at the point in the road which Cowles had left.

At the beginning of the battle of Mine Run General Ewell was in need of a competent officer to take command of the skirmish line in his front and requested General Stuart to suggest the man. General Stuart detailed Captain Cowles for the duty and directed him to take in addition to the cavalry he would find with General Ewell one hundred picked men, which he did, quickly joining General Early. He went to the front and established his skirmish line and next morning met the enemy's advance gallantly checking its movements every inch of the way to the Confederate's main lines. In this engagement he received his first wound by a minie ball through the body. His wound was thought to be

fatal but the following spring he rejoined his command in time to take part in the first of that memorable campaign of 1864 and was in command of the right wing of General Gordon's forces at Brook church near Richmond, where Gordon fell. He continued in active service until the 31st of March, 1865, when, in leading a desperate assault on the right of the enemy near Petersburg, and after his horse was shot leaving him on foot and knee deep in water he was shot in the head. Those who saw him thought he was killed and he was left unconscious to fall into the hands of the enemy. He was taken to the hospital where he heard the news of the surrender of Lee. It happened that he met there an officer of his own name and probably his kinsman, Maj. Cowles, of the Federal army, who promised him the best treatment and who allowed him and a number of his friends to go home on parole. Colonel Cowles took the boat for Norfolk under guard. At Norfolk he was imprisoned for a day, then he left for New Bern. He was badly treated on the vessel and he came near being thrown overboard. At New Bern, by the aid of a friend, he managed to get across the Federal lines. He went to Raleigh, then to Salisbury with Thad Coleman. They reached Third creek in a private conveyance and attempted to walk the rest of the way to Statesville, but it was too much for men who apparently were nearer their graves than their homes. When within three miles of Statesville, Col. Cowles offered a farmer \$3.00 in greenback and \$20.00 in Confederate money to take them to Statesville, and after much persuasion prevailed upon the farmer to comply. Cowles finally reached Wilkesboro.

At the close of the war he came home poor, and in addition he was suffering intensely from the wounds received March 31st, 1865. As soon as health would

permit he began the study of law under Judge Pearson, his room mate being Hon. Charles Price, of Salisbury.

After obtaining license in 1868 he located in Wilkesboro and immediately entered into a lucrative and successful law practice. This was during the dark days of North Carolina, and as he had stood by his State in time of peril and war so in the great political battles of 1868 and 1870 he did not shrink duty or responsibility, but entered actively into the campaigns and did good work for his party. In 1872 he was elected Reading Clerk of the Senate. In 1874 he was elected Solicitor of the 10th Judicial district, which office he held till 1879, and was an able and fearless prosecuting officer.

In 1882 he was nominated by the Democrats for the Legislature, and although he was defeated, he made a campaign that won a great reputation for him.

In 1884 Colonel Cowles was nominated for Congress and was elected by a handsome majority. He entered upon his duties as Congressman March 4th, 1885, the same day President Cleveland was first inducted into office. He was re-elected in 1886, 1888 and 1890, and voluntarily withdrew in 1892 before any county conventions were held.

He represented his district with fidelity and credit during his eight years in Congress, always glad to attend to any business for any of his constituents, and was noted in Washington for his interest in and fidelity to his constituents.

As a campaigner he ranked among the best in the State, and during the four canvasses he made for Congress he made many able and interesting speeches.

After his retirement from Congress he devoted himself to farming and was one of the best farmers in the county.

Colonel Cowles was twice married, first in 1870 to Miss Cora Worth, of Ashe county. She died in 1877. By that marriage two children survive—Carrie Lizzie who married T. B. Finley and Cora who married J. A. Gaither, of Newton. In 1888 Col. Cowles married Miss Lura Bost, of Newton, who survives him with six children.

On the 30th day of December, 1901, with scarcely any warning, death claimed him as a victim. He was taken with pneumonia on Saturday and died on the following Monday. He was buried in the Wilkesboro cemetery.

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## REV. GEORGE W. GREENE.

BY FRANK B. HENDREN.

THE subject of this sketch was born in Watauga county. He came to Wilkes and took charge of Moravian Falls Academy upon its completion about the year 1877, and remained there for about fifteen years. Under his principalship the school enjoyed a high degree of popularity, becoming the leading school in all this section. Many of the officials and leading business men of the county received their education under the tuition of Prof. Greene. It is to be doubted if any other man ever gave a greater impetus to the educational progress of the county. He is a ripe scholar and a man of unsullied honor. He is at present a missionary of the Baptist church to China.

## DR. TYRE YORK.

DR. TYRE YORK, son of Mike York, was born at Rockford, Surry county, in 1836. He was educated in the common schools of his county. He studied medicine at the Charleston Medical College, from which institution he is a graduate.

He was married to Eliza Crumpler, of Surry county, daughter of Thomas Crumpler and sister of the famous T. N. Crumpler. By this union were born three children—all girls. The oldest married Hilary Cockerham; the next married M. F. Bryan, and the the third married Benjamin Taylor, of Alleghany county.

About 1869 Dr. York located in the Trap Hill section where he practiced his profession and tended his farm. When the Civil war broke out, he being a physician, was exempted from military service. He was very friendly to those who chose to conceal themselves in the mountains and caves rather than enter the army, and he would go to their dens to give them medical attention in time of affliction. Many a poor soul was kept out of the army by his certificates of unsound health.

Immediately after the war Dr. York sold his property at Trap Hill and started for the State of Arkansas to make his future home. He and his wife and children started on the long journey in a wagon. After many days of weary traveling they reached the Mississippi river. There they camped on the bank of the "Father of Waters." In the morning after their arrival Mrs. York began washing some of their clothes that had been soiled during the long journey and the Doctor started for a day's tour in Arkansas where they intended to make their future home. In the evening the Doctor returned; Mrs. York had

finished her washing and the clothes were hanging out to dry. The Doctor had seen enough of Arkansas, and was satisfied that Wilkes was the best place to live, and without waiting for the clothes to dry, he pulled up his tent and started back to Wilkes.

After he returned from his Arkansas trip he purchased a farm a mile and a half from Trap Hill and here he has lived ever since, except what time he was in the Legislature and Congress.

York has always taken a lively interest in politics, and in 1870 he was elected to the Legislature. He was again elected to the same position in 1887. He was elected to the State Senate in 1879 and also in 1881. In 1884 he was the Republican candidate for Governor and made a brilliant campaign but was defeated by Alfred M. Scales, the Democratic candidate. In 1882 he was elected to Congress as an independent. In 1896 he was elected as Presidential Elector for the 8th N. C. district.

Dr. York is remarkable for his wit and he did not withhold his jokes in his campaign speeches. He always attracted the crowd and his jokes, told in his own original and familiar way, always brought "side-splitting" laughter. Public speakers, and especially politicians, often reiterate his jokes, and it is only necessary to say that they are Doctor York's to assure the closest attention.

After Dr. York was elected to Congress and was making arrangements to start to the National capital he included among his vesture a pair of kip boots made by a first class country boot and shoe maker. This is told to show the Doctor in his simplicity, representing his constituents as they were.

Dr. York was the owner of a mule that was almost as celebrated as the Doctor himself. The mule was known as "General Jackson." York rode "General Jackson" on his campaign tours, and they were the



subjects of much comment both among the people and in the newspapers. The newspapers sometimes had cartoons of Dr. York riding "General Jackson." It has been told that York rode "General Jackson" all the way to Washington to attend as a member of Congress, but I am informed that that statement is untrue. "General Jackson" died a few years ago and York has quit politics and is content to live quietly on his farm under the shadow of the towering mountains round about his country home.

He is surrounded by multitudes of friends who love him for his efforts in their behalf while a public official and for his professional services in times of affliction.

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### MONTFORD STOKES.

THE subject of this sketch, and the first of the Stokes family that was afterwards to play an important part in the affairs of Wilkes county, was born on the 12th of March, 1762. He entered the American army during the Revolutionary war and was taken prisoner near Norfolk in 1776, being then only fourteen years of age, and was confined as a prisoner of war for seven months on a British war ship.

Montford Stokes was Clerk of the County Court of Rowan county for several years when that county embraced the territory of Wilkes and other counties in this section.

He was also Clerk of the State Senate for a number of years, where he was very popular.

Probably Montford Stokes was the first and only man to refuse a seat in the United States Senate. He was elected to that position while he was Clerk of the State Senate but refused to accept. In 1816

he was again elected to fill the important position of United States Senator; this time he accepted and served in that branch of the National Legislature until 1823, when he voluntarily retired.

After his retirement from the United States Senate Stokes wanted to lead the life of a private citizen on his Morne Rouge plantation (now known as the Gray farm), but the people again called him into public service and in 1826 elected him to the State Senate. In 1829 he was elected to the House of Commons, and also in 1830.

In 1830 he was elected Governor of North Carolina, but resigned in 1831 to accept the appointment from President Jackson as Indian Agent in Arkansas, where he lived until his death in 1842 at Fort Gibson.

On Dec. 17th, 1842, Hon. D. M. Barringer introduced the following resolutions in the House of Commons:

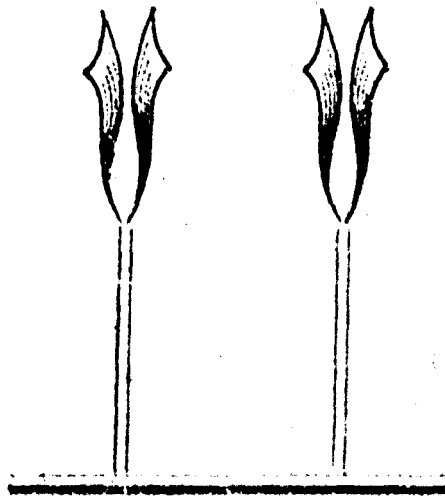
“Whereas the House of Commons have heard with regret of the death of Ex-Governor Montford Stokes, whose life has been connected with, for more than half a century, the history of North Carolina, and has occupied many distinguished stations in her gift, therefore resolved unanimously—

“That as a mark of respect to the memory of Montford Stokes, this House do now adjourn until Monday morning, ten o'clock.”

I am sorry that I am unable to give more information of the public life of this man, but it has been impossible to obtain further data. Governor Stokes was one of the great men of his time. From the account of his public services given in this short sketch it will be seen that he felt the responsibility of his position as representative of the people. Gov. Stokes was one of the early settlers of Wilkes coun-

ty. He married Rachel, daughter of Hugh Montgomery, one of the two heirs who inherited the Moravian lands in Wilkes embracing nearly ten thousand acres. By this union was born Montford Sidney Stokes on Oct. 6, 1810.

Governor Stokes was very fond of card-playing, and while he was at Fort Gibson, after being absent from home for several years, his only son Sidney paid him a visit. Sidney called at the house where his father was staying and was informed that he was up stairs playing cards. Sidney went up to the room and found his father seated at the card table. Governor Stokes at once recognized his son but was so deeply absorbed in the game that he only said, "Hello Sid, is that you? Have a seat; I'll be through here in a few minutes." After the game was ended he gave Sidney a royal welcome.



## C. C. PETTY (Col.).

ONE of the smartest negroes of the 19th century was a native of Wilkes county. That negro was Charles Calvin Petty. He was born in the year 1850, about four miles east of Wilkesboro, and was the son of Jordan and Fannie Petty. He was educated at Biddle University and was a graduate of that institution.

Early in life he associated himself with the M. E. Zion church. He began his career as a local preacher at Charlotte, and displayed such talent and ability that his denomination soon promoted him to Presiding Elder. About 1890, at Newbern, N. C., he was elected Bishop, in which capacity he served his church and race until his death in 1899.

He was emigrant agent to California for about a year, before he was elected Bishop; with this exception his life was spent in the service of his church.

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THE CLEVELAND OAK.

THE old oak tree that stands north of the court house and in front of the old I. T. Prevette residence is a relic of Revolutionary times when Colonel Cleveland was engaged in suppressing the Tories. Several Tories were hung to this tree by Cleveland and his associates. Among the number was Captain Riddle and two other Tories who had previously captured Cleveland at Old Fields and would have killed him, doubtless, had it not been for the timely rescue by his brother Captain Robert Cleveland. There were several other Tories hung to this tree. Coyle and Brown, two notorious horse thieves, were

hung there with the clothes-line they had stolen from Maj. Wilfong and converted into halters to lead away Wilfong's horses.

It is not known where nor in what manner the remains of the Tories that were executed here were buried; but it is reasonable to suppose that they were not taken very far away and that no great pains were taken to inter them very securely. Dr. F. H. Gilreath recently found a joint of the spinal column of a human being in the lot back of I. S. Call & Co's. store. It is thought that that was a part of the remains of some one of the Tories executed by Cleveland, and doubtless the remains of all those Tories are scattered in the same locality.

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## RUFUS A. SPAINHOUR.

BY FRANK B. HENDREN.

RUFUS A. SPAINHOUR was born in Burke county in 1839 and came to this county first in 1859 and entered New Hope Academy. He remained here, part of the time as pupil and part of the time as an assistant to his brother, who was principal of the academy, until the commencement of the war when he together with his brother and several of the pupils of the school enlisted in company B, First Regiment N. C. Troops. He served throughout the war. He was made Quarter Master of his regiment.

Returning to his native county, Burke, after the war he engaged in teaching school for about two years, and again returned to Wilkes county and taught school at Oak Forest for about two years. He then bought out the late W. H. Reeves' mercantile business at that place and conducted it two

years. He has been in the mercantile business ever since either at Moravian Falls or at Wilkesboro, and is one of the most successful merchants and business men in the county. Being one of the most public-spirited and liberal men in the county he has done as much for the material and educational upbuilding of the county as any man who has ever lived in it. It was largely through his energy and influence that Moravian Falls Academy was built and maintained through so many years of conspicuous usefulness to this and many surrounding counties. He represented this county in the lower house of the General Assembly in 1880 and has held several other positions of trust and usefulness, being at present Chairman of the County Board of Education.

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### LOVERS' LEAP.

ABOUT a mile west of Wilkesboro there is a precipice that overhangs the south side of the Yadkin river which is known as Lovers' Leap. Tradition has it that many years ago when there were but few white people in this country, a young Indian fell in love with a native Squaw and were engaged to be married. The father of the Indian girl refused to give her up, and she and her lover consented to end their lives by leaping from the cliff into the river, which they did. Ever since the place has been known as Lovers' Leap.

## COURT HOUSES AND JAILS.

ALTHOUGH it was decided by the committee appointed by the General Assembly in 1777 that the court house should be located where the Mulberry Field Meeting House stood it was not until about 1799 that the question was finally decided and a wooden court house built. From the formation of the county to that time, embracing a period of about twenty-two years, the regular courts were held at various places, some times in houses and some times out in the open air under the trees. It is said that many times the courts were held near Brown's Ford, and at other times over near Fairplains and on the hill where the late John Finley lived.

There was strong opposition to building the court house at the Mulberry Fields notwithstanding the State's committee had decided that it should be build there and Rachel Stokes and Rebecca Wellborn had deeded to the county fifty acres for the site. The people across the Blue Ridge contended that the county seat should be located nearer the center of the county. Hamilton Horton had secured a charter for a turnpike from Holman's Ford to New river and the road was built; a stage line was then put into operation from Guilford Court House to Knoxville, Tenn. Emigrants from the east came this way and many of them settled across the Blue Ridge about the Old Fields on New River, along the Watauga river and Beaver Dam creek. A considerable settlement had sprung up across the mountains which was protesting against building the court house at Mulberry Fields. The settlements across the mountains continued to grow and the agitation about the location of the court house was not ended until Ashe county was formed and all the

territory across the Blue Ridge was given to the new county, embracing all of the present counties of Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga, and probably more.

There is some dispute as to when the first court house was built and where it was located, but I think it safe to say that it was built about the year 1799 and was located near where the Chronicle building now stands. The fifty acres of land—including the Mulberry Fields—given to the county for a court house site by Rachel Stokes and Rebecca Wellborn was divided into lots and sold, with the exception of the court house plot and two public lots, one at the old North spring and the other at the old South spring. The money accruing from the sale of the lots was used to erect the court house. The house was made of logs and fastened together with wooden pins. Part of the logs of the old court house were used in constructing Dr. W. C. Greene's residence, which is still standing.

Between the years 1820 and 1830, in order to accommodate the rapidly increasing population, it was necessary to build a larger court house. Then was the old brick building—35 x 45 feet—with the stone foundation built. Frank D. Hackett tells me that his father was appointed to superintend the construction of that house and he was placed under a bond of \$10,000 for the faithful performance of his duty. It was one of the best court houses in the State at the time of its construction. This building was torn down this year, 1902, and the new house now being constructed by L. W. Cooper & Co., of Charlotte, will be completed by Nov. 1st, of this year.

There is much pathetic remembrance connected with the old court house that has just been torn down. Within its walls wives and mothers have heard the sentence of death passed upon their hus-



bands and sons. Within its walls have been tried those who had taken the lives of father or child. The ablest jurists in the State—such as Col. Folk, Armfield, Linney, Pearson, Glenn, Bower, and others—have made the old temple ring with their pleadings for mercy and justice. And the politicians and statesmen—such as Settle, Linney, Pritchard, Ransom and Vance—have cheered the multitudes and fired the patriotism and ambition of thousands by their oratory. This volume is too small to give the history of this old building. Its walls have been pulled down but it will be many a day before it is forgotten.

Wilkes county's first jail was built immediately after the county was formed and was located on the southwest corner of the present court house lot. The stocks, whipping post and pillery were near the jail. The first jail was a wooden structure and it is said that Colonel Cleveland kept Tory prisoners in it during the Revolutionary war. About the year 1828 this jail was sold and torn down and a part of the timber used in the building of the old Noah hotel. A new jail was built on the hill where Esq. R. M. Staley lives, and that jail remained until about 1860, when the present jail was completed.

## HARRY HOLLAND.

Who has not read the story of the Indian in the hog skin during the Revolutionary war? An Indian had disguised himself in this way and had been deceiving the pickets of the patriot army and when they got within range of the fictitious hog he would shoot them down. Harry Holland, being a soldier in the patriot army, was on picket duty and discovered what he at first thought was a large hog. After watching the supposed hog for a short time he noticed that it had actions peculiar for a hog, and instead of being frightened away was coming nearer him. Holland suspicioned that it might be a false hog and he shot and killed it, and lo, it proved to be an Indian in a hog skin, with rifle cocked ready to shoot the patriot soldier.

Harry Holland was a native of Wilkes county; was born and raised near Millers Creek, and was buried on the W. B. Owings plantation. After the war was over and our independence was won, and the soldiers had returned home, Holland would take great delight in telling this story, and probably there are people yet alive who have heard him tell it.

## AGRICULTURAL POSSIBILITIES,

AT THIS time agriculture is not regarded as a very profitable industry in Wilkes, but the fault is in the people and not in the natural resources. There is not a section in the world of equal area that surpasses Wilkes county in agricultural possibilities. And in a few years when the people shall have learned the truth of this statement Wilkes will be one of the finest agricultural counties in the State. Our climate is so diversified that we can grow the sugar beet in one end of the county and cotton in the other. In fact, almost anything grown in a temperate climate may be found in Wilkes.

The red clay soil so abundant in the county is the richest land to be found. There are thousands of acres of this kind of land that has been turned out as worthless. This land will all be reclaimed and will make old Wilkes county rich. It is not the purpose of this book to tell how that can be done, but the State Department of Agriculture will cheerfully give any information you may desire along this line, or any other item discussed in this chapter.

Several years ago stock raising was an important industry in this county but it has been neglected until there is not a thousand dollars' worth of stock exported in a whole year. Before the Civil war the stock raisers of Wilkes drove their cattle on foot to Philadelphia and other northern markets. Now a market is at the door, but the cattle are not here. This condition will not always exist. The broad valley of the Yadkin will one of these days be the best stock growing regions in the world. This is rather premature history but I verily believe it is true, nevertheless.

One of the most important branches of agricultural industry is that of fruit raising. Wilkes county is situated in what is known as the isothermal belt and is the best fruit-growing section in the world. The Blue Ridge on the north-west rising to the height of about 4,500 feet above the sea level forms a wall to protect us from the cold north-west winds. On the south are the Brushy mountains, about 2000 feet above the sea level. Many years ago it was discovered that orchards planted in the elevated coves and on the mountain sides along the Blue Ridge and Brushies were very seldom damaged by frost in the spring, and that the fruit was not subject to the attacks of harmful insects abounding in the valleys and that the fruit attained a perfection in shape, color and flavor not known in other localities. For the last few years the quality of fruit raised in this section has attracted the attention of the whole country, and parties from New York and other great fruit markets have come to buy our fruit and investigate the orchards, and they have pronounced this the finest fruit-growing section in the world.

It is not my purpose to establish a "scientific theory" in regard to this state of things but it is a fact, proven by scientific investigation and established by abundant testimony that, by reason of the nocturnal radiation of heat absorbed during the day, the stratum of air in the bottom of a valley after nightfall is colder than the air some distance above the surface. Here this condition is intensified by the greater amount of heated air and being surrounded by mountain walls leaving no avenue by which the heated air may escape, thus it gradually rises and escapes through the gaps of mountains. I quote the following paragraph from the Handbook.

of North Carolina, issued by the Department of Agriculture:

"The fact remains that within the limits of these frost belts fruit never fails, and at the height of 1500 to 2000 feet (hoar) frosts never fall. Such localities are found . . . along the face of the Brushy Mountains in Caldwell, Alexander and Wilkes. In the future this phenomenal section must become of inestimable value, for nowhere is there such certain assurance of the security and maturity of peaches and other tender fruit crops, or of the grape; to the successful cultivation of the grape the soil and the general conditions of the climate offer numerous inducements."

There is a large portion of soil in the county that is especially adapted to tobacco. At the World's Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia several years ago tobacco raised near Boomer, this county, was awarded the first prize. Tobacco raising could be made an important industry, and is an excellent crop to put in rotation with wheat, corn and clover.

Another industry that might be mentioned is the cultivation of Genseng or Sang. The roots of this plant sell for fabulous prices, as the plant has been almost extinguished. Wilkes is the natural home of this plant and it will grow luxuriantly if it can be protected from thieves. The United States Department of Agriculture has sent out a bulletin on Sang culture, and any one contemplating trying to raise this plant should write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and ask for a copy. It's free.

Sheep raising could be made a profitable branch of agricultural industry. Before the stock law was enacted nearly every farmer had a herd of scrub sheep running "outside" on mountains and hills.

These herds of scrub sheep paid better than anything else the farmer raised considering the cost and labor. The wool furnished the whole family in winter clothing and lots of wool to sell to the factories besides, and the sheep still left for mutton or market. When the stock law was enacted the people thought that since their sheep could not run at large their sheep raising industry was destroyed, so they sold their sheep and quit the business. That was a very foolish step indeed. Nearly every farm in the county has some land that is too rough to plow that would make excellent pasturage for a herd of sheep. Suppose you fence in such a scope of land, say 25 acres, and put in it twenty-five the best improved stock of sheep. Each year you can clip \$75 worth of wool and you will have the increase of the herd besides. This is simple logic and the people wont be long in catching the idea.

When all the agricultural advantages of Wilkes county are considered it is hard to find a county that will compare with it. We can raise almost anything that is grown in a temperate climate, live "under our own vine and fig tree," live sumptuously from the products of the plantation, and besides sell a surplus each year. We have the purest freestone water and the purest air in the world and the healthfulness of our climate is not surpassed. After considering the blessings the Creator has so lavishly spread over our county why will our young men leave the old "State of Wilkes" and seek better chances elsewhere? There can be but one answer to that question: they lack information about the resources of their own county.

## FORT HAMBY.

IN THE spring of 1865 about the time of the surrender of General Lee and immediately following, there was a band of desperadoes under the leadership of a man named Wade, a deserter of the Yankee army, who made headquarters at Fort Hamby. Fort Hamby was an old fashioned residence built of logs; there were two buildings, the larger one was two stories high and was the one used as the fort. The other building was about thirty feet from the main building, only one story high and was used as the kitchen. These buildings were on the north side of the Yadkin river near the mouth of Lewis Fork, about eight miles west of Wilkesboro. They were situated on top of a hill overlooking the bottoms of the Yadkin river and Lewis Fork creek, and from the fort windows was an excellent view on either side. It was an ideal location for a fort and no doubt Wade and his gang of robbers felt secure inside the heavy log walls.

The gang consisted of Wade and Lockwood, two renegade Yankee deserters, and about eighty-five men from this and adjoining counties. They were a terror to the people round about and committed many depredations, robbing dwellings, smoke-houses, stores and anything else they could plunder and destroy, killing innocent women as well as men.

On one occasion a woman (the wife of Frank Triplett) was passing along the road on the opposite side of the creek several hundred yards away in a covered wagon when one of the robbers decided to try his rifle. He fired upon the wagon and the ball struck the woman and killed her.

The last raid of Wade and his gang of robbers

was a raid into Alexander county. John Greene, father of Dr. W. C. Greene, was one of the most prosperous planters in Alexander county. He had learned that the robbers were marching in the direction of his house, and supposing that they would attempt to rob him he set about making preparation to resist them. He supplied all his negroes and laborers with arms and stationed them in the house. The negroes were stationed in the dining room and the old man Greene and his son W. C. Greene, whom Wade's men had threatened to kill, took position in the front part of the house. About bed-time Wade's men surrounded the house and Wade and two others went to the front door and tried to deceive Mr. Green by pretending to be Confederate soldiers returning from the war. Their story was not believed and while Wade and Greene were talking some of the robbers were trying to force an entrance at a back window. Young Greene rushed to the window and began firing on the robbers who at once retreated. The robbers went up on the Brushies and stayed until about daylight and then made their way back to Fort Hamby. W. C. Greene at once set about to raise a company to pursue the robbers and capture them before they could reach Fort Hamby; but they soon found that they could not overtake them.

The people were enraged at the conduct of these robbers and determined to drive them out of the country or capture and destroy them. A company was soon made up—mostly of men from Alexander county—which was prepared to make an attack on Fort Hamby. The company came across the Brushy mountain by Solomon Davis', who had been robbed by Wade's gang. Davis told the men that he was too old to engage in the attack, but he



wanted to encourage them all he could. He had some four-year-old peach brandy to which he told the men to help themselves. They drank what they wanted and some of them filled their bottles and carried them with them. Jones Brown who had just returned from the Confederate army was in the company, and was riding a mule beside Parks Gwaltney. When they were riding along the bank of the Yadkin river Brown was in a very solemn mood. Suddenly he drew his bottle of brandy from his pocket and tossed it over on the river bank and said: "Parks, I never intend to touch that again." Gwaltney, in relating the incident several years later, said that "coming events seem to cast a shadow before." But they marched on, and when they were near the fort a consultation was held and a plan of attack was agreed upon.

The company, which was composed of about 26 men, was divided into two squads—one under the command of Captain Evan Ellis, of Wilkes, and the other under the command of Colonel Sharp of Alexander. One squad was to dash by and be ready to commence the attack on all sides simultaneously. When this was done the fort was surrounded and firing began. The robbers within the fort returned the fire and the battle was hotly contested. James Linney was shot and killed during the engagement. The robbers had all the advantages of the fight, as they were protected from the fire of the citizens by the thick log walls of the fort, while the citizens were in open view to the robbers. After seeing that the attack could only result in disaster to the citizens they retreated under a heavy fire from the robbers. Parks Gwaltney said that he was marching back and forth firing into one of the windows of the fort where the robbers were con-

stantly passing when he discovered that his comrades were retreating. He followed them and again happened to get with Jones Brown. They were riding side by side when they came to the ford of Lewis Fork creek. While they were in the ford the mule which Brown was riding became stubborn and would not go along. The balls from the fort were flying thick and fast all around them. Gwaltney was aiding Brown in trying to get the stubborn mule along. While they were yet in the ford a ball struck Brown on the thigh and the blood spouted and the clear mountain stream flowed on toward the sea crimsoned with the blood of a Southern hero. When the ball struck Brown he said, "Parks, take care of yourself, I'm killed!" The blood was flowing in a stream from the wound and the bullets from the fort were coming thicker and faster. By this time the mule had become manageable and the two comrades were riding along the road by the bank of the stream while the balls knocked up the sand all around them. Gwaltney was trying to hold his wounded comrade on his mule, but Brown was getting weaker every second from the loss of blood, and he again told Gwaltney to take care of himself as he was already killed. Brown then fell from his mule upon the sand and died, and Gwaltney hurried on to get beyond the danger line.

A company of men from Caldwell county had previously attacked Fort Hamby, and had succeeded in getting to the fort but were unable to capture it. In the engagement the Caldwell crowd lost two men—Clark and Hensely—who were shot and killed by the robbers.

Although defeated in the first engagement, the people were more determined than ever to burst up the gang of robbers congregated at Fort Hamby,

and immediate preparation was made for a second attack. The first company was reinforced by men from Wilkes, Alexander and Iredell counties, and about 8 days later they went more determined than ever to capture the robbers. The intention was to camp on the south side of the Yadkin and wait until just before day to surround the fort. When the citizens approached the place where they intended to camp they saw several lights and they supposed that Wade and his gang had started out on another raid and Sharp's men thought they would intercept them and give battle. They charged down on the men but to their surprise and delight instead of finding Wade's gang found a company of about seventy-five men from Caldwell awaiting to attack Wade's gang of robbers.

The Caldwell men and the Alexander, Iredell and Wilkes men joined forces and awhile before day they surrounded the fort and began the attack. All that day and all the next night the firing was kept up but no man on either side was killed. Awhile before daylight the second night Wall Sharp slipped up to the kitchen under the cover of the darkness of night and set it on fire. When Wade and his men discovered that the kitchen was burning they thought the fort would be certain to catch on fire and that they would either have to surrender or be cremated in the fort, so Wade asked what quarters would be given if they would come out and surrender. One of the men replied: "We'll give you a passport to h—l." But Wade thought it better to surrender than to remain and be burned up in the fort; so he announced that they would come out and surrender. But by some means, presumably by jumping from a window, Wade got out of the fort without being detected and instead of surrendering

made a break for the river. He dashed through the citizens' line and was fired upon a number of times but without effect. Wade reached the river in safety. The others came out and surrendered.

The robbers under the leadership of Wade numbered eighty-six, but during the siege all had escaped but four—Bill Beck, Bill Wood, Enoch Wood and — Lockwood. After these had surrendered the fort was searched and all the articles that had been stolen by the robbers that could be identified were returned to the proper owners. Then the fort itself was fired and the people who had been robbed and their friends stood by and watched Fort Hamby dissolve to ashes and smoke.

After the fort had burned to the ground a court martial was organized and the four robbers were tried and condemned to be shot at the stake. They were taken a few paces east of the burned fort and tied to stakes. Revs. William R. Gwaltney and Isaac Oxford, two Baptist ministers, were in the company of citizens, and they both offered prayer for the robbers about to be shot at the stake. Wells Linney asked to be allowed to shoot Beck, who confessed that he had shot James Linney in the engagement on the previous Sunday. The signal was given and the detailed men fired upon the four robbers tied to the stakes; their bodies were riddled with bullets and their souls went back to the God who gave them.

The citizens then searched along the river for Wade but failed to find him. Then they dispersed, leaving the four robbers hanging to the stakes, and returned to their homes. Wade told some of his friends in the community that he sank himself under the water and got breath through a reed and stayed concealed in that way until late in the even-

ing; he went up and looked at his comrades hanging to the stakes dead; he immediately left this country and has not been heard of since.

The bodies of the robbers were probably cut down in the evening after they were shot, then they lay about the ruins of Fort Hamby for three days and nights; finally the people of the community put them in boxes and hauled them away and buried them.

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### SIMMONS' GANG OF ROBBERS.

THERE was another gang of robbers under the leadership of another renegade Yankee deserter named Simmons. They made headquarters out on the Brushy mountains. They were as mean and daring in their deviltry as the Fort Hamby gang, and sometimes the two gangs would raid together. A number of innocent people were wontonly murdered by this gang for no purpose whatever except to gratify their hellish desire to kill. On one occasion a young man who was rather idiotic was captured by one of the gang who thought he would take him to the camp and have all the fun they wanted out of him and then kill him. The young man was put in the road before the robber and made to march at his command. As they were marching through a dark hollow the robber was sighting at the back of the boy's head and the opportunity to commit murder was so tempting that he pulled the trigger and the innocent man fell dead.

About twenty years before the outbreak of the Civil war one morning there was a boy baby found lying on the court house steps. The child's parent could not be found, so a Presbyterian minister named Pervis, who lived on the lot east of the court house known as the Cowles place, adopted the child into his home and raised it. Since the boy was found at the court house he was named John Wilkes after the county. It grew up to manhood and was a bright young man. He was wontonly killed by a member of the Simmons gang.

When Stoneman's division of the Federal army marched through Wilkes the people hid their horses in the woods and mountains for fear they would be stolen, and it was several days that the people were afraid to venture out. About three days after the raid Willian Transou ventured up to Wilkesboro to hear the news. Simmons captured him on his way home and intended to kill him. He told him if he wanted to pray he would give him a moment. Transou fell to his knees and began begging Simmons not to kill him. One of Simmons' associates was touched by Transou's pleading and he too begged Simmons to spare him. Simmons finally consented to spare Transou if he would tell where his horses were at.

The Simmons gang committed some daring robberies mostly in Alexander and Iredell. After the Fort Hamby gang was broke up the band dissolved and Simmons left the country.

## STONEMAN'S RAID.

IN APRIL, 1865, a detachment of the Federal army numbering about twenty-five thousand men marched through Wilkes county burning houses, barns, etc., robbing and plundering everything in sight leaving their trail almost a howling wilderness. They came to Wilkes by way of Boone where they burned the court house as well as much private property, thence by Patterson's Factory where they burned the woolen mills located there, thence down the Yadkin into Wilkes.

They crossed the Yadkin at Holman's ford, and the river being swollen, it was with difficulty that they succeeded in crossing; but they crossed in safety to the men and horses but a wagon of amunition and a cannon were overturned and lost in the river. The cannon and a lot of the amunition was found after the war was over. Here the army was divided into two sections; one section was put under the command of General Palma while General Stoneman commanded the other section. Palma and his detachment went on the North side of the Yadkin, and Stoneman's section on the South side.

When the wing of the army under Stoneman's command reached Cub creek it was too high to ford so he pitched his tent on the hill this side, just east of where W. W. Barber now lives, and camped there for several days, during which time his soldiers were plundering and burning. One morning one of his men had entered and was preparing to set fire to the tithes the Confederates had collected here, which were stored in the old Hall store house just north of the court house. Just at that moment Calvin J. Cowles stepped in and persuaded the soldier not to burn the building. He argued that the provisions

ought to be distributed among the poor women and children of the Union men in this county. The soldier told him he would wait until he could run to Stoneman's camp and see him. This Cowles did at the peril of his life and succeeded in saving the stores and the court house and jail and other buildings as well.

Stoneman sent Cowles with a number of soldiers with a message to General Palma who was encamped on the opposite side of the river with the other wing of the army. Cowles urged Palma not to burn the factory at Elkin; this request was complied with and the army soon left the county. They went down the river to Elkin, then to Mount Airy and then to Salisbury.

The people were left in a desolate condition. Many families were left entirely without provisions with their houses and barns burned; the men were nearly all in the army, robbers abundant in the county, and it was with difficulty that starvation was averted.





## MONTFORD SIDNEY STOKES.

THE subject of this sketch was born at "Morne Rouge," in Wilkes county on October the 6th, 1810. He was the son of Montford Stokes, who was a U. S. Senator and later Governor of North Carolina. Sidney Stokes was appointed a cadet to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, where he graduated. Upon his graduation at Annapolis he entered the Navy and served for ten years or more when he resigned and returned to his plantation to engage in farming.

Stokes was appointed Major of the North Carolina Volunteers in the war with Mexico. As an officer in the Mexican war he displayed his ability to command troops and proved himself a man of superior courage. He was the soldiers' favorite officer, and as mark of their love and admiration for him they presented him a beautiful sword. The sword is now in the possession of his daughter, Mrs. C. N. Hunt. It is mounted in gold and silver and furnishes a handsome appearance. On it are the following inscriptions ;

"Presented to Maj. M. S. Stokes, of the N. C. Vol. by the non-commissioned officers and privates under his command in Mexico."

"Major M. S. Stokes, the Soldiers' Friend."

After terms of peace were made with Mexico Stokes returned to his farm in Wilkes and was one of the most successful farmers in this section. He raised many fine cattle and often drove them on foot to Philadelphia to market them. On one occasion as he was returning from Philadelphia, where he had been with a drove of cattle, he stopped for a few days with friends in Washington. It was during Andrew Jackson's administration as President

and Jackson and Stokes had been school mates at Annapolis. While in Washington Stokes was invited to attend a banquet where the President was to be the guest of honor. Stokes was a tall athlete with long limbs and large hands. He rented a conventional suit for the occasion but it was impossible to find a suit that would fit the athletic figure. But he went to the banquet and when the reception was being given Stokes went up to shake the hand of the President. "Is that you, Sid Stokes?" exclaimed the President, and the two old schoolmates embraced and gave a singular coincidence to Washington society.

Sidney Stokes was a perfect gentleman and tried to regard everybody else as such. The writer asked one of his old slaves—Sam—what kind of a man Stokes was. The old darky replied that he was one of the best men that ever lived. He said that the worst fault he had was that he put too much confidence in everybody.

When the Civil war came on Major Stokes formed the first company that left this county to join the Confederate army. He was elected captain of the company, and when the First North Carolina Regiment was organized on May 11th, 1861, at Warrenton, Stokes' company was put in that Regiment and was known as Company B, and he was elected Lieutenant-Colonel of the Regiment.

Stokes was highly regarded by his superior officers as well as by the privates under his command, and he had been recommended for promotion in recognition of his able services and daring courage. But unhappily on the 26th day of June, 1862, he was mortally wounded at Chicahominy during the Seven Days fight around Richmond. On July 8rd, 1862, this gallant hero died from the wound he had received a few days before. His remains were

brought home and buried in front of the old Stokes residence.

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## GENERAL JOHN SEVIER.

GENERAL JOHN SEVIER was not a native of Wilkes county but in that section of country west of the Blue Ridge and Smoky mountains that was in the time of Severe a portion of Wilkes county he was the most conspicuous man. In 1790 he was a member of Congress from North Carolina, living at that time in Wilkes county, the portion now Tennessee. This year Tennessee was organized and admitted into the Union as a State and General Sevier was made the first Governor.

John Sevier was born in Virginia about 1740. He came to the Holston river with an exploring party about 1769. He directed and aided in the construction of the first fort on the Watauga river. While in defense of Watauga Fort he discovered a young lady of tall and erect stature coming with the fleetness of the roe towards the fort closely pursued by Indians; her approach to the gate was cut off by the Indians, but turning suddenly she eluded her pursuers and leaped the palisades at another point and fell into the arms of Captain John Sevier. This resolute woman was Miss Catharine Sherrill, who in a few years became the devoted wife of the Colonel, and the bosom companion of the General, the Governor, the Congressman, the Senator, the people's man and the patriot, John Sevier.

Sevier was a contemporary of Daniel Boone, and devoted much of his time to hunting. He was con-

stantly engaged in defending the fort from the attacks of the Indians, and from the beginning the people of the settlement regarded him as their leader. During the Revolutionary war he and his associates went into the Indian territory, scattered the hostile bands, burnt the Indian towns and returned to their homes in better security and some more confidence of peace.

At the battle of King's Mountain Sevier commanded a section of the American army and shared in the victory at that battle. The North Carolina Legislature passed a resolution thanking Sevier for his brilliant work at King's Mountain.

In 1784 came the scenes of the State of Franklin. The people beyond the Smokies organized a government of their own under the name of the State of Franklin. Sevier was made Governor of Franklin, and received his salary in coon skins which was the currency of the State. The measures adopted by North Carolina to cede the territory to the general government caused Sevier and the supporters of the State of Franklin to come into measures of adjustment. Franklin ceded her claims to the territory to the United States and the territory south of the Ohio river was organized. The State of Franklin quietly died; the stage of territorial government was passed; the State of Tennessee was established and admitted into the Union, and General Sevier was chosen first Governor.

The authorities in North Carolina had Sevier arrested and he was taken to Morganton and put in prison on the charge of rebelling against the State, but was released because of his services at King's Mountain.

In 1811 he was elected to Congress; he was re-elected in 1813. He was a member of the Military Committee during the war of 1812.

In 1815 President Madison appointed him on a commission to adjust some difficulties with the Creek Indians. He engaged in the duties of a commissioner, was taken sick and died at an encampment on the east side of the Tallapoosa river, near Fort Decatur, Ga., on the 24th of September, 1815, and was buried with the honors of war.

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### CHARLEY GORDON.

CHARLEY GORDON was a native of Wilkes county and was a Captain under Colonel Cleveland during the Revolutionary war. He was at the battle of King's Mountain and distinguished himself by siezing a British soldier by the "Q" of hair on the back of his head and dragging him down the side of the mountain. Finally the soldier was enabled to draw his sword and immediately Gordon drew his revolver and killed him. The subject of this sketch was the great-grandfather of General John B. Gordon, late Governor of the State of Georgia, and a cousin of our illustrious Gen. James B. Gordon.

## GENERAL JAMES B. GORDON.

AMONG the great men of Wilkes county the name of General James B. Gordon stands in the front. He was born in Wilkesboro on the 2nd of November, 1822, and was a descendant of a respectable Scotch ancestry. He was educated in the common schools and academies of this section and at Emory and Henry college. He engaged in the mercantile business and was probably the most successful business man in the county in his day. Gordon always took a lively interest in politics and he became the leader of his party in the county. In 1850 he was elected to represent the county in the lower house of the General Assembly.

At the outbreak of the Civil war he was one of the first to answer the call for volunteers. He enlisted in Company B, formed by Sidney Stokes, and was elected Lieutenant of the company. This company was attached to the First North Carolina Regiment upon its organization at Warrenton.

When the Ninth Regiment (afterwards known as the First Cavalry) was organized Governor Ellis appointed him Major of the regiment. The regiment was composed of picked men and only men of courage and bravery were chosen for this regiment. In a few days Gordon was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel. On the 25th of July, 1862, the cavalry was reorganized and the Ninth Regiment was placed in the Hampton Brigade. Gordon's regiment was soon called to the retreat at the second Manassas, where he showed his skill as a cavalry commander, checking the enemy and giving time for the Confederates to successfully retreat with their men and artillery.

At Gettysburg the fighting was mostly by infantry

and artillery and the cavalry was not so extensively engaged. However, Hampton's Brigade bore the brunt of a severe fight. Gordon commanded the First N. C. Cavalry and bravely held his ground. After the fall of Colonel Evans he was put in command of the 68rd Regiment and he commanded that regiment during the remainder of the Gettysburg campaign.

At the battles of Culpepper, Jack's Shop and Brandy Station, Gordon did such brilliant work as to receive the commendation of General Stuart and which led to his promotion to Brigadier General.

In March, 1864, the Fifth N. C. Cavalry returned to their several homes for new horses and recuperation. On May 2nd, they returned to the army and were ordered to report to General R. E. Lee for assignment in Gordon's Cavalry Brigade. At that time Gordon's brigade consisted of the the First, Second, Fourth and Fifth North Carolina Cavalry Regiments.

On April 30th, 1864, a special order was issued taking Gordon's Brigade out of Hampton's division and placing it in the division of General W. H. F. Lee. Hampton regretted to have this done, and his order in executing this transfer is here given in full, as it shows the high esteem in which Gordon and his men were held:

“Headquarters Hampton's Division Cavalry,

“Cavalry Camp, Army of Northern Va.,

“Milford, May 5, 1864.

“Brigadier General J. B. Gordon, Commanding Cavalry Brigade:

“General: In pursuance of Special Orders No. 118, Department of Northern Virginia, of April 30th, and of instructions from Major General J. E. B. Stuart, commanding cavalry, you are directed to proceed without delay with your command to the

vicinity of Shady Grove, where you will concentrate your brigade and report for further orders to Major General Stuart. I am directed by Major General Hampton, in communicating the above orders, to express to you, and through you to your whole brigade, the surprise with which he has received the orders and the pain it causes him to execute them. He indulges the hope that his wishes may be consulted, and that a new assignment may be made as soon as the present emergency shall have passed, which will return your brigade to his division and give him back the troops to whom he has become so attached and whom he has learned to trust in times of danger and trial.

"Indulging this hope, he refrains from saying farewell, but will watch the performance of affairs and men in the approaching contest with the same anxious interest as if they were under his own command, confident that if your regiment should be eventually returned to him they will bring back unsullied banners and a record of glory increased and illustrated by new achievements in the coming campaign. I am, General, very respectfully

Your obedient servant,

"THEO. G. BARKER,

"Major and Assistant Adjt. Gen."

At the battle of the Wilderness Gordon's Brigade did valiant service. He was continually riding and walking along the lines of his dismounted regiments.

On the return of the Confederate forces from Mine Run to Spottsylvania C. H. Gordon's brigade made the whole distance of of sixty-six miles in 28 hours, without rest or sleep, reaching Spottsylvania about sunset. Immediately he was ordered to attack the enemy's right. He responded and succeeded in driving the enemy back before he or his men slept.

In the famous retreat from Petersburg to Appo-



mattox when the Confederates came to Sailor's creek they found the bridge burned. The enemy was close behind and the Confederates were in a perilous situation. The enemy was held in check by Gordon's regiments until the bridge was rebuilt and the retreat continued.

At Hagerstown Gordon repulsed an attack that General Stuart said saved the trains of the Confederates.

On May 9, 1864, Sherridan began his raid on Richmond. He had with him his whole corps, three divisions of cavalry, at least 12,000 mounted men and one brigade, and six batteries of artillery. To contend with this great invading force Stuart could command but three brigades—Lomax and Wickham's, Fitz Lee's division, and Gordon's brigade, and of artillery Johnson's battery and a section of Hart's. All told not over 4,000. By forced marches the two brigades of Fitz Lee succeeded in getting in Sherridan's front at Yellow Tavern on the Brook turnpike early in the morning of the 11th, and began the battle of Yellow Tavern. About the same time Gordon's forces attacked his rear ferociously. The Federals burned the Ground Squirrel bridge over the South Anna river but Gordon found an old ford, almost impassable, where he and his men crossed rushed up the hill and drove the enemy back in confusion. While Sheridan claimed the victory at Yellow Tavern it was about such a victory as Cornwallis won at Guilford Court House. It was Sheridan's aim to march into Richmond on the 11th, and had it not been for Gordon and his gallant men the capital of the Confederacy would have fallen into the hands of the Yankees that day.

On the 12th came the fight at Brook Church. Gordon was in Sheridan's rear. He had ordered some artillery from Richmond which came in due

time and was trained and fired upon the enemy. Immediately one or more of Sheridan's guns were turned upon it. Gordon was furious. He raved and begged, and called it "band box artillery," but his men stayed in the trenches. He became disgusted and went in a gallop right into the fire down that military road, and there he received his death wound. He was taken to the hospital but six days later he died.

General Stuart also received his death wound at Brook Church, and when at last he was sorely pressed and his squadron broken, just before his death, his last words were: "Would to God, Gordon were here." But Gordon, too, had received his death wound.

Gordon's remains were brought home and buried in the Episcopal cemetery at Wilkesboro. His last resting place is marked by a beautiful monument, and the evergreens and flowers that grow about his grave show the lasting admiration of his comrades, friends and relatives. Wilkes is glad that the whole country glories in the achievement of her noble son, but his fame, his glory, and his tomb are all her own.

In his history of the 5th N. C. Cavalry, Col. Paul B. Means has this to say: "Our great loss at Brook church was the gallant and glorious James B. Gordon. The Fifth loved him as its commander during the Gettysburg campaign and as his entire brigade did for his splendid courage and merit in all respects. He was the Murat of the army of Northern Virginia, and had he lived he would have added increased lustre to our North Carolina Cavalry."

Of him Gen. Julian S. Carr said: "On the 28th of Sept., 1863, James B. Gordon, Col. of the 9th, was commissioned Brigadier General and took command of the Brigade. Under General Gordon it

made famous its name of "The North Carolina Cavalry Brigade," and was thus to the end of the war widely known throughout the army of Northern Virginia and by a very great many in the army of the Potomac. Of course, it was often spoken and written of as Gordon's and afterwards Barringer's Brigade.

"Gordon was a genius of war, a "veritable god of battle." He did more than any other one man to make his brigade what it was, and had he lived his brigade would have placed his name as high on North Carolina's roll of honor as that of any Confederate, if not higher. At Brook church on the 12th of May, 1864, he received a wound which proved mortal within a week."

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### THE "BUZZARD ROOST."

IN THE early days of Wilkes county the bottoms along the Yadkin and Reddies River at the junction of the rivers was heavily timbered with tall cedars. The buzzards of all the adjacent country would gather there to roost in those cedars. So it became known as the "buzzard roost." The bottoms were cleared by the late John Finley and were so productive that the name, "buzzard roost," was very appropriate, and as long as Mr. Finley lived the bottoms were known as "John Finley's buzzard roost."

## GENERAL JAMES WELLBORN.

IN HIS day General James Wellborn was probably the most prominent man in the county. He married Rebecca Montgomery, one of the two heirs to the large tracts of land known as the Moravian surveys.

James Wellborn was appointed General of the militia about the close of the Revolutionary war. From the year 1796 to 1835 General Wellborn served in the State Senate thirty years. He served in succession from 1796 to 1811, from 1817 to 1821, in 1823 and 1824, in 1828 and 1829, in 1832, and in 1834 and 1835. Prior to 1835 members of the General Assembly were elected each year, so Wellborn was elected thirty times in thirty-nine years. The fact that a man can stand so popular for thirty-nine years is honor enough for one man. I doubt if the world can furnish a like example.

During his terms in the Senate General Wellborn made strenuous efforts to have the State build a turnpike road from the mountains to the sea, but he failed. That was before any railroads were built in North Carolina and the turnpike would have been a great thing for the people of the west, but east had the majority and they knew that the people of the west had to come to them for their necessities turnpike or no turnpike, and they were not willing to be taxed to build the road for the accommodation of the people of the west.

It was largely through the efforts of General Wellborn that his brother-in-law, Montford Stokes, was twice elected to the United States Senate and once elected as Governor of the State.

He was buried on his plantation about 8 miles west of Wilkesboro.

## HON. ANDERSON MITCHELL.

ANDERSON MITCHELL was at one time a distinguished citizen of Wilkes; he was born in Caswell county in the year 1800; was educated at the Bingham School and at the State University at Chapel Hill where he graduated in 1821. He read law under George Henderson and was admitted to the bar in 1823.

Mitchell located in Jefferson, Ashe county, to practice his profession. In 1827, '28 and '29 he represented Ashe county in the lower branch of the Legislature, and in 1838 he was elected to the State Senate. In 1840 he moved to Wilkesboro and the same year was elected to the State Senate from Wilkes. In 1842 he was elected to Congress but resigned in 1843 to devote his entire time to the practice of law.

In 1859 he removed to Statesville. In 1866 he was appointed Judge of the Superior Court, and in 1872 was elected, without opposition, to succeed himself as Judge and he served until his death in 1876 when Governor Bredgen appointed D. M. Furches to succeed him.

On Dec. 24th, 1876, he died and was buried in the cemetery at Statesville.

Judge Mitchell's conduct during the Ku Klux era in North Carolina has won for him lasting fame. In his district there was no such thing as Ku Klux allowed; neither was there any necessity for such, for all the violators of the law were punished without fear or favor. Our distinguished county man Anderson Mitchell Vannoy was named after him and was a close companion of the Judge until his death. Mitchell was an able lawyer, an excellent Judge, and a great and noble man.

## COL. WM. M. BARBER.

THE SUBJECT of this sketch was born Jan. 24th, 1834. He enlisted in the 37th N. C. Regiment and on its organization at High Point, Nov. 20th 1861, he was elected Lieutenant-Colonel of the regiment.

At Fuzzell's Mill Lane's Brigade, led by Col. Barber, recaptured the Confederate entrenchments, which had been lost by other Confederate troops, on the Darbytown road in the presence of General R.E. Lee. At Gravelly Hill he led the regiment in a hot fight and was wounded in the engagement.

The officers of Lane's brigade presented their leader with a sword and General's sash at Moss Neck and Col. Barber was chosen to present the presents which he did in a neat and graceful speech.

Col. Barber was engaged in the battle of Fredericksburg and performed his duty bravely. At Chancellorsville he grappled with the enemy bravely and drove them back but he described the fight by his regiment as the bloodiest battle he ever saw.

He was wounded in the fight at Jones' farm near Petersburg on Sept. 30th, 1864, and died from the wounds on the 3rd of the following October. His remains were brought to Wilkesboro and buried in the Episcopal cemetery.

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LEE CARMICHAEL was a prominent man in Wilkes before the Civil war. He was a fine lawyer and was a candidate for Congress against General Thomas L. Clingman. He represented the county in the Legislature a number of times. He died about the close of the war.

## COL. THOMAS C. LAND.

THOMAS C. LAND is one of the landmarks of the county. He was born March 18, 1828, and was raised on a farm, attending the old field schools a few weeks for a part of the winters. He attended old Beaver Creek Academy for a short time while Hugh Stokes was principal.

At the outbreak of the war he joined Col. Sidney Stokes' company as a private and served during the war. He was appointed commissary and later corporal. In the Seven Days Fight around Richmond he was wounded and was allowed to come home on furlough. During his absence from the army he was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of the 53rd regiment, which position he assumed on his return to the army. He was wounded at the battle of Winchester and a number of other times but not seriously.

After the war Col. Land returned to Wilkes and engaged in teaching school and farming. In 1870 he went to Oregon and took up land and lived there until 1884 when he returned to Wilkes. In 1891 he again went to Oregon and lived there until 1898 when he returned to Wilkes where he has since lived. While in the West he engaged in farming, teaching and mining.

Col. Land has considerable literary talent and is the author of the popular ballad, "The Death of Laura Foster," and a number of other poems.

Col. Land has been fond of hunting and while in the West he had quite a little experience in hunting deer, bear and elk. He has the horns of a large elk that he killed which he prizes very highly.

Col. Land is at present a member of the county Board of Education, the only office he ever held.

## REV. W. R. BRADSHAW.

BY F. B. HENDREN.

REV. W. R. BRADSHAW, the pastor of the Baptist church in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro respectively, was born in Burke county, N. C., on the 14th of July, 1866. His father was a farmer and young Bradshaw worked on his father's farm until he was eighteen years old. He attended the district school



REV. W. R. BRADSHAW.

a few months in the winter, and at eighteen years of age he entered Amherst Academy, situated near his father's farm, under the tuition of Rev. R. L. Patton, one of the ablest ministers and educators in the



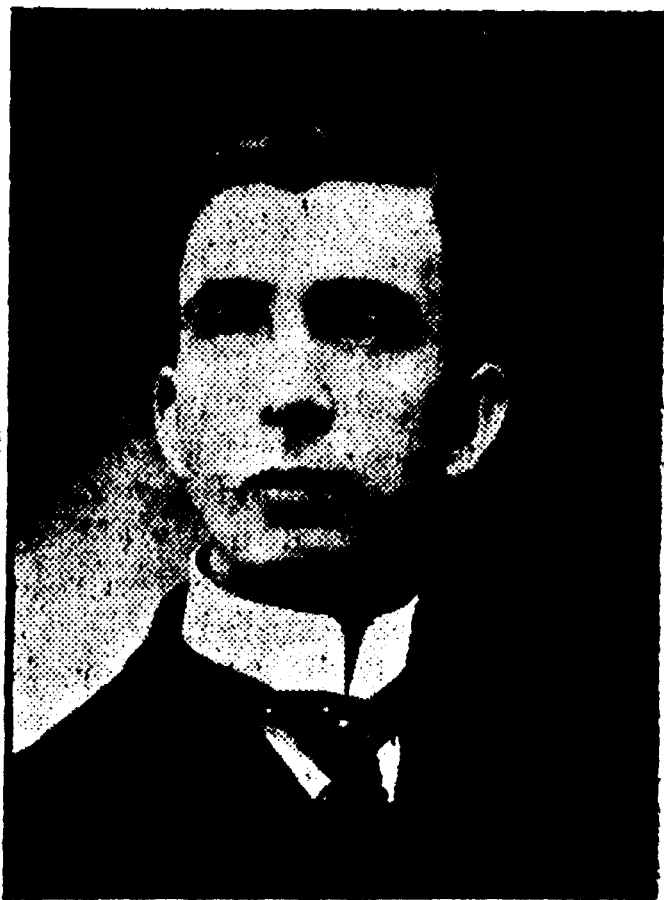
State. Here he was fitted for college and, having decided to enter the ministry, matriculated at Wake Forest College in the fall of 1888 and graduated in the class of '92. The following fall he assumed the principalship of Moravian Falls Academy and also took charge of the Baptist church at Moravian Falls, and during the year had charge of other churches in this county. Soon after his removal to this county he took charge of the Baptist churches at Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. These pasturates he has most acceptably and successfully filled up to the present time. He has received several calls to good churches in other towns in this State but has uniformly declined them. Under his eloquent sermons and wise ministry the churches in the two Wilkesboros have enjoyed a most gratifying and steady growth. Nor does his influence cease at the borders of the two towns, but reaches out all over the county, throughout which he is well known. He is also a prominent personage on the floor of the Baptist State Convention and occasionally electrifies it with his bursts of eloquence. He is often referred to as the "Boy Orator of the Mountains."

Pure in life and chaste in demeanor, he is yet the stern and uncompromising enemy of evil in every form, especially of the liquor evil. He is prominently connected with the educational interests of the county.

## NEWSPAPERS.

*The Hustler, North Wilkesboro.*

THE HUSTLER was established in July, 1896, by T. J. Robertson, the present owner and editor. It was a three column, 8 page paper. On January 2, 1898,

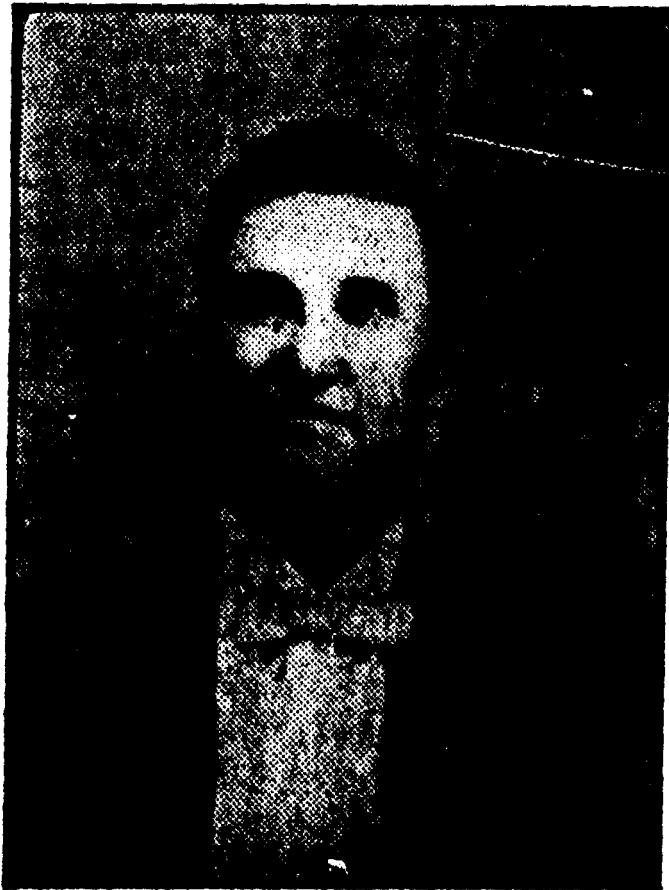


T. J. ROBERTSON.

the entire outfit was destroyed by fire and not a cent of insurance on the plant. Mr. Robertson assumed the proportions of the name of his paper and in two weeks a new outfit was put in and the paper re-appeared in an enlarged form—a 5 column, 8 page paper. The Hustler has made steady advancement

and now has a firm hold on the people of North Wilkesboro and the county.

The editor and owner, T. J. Robertson, was born in Pittsylvania county, Va., Feb. 27, 1865. In 1877 his parents moved to Kernersville, N. C., where he received an academical education. He came to North Wilkesboro in 1895 and was editor of the North Wilkesboro News until 1896 when he established The Hustler.



ROBERT A. DEAL.

*The Chronicle, Wilkesboro.*

THE CHRONICLE was established at Lenoir by H. S. Blair in 1888, but a few years later was moved

to Wilkesboro, and has been published continuously ever since. Soon after the paper moved to Wilkesboro R. A. Deal bought it and has owned and conducted it ever since. In 1899 he bought the Mountain Breeze and the two offices were consolidated.

Robert Avery Deal, editor and owner of The Chronicle, was born in Caldwell county Dec. 6, 1863, and was raised on the farm, attending the public schools a part of the sessions. He attended Rutherford College under Prof. R. L. Abernethy for about two years, going in debt for his tuition. After leaving Rutherford he taught school, and when The Chronicle was established he worked with it until he bought the paper, paying the last of his Rutherford College tuition after coming to Wilkesboro. On Feb. 7, 1900, he was married to Miss Mamie Wallace, by which union two children have been born. Mr. Deal is a man of deep thought, and by close application has made a reputation for thoroughness in whatever he undertakes. He is an ardent democrat and an earnest worker for his party, having served for a number of years as chairman of the county executive committee. He was postmaster at Wilkesboro during Cleveland's last administration.

### *The Yellow Jacket, Moravian Falls.*

THE YELLOW JACKET was established by R. Don Laws in June, 1895, as a three column, four page, monthly paper. When the paper was started, out in the country, away from any public road and two miles from the postoffice, many people predicted the thing a failure. As the name implies, the Yellow Jacket was from the beginning a "warm baby." It discusses politics almost exclusively from a republican standpoint. The paper has been enlarged

from time to time until now it is a five column folio and is issued twice a month. The circulation has built up wonderfully. The paper now has about 20,000 subscribers in every State in the Union. In order to issue the paper in such quantities it was necessary to install new machinery from time to time. Now the Yellow Jacket outfit is the best printing plant in this section of the State. The paper is about to outgrow its present equipment and



R. DON LAWS.

Mr. Laws is making arrangements to put in a perfecting press.

R. Don Laws, the editor and proprietor of the Yellow Jacket, was born in Wilkes county in 1868, and worked on the farm till he was 21 years old. Mr. Laws printed the following account of himself in his paper some time ago:

“We were born in Wilkes county, North Carolina, in 1868, lived on a farm, ate corn bread and fat meat and plowed a steer until we were 21 years old. We were blessed with the opportunity of getting to attend school for about eighteen months, all told. At the age of thirteen we made the first printing press we ever saw, carving the type from ivy wood. When we obtained money enough a small hand press and a few fonts of type were purchased. Printing seemed to be our fort so we stuck to it. Somehow we got the idea in our noggin that we wanted to be a one hoss editor, so in June, 1895, without any money, and with a printing outfit that was not worth twenty-five dollars, we founded the Yellow Jacket. For a long time it looked like the game was not worth the candle, but we worked the harder, hoping that a brighter day will come by and by. At last our hopes are partly realized. To-day we have a larger paid-up circulation than any other paper published in North Carolina, and have at last succeeded in replacing the little old printing outfit with an up to date plant and have that paid for.”

Mr. Laws is a man of more than ordinary wit and seems to be specially suited to the work he has adopted. He married Miss Dora Wallace and they have three children.

### *The Patriot, Moravian Falls.*

THE PATRIOT is a three column, four page paper established a few months ago by James Larkin Pearson. Mr. Pearson is a young man, about 28 years old. He is widely known throughout this county as a poet, having been writing verse since his youth. He made his first printing press out of wood.

*The Blue Ridge Baptist, North Wilkesboro.*

THE BLUE RIDGE BAPTIST was established in Wilkesboro in 1900 with Rev. W. R. Bradshaw and F. B. Hendren editors. The next year the paper changed hands and A. C. Hamby became editor and



A. C. HAMBY.

D. W. Lee manager, and the paper was moved to North Wilkesboro. The Baptist is a clean religious paper and speaks well for its young editor and manager.

A. C. Hamby, editor, was born in Wilkes county Aug. 28, 1876, and worked on his father's farm un-

til he was seventeen years old. He attended Bethel Hill Institute, Trap Hill Institute, Whitehead Academy, and he also spent nine months at Wake Forest College. He paid his tuition and board by teaching and working as a farm hand. He also attended the Blue Ridge Institute for one session. He was licensed to preach by his church but has not yet been ordained.

D. W. Lee, manager of the Baptist, was born June 28, 1875, was raised on the farm and attended school at Bethel Hill, Trap Hill and Whitehead. At the last named place he taught a commercial department for one session. He was principal of New Hope Academy in 1898 and 1899. In 1900 he, in copartnership with his brother, established the Baptist Instructor which was consolidated with the Blue Ridge Baptist in 1901.

### *The Curfew, Brewers.*

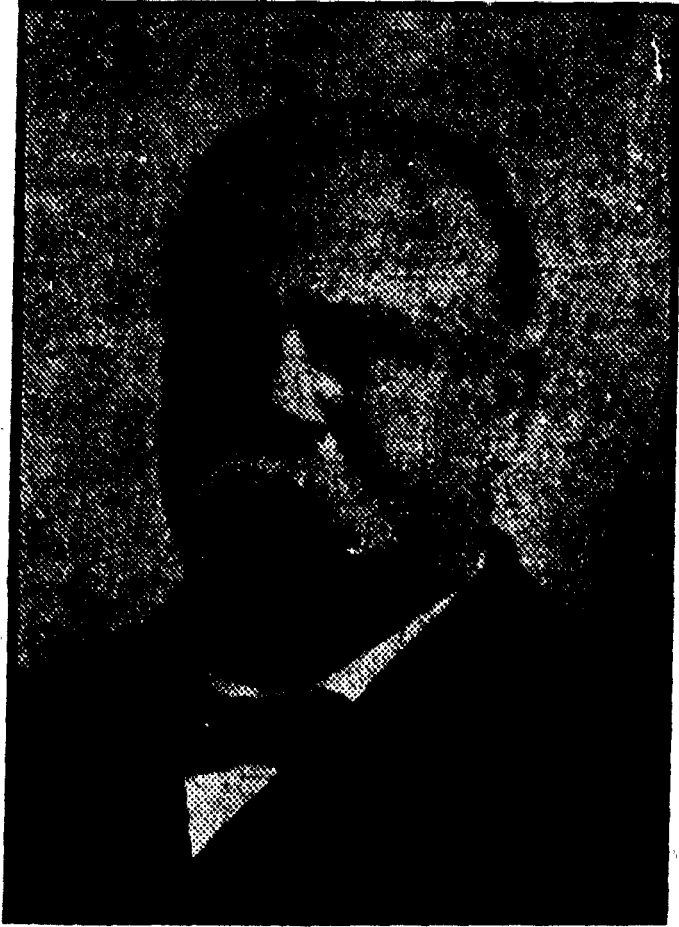
THE CURFEW was established in 1898 by W. L. Brewer and J. J. Spicer; at first it was a 3 column, 4 page paper but it has been enlarged to a 6 column, 4 page paper. Mr. Brewer, the present editor, is a man of character and ability. (Further particulars about the Curfew have not reached the author.)



## LAWYERS.

*John S. Cranor.*

JOHN SAMUEL CRANOR was born at Rockford, in Surry county, April 26, 1847. When he was about



JNO. S. CRANOR.

ten years old his father moved to Wilkesboro and engaged in running a hotel. In 1864 he entered the Confederate army, being then only seventeen years. He enlisted in Company B, and was intended to be assigned to the First Battalion North Carolina Reserves and was stationed at Camp Vance for instructions. Here he was captured by Col. Kirk of the

Federal army and was carried as a prisoner of war to a prison camp at Chicago, where he was kept for twelve months. While in prison he endured many hardships and witnessed the death of many comrades from exposure and hardships. After being paroled after peace was proclaimed he returned to Wilkesboro, studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1868.

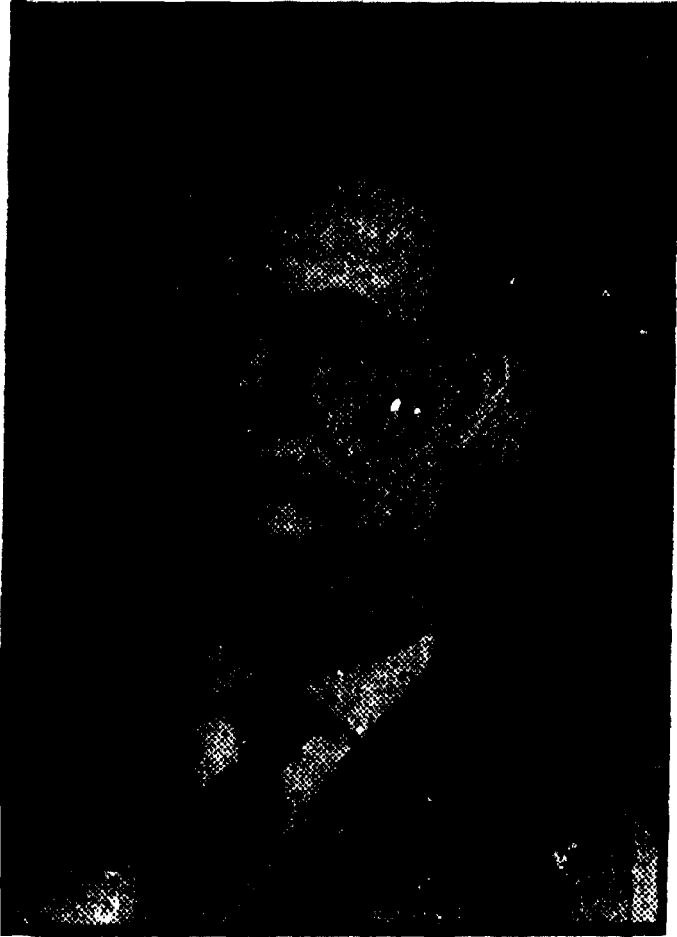
On Nov. 27, 1872, he was married to Miss Sarah Taylor and to them were born nine children. Mrs. Cranor died in May, 1902.

Mr. Cranor was Register of Deeds from 1884 to '86. In 1893 he represented his district in the State Senate; he was elected by 745 majority when the majority was usually about that much for the opposing party. Mr. Cranor is at present Mayor of the town of Wilkesboro.

### *Frank B. Hendren.*

THE SUBJECT of this sketch was born Feb. 24, 1860, and worked on the farm until he was 21 years old attending the public schools about two months during the winter for a part of the winters. He entered Moravian Falls Academy and was prepared for college by Rev. Geo. W. Greene, principal of the academy. Before entering college he taught school in Ashe county one year and at Vashti academy, in Alexander county, one year. In 1884 he entered Wake Forest College and graduated in 1888. After his graduation he taught school for ten years, teaching in Montgomery county, in High Point Female College, in the Winston Graded Schools, in Jackson county, and finally for four years was principal of Moravian Falls academy. In 1895 he was admitted to the bar, but taught school two years after. In 1898 he moved to Morganton and formed a partner-

ship with J. F. Spainhour for the practice of law. He returned to Wilkesboro in 1900 where he has since resided practicing his profession. While he was at Morganton he was elected County Superintendent of Schools of Burke county. Mr. Hendren



FRANK B. HENDREN.

is a ripe scholar and an able jurist. He is an enthusiastic member of the Baptist church and is a great Sunday School worker.

*William W. Barber.*

The subject of this sketch was born in Wilkesboro Oct. 14, 1855, and was educated by his father, Rev.

R. W. Barber; he read law at Lenoir under Col. Geo. N. Folk and was admitted to the bar in 1879. In 1882 he formed a copartnership with Col. W. H. H. Cowles for the practice of law; the partnership existed until 1887, several years after Col. Cowles had been elected to Congress and was mutually dis-



WILLIAM W. BARBER.

solved; since that time he has practiced law alone in Wilkes and adjoining counties.

In early life he showed a fondness for politics and since 1876 he has been an active worker for his party. He has several times been chairman of the County Executive Committee of the Democratic party; he served eight years as a member of the ex-

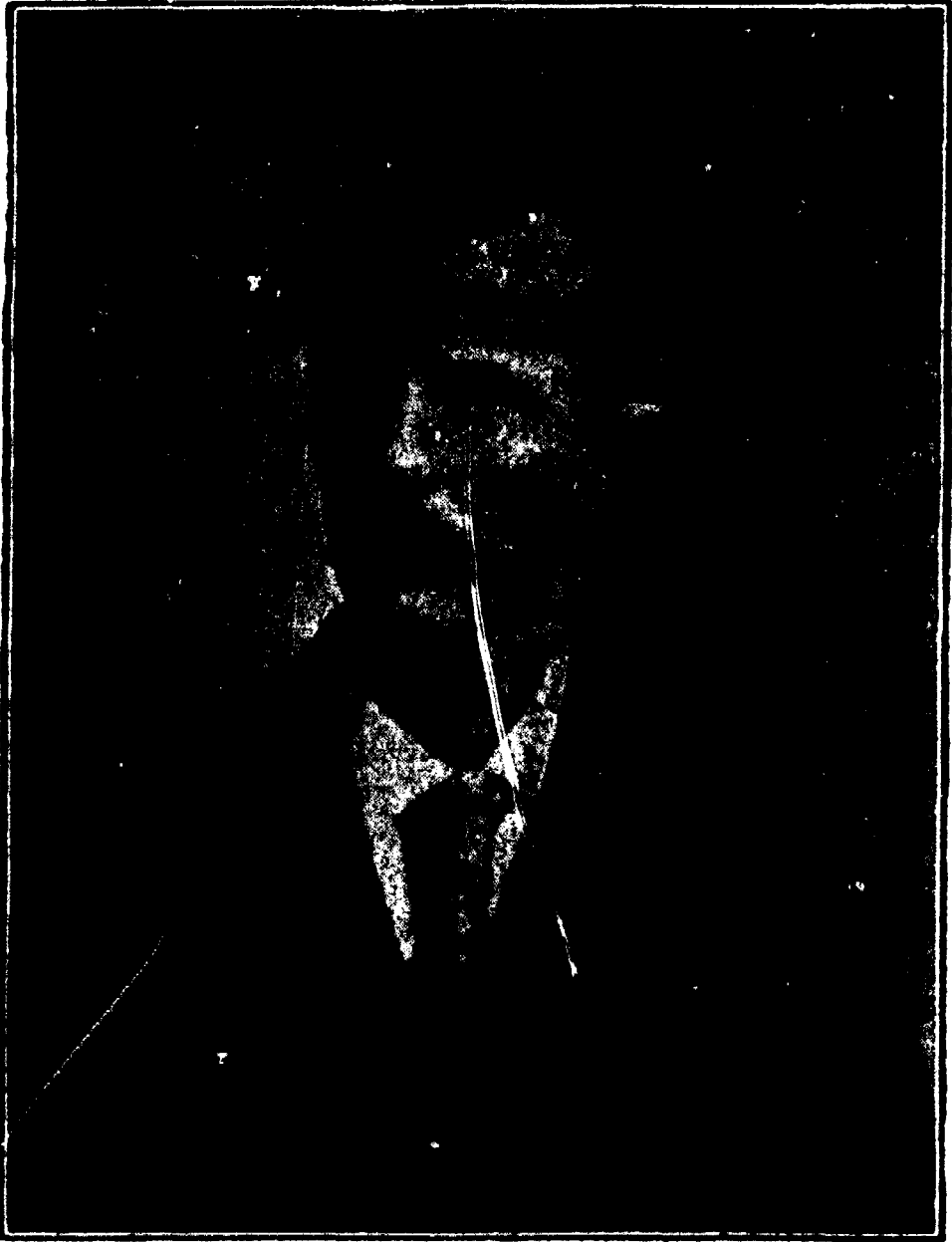
ecutive committee for the judicial district, four years as chairman; for ten years he has been a member of the Congressional Executive Committee, two years as chairman, and is still a member of the committee; he also served six years as a member of the State Executive Committee. He was clerk to the committee in Washington of which Col. Cowles was chairman, but he resigned in 1889, after serving nearly two years, to take his seat in the State Senate to which he was elected the previous year.

In 1890 he was the Democratic candidate for Solicitor in this district; he canvassed the district against Hon. Thomas Settle, the Republican candidate. As the district was largely Republican Barber was defeated but he ran ahead of the ticket. Mr. Settle resigned in 1893 and Gov. Thos. M. Holt appointed Mr. Barber to succeed him and he served till 1895. In 1894 he was again nominated by his party for Solicitor but with his party he went down in defeat in that memorable campaign of 1894, again running ahead of his ticket.

In 1891 he was married to Miss Wilcox, daughter of Dr. J. O. Wilcox, of Ashe county, and four children bless their home. Mr. Barber stands in the fore front in his profession.

### *Frank D. Hackett.*

MR. HACKETT was born near Wilkesboro June 14, 1857. His father was a distinguished educator and his mother was a Miss Sturgis, daughter of Judge Sturgis of the Georgia Supreme Court. He studied law under Maj. Bingham, of Statesville, and was admitted to the bar in 1890. He was Distillery Surveyor during Cleveland's second administration. In the Legislature of 1899 he was assistant to the Principal Clerk of the House; in 1901 he was again



FRANK D. HACKETT.

selected for the same position. In 1900 he was a candidate before the Democratic convention for the nomination for State Auditor, but retired in favor of Maj. Dixon.

*Lytle N. Hickerson.*

The subject of this sketch was born in Boone

county, Arkansas, August 20, 1874. When he was about seven years old his parents moved to this county. Lytle worked on the farm and attended the academic school at Ronda; he also went to Moravian Falls Academy two years and finally took the four years course at the State University at Chapel Hill, after which he studied law at Statesville under Judge R. F. Armfield and was admitted to the bar. He located at North Wilkesboro where he has since lived. He married Miss Jarvis, daughter of L. A. Jarvis, of North Wilkesboro.

*Richard N. Hackett.*

THE SUBJECT of this sketch was born in Wilkesboro on the 4th of December, 1866. He was educated at the State University at Chapel Hill where he graduated in June, 1887. Then he took up the study of law under Col. Geo. N. Folk, and in September, 1888, was admitted to the bar. He located in his native town and has become one of the ablest jurists and advocates in this section of the State.

Mr. Has always taken a lively interest in politics, and when he was only twenty-one years old he was chosen as chairman of the county Democratic Executive Committee and he served continuously for six years. While he was chairman his party made steady gains until in the election following the last campaign under his direction a part of the Democratic nominees were elected. For more than ten years he has been a member of the State Democratic Executive Committee, and is also a member of the Judicial Executive Committee. At all times he has taken an active personal interest in the advancement and campaigns of his party, and he is one of the most forceful orators in the West.

In 1889 he was Commissioner of State to repre-

sent North Carolina in New York at the centennial anniversary of Washington's Inauguration.

In 1896 he was a candidate for the Legislature but



RICHARD N. HACKETT.



was defeated though he led the Democratic ticket by 300 votes. In 1898 he was a candidate for the nomination for Congress from the eighth district and was defeated by only four votes. In 1900 his name was again brought before the convention, but he was defeated by J. C. Buxton, after which he gracefully took the stump and canvassed the district for Mr. Buxton.

In the campaign preceeding the August election of 1900 Mr. Hackett canvassed the north-western portion of the State in behalf of the State ticket and the constitutional amendment.

In 1901 he was appointed Assistant Secretary of State for the purpose of annotating and indexing the laws of the Genoral Assembly of the session of 1901.

He is an officer of the Grand Lodge of Masons of North Carolina, and is an earnest worker for the order, especially for the orphanage of the order. He is a distinguished looking gentleman of pleasant and agreeable manner, a man of unsullied honor, a lawyer of much ability, and one of the coming statesmen of North Carolina.

### *Herbert L. Greene.*

MR. GREENE was born in Wilkesboro May 28, 1866, and was educated at the Wilkesboro Academy and at the State University. He read law under Col. Geo. N. Folk and was admitted to the bar in 1887. Instead of becoming a candidate for office he stuck to the practice of law and, in partnership with T. B. Finley, has built up a large practice. Although against his wishes, he was nominated for the Legislature in 1900 by the Democratic party, and he represented the county in the next General Assembly. Mr. Greene has been chairman of the

County and also the Congressional Executive Committees of his party.

Mr. Greene is the author of the bill enacted by the Legislature of 1901 commanding the commissioners of Wilkes county to build a new court house.



HERBERT L. GREENE.

He also helped to secure the passage of the bill to build the Wilkesboro and Jefferson turnpike by the penitentiary convicts.

He was married in 1898 to Miss Davie Wellborn.

*Hugh A. Cranor.*

MR. CRANOR is a son John S. Cranor and was born

in Wilkesboro Nov. 20, 1875. He attended Wilkesboro Academy and the State University; studied law at the law department of Wake Forest College and was admitted to the bar in 1902. He is a bright young lawyer and has a promising future.

*Col. Thomas J. Dula.*

THE SUBJECT of this sketch was born in Caldwell county and was raised on the farm; he attended the common schools and Emory and Henry college. He studied law under Judge Anderson Mitchell and was admitted to the bar about 1855 and located at Lenoir; in 1858 he was elected to the Legislature from Caldwell. When the Civil war broke out he entered the Confederate army as a private in company I, 26th N. C. regiment. He was detailed to return home and form a new company; he was elected Major and later was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel. During the war he was twice wounded. In 1871 he moved to Wilkesboro and the next year was elected to the Legislature, and also in 1874. In 1875 he was elected a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. In 1876 he was the Republican nominee for Congress but was defeated by Maj. Robbins. In 1900 he was elected to the State Senate.

*L. C. Carter.*

LITTLETON CALHOUN CARTER was born May 14, 1871, and was raised on the farm. He was educated in the common schools and at Fair View College, Trap Hill. For a number of years he engaged in teaching school. At the age of twenty-two he began the study of law under Maj. Bingham, of Statesville, and seven months later was admitted to the bar.

*Thomas B. Finley.*

The subject of this sketch is the son of the late Augustus W. Finley, one of the wealthiest and most influential men that ever lived in the county. His mother's maiden name was Miss Martha Gordon. On his farm—where North Wilkesboro now stands—in the year 1862 was Thomas B. Finley born. During his boyhood he worked hard on the farm, keeping his work apace with that of the negroes hired by his father. He was educated at Wilkesboro Academy, Finley High School at Lenoir and at Davidson College, completing an elective or scientific course at the latter place in three years. At Davidson College he won a gold medal for declaiming. He read law under Col. Geo. N. Folk and was admitted to the bar in 1885. After receiving his license he located at Wilkesboro to practice his profession. He formed a partnership with H. L. Greene which exists up to this time.

Mr. Finley has been the promoter of many of the business institutions of this county. He was one of the men who planned and founded the town of North Wilkesboro; he was the first man to advocate the establishment of the Bank of North Wilkesboro and it was largely through his efforts that the bank was established. At present he is a director of the bank. In 1888 he canvassed the county in favor of the county issuing \$100,000 bonds for the construction of a railroad to Wilkesboro. He has helped to promote several other business institutions.

Although strenuously urged by his friends Mr. Finley has never been a candidate for office. In 1902 he was specially urged to become a candidate for Judge of the Superior Court; although assured of the nomination he declined to abandon his prac-

tice. He has appeared in a majority of the civil cases tried in the county since he was admitted to the bar.

In 1893 he was married to Miss Carrie Lizzie Cowles, and five children bless their home.

*James W. McNeill.*

THE SUBJECT of this sketch was born in Beaver Creek township Feb. 3, 1872. Until he was ten years old he lived on a farm and attended the public schools; in 1882 his father, Rev. Milton McNeill, was elected Sheriff of the county and moved his family to Wilkesboro where they have since resided. The subject of this sketch attended Wilkesboro Academy, and in 1892 entered Wake Forest College and took a special course preparatory to the study of law. He studied law at the State University and was admitted to the bar in 1895. Before entering college he was Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court under his father. After obtaining license to practice law he located at Winston for six months. In 1896 he located in Wilkesboro and became the law partner of Solicitor Mott. During this partnership and since he has done much work for Mr. Mott, acting as Solicitor pro tem. In 1899 he formed a partnership with his brother R. H. McNeill and they now have offices in Wilkesboro and Jefferson, and at each place they have a large practice.

In 1900 Mr. McNeill was nominated for the Legislature by the Republican party and was elected by 259 majority, but by means of the trickery of political machines four largely Republican precincts were thrown out by the Canvassing Board, thus giving the place to another man by 41 majority.

In 1900 he was married to Miss Anna Gertrude Johnson of Raleigh.



JAMES W. M'NEILL.

At the present time Mr. McNeill is the chosen candidate of his party for Solicitor in this district; his chances of election are good. The experience he has had as Solicitor pro tem. makes him specially qualified for the office, while his services as Solicitor have distinguished him as an able prosecuting officer.

Mr. McNeill is a distinguished looking gentleman and is one of the most gifted orators in this section. He has made a marked success as a lawyer—seldom equaled in so short a time—and a bright future is before him.

*Luther M. Lyon.*

MR. LYON was born in Wilkes county Jan. 24, 1871, was raised on a farm and was educated in the common schools and academies of his section. He taught school for a number of years, and then read law at the State University and under Chas. H. Armfield and was admitted to the bar in 1899. He is located at Wilkesboro. His great grandfather Jacob Lyon, was a soldier in the Revolutionary war and was in the battles of Brandy Wine and Kings Mountain.

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## PHYSICIANS.

*Dr. J. W. White.*

DR. WHITE was born near Hamptonville in Yadkin county March 9, 1861, and was raised on the farm. When he was only six years old his father died leaving three children, two younger than the subject of this sketch. When he became old enough the duty fell upon him to take the lead in caring for his mother and plantation. He received his literary education in the public schools and academies of his community, and he attended Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, where he graduated in 1889. He practiced medicine at Osbornville four years and then moved to Wilkesboro where he has since resided. He has also taken two post graduate courses. He is a member of the North Carolina Medical Society and in 1898 was elected Vice President of that body. He was county physician for about four



DR. J. W. WHITE.

years. In 1898 he was married to Miss Pearl Sydnor and one child blesses their home.

*Dr. Geo. Doughton.*

The subject of this sketch was born in Alleghany county in 1860 and was raised on the farm; was educated in the public schools and academies of the community, and is a graduate of the Baltimore college of Physicians and Surgeons and a post graduate of the New York Polyclinic in the class of 1891. He has also attended several other short courses—at John Hopkins and elsewhere. At present he is local



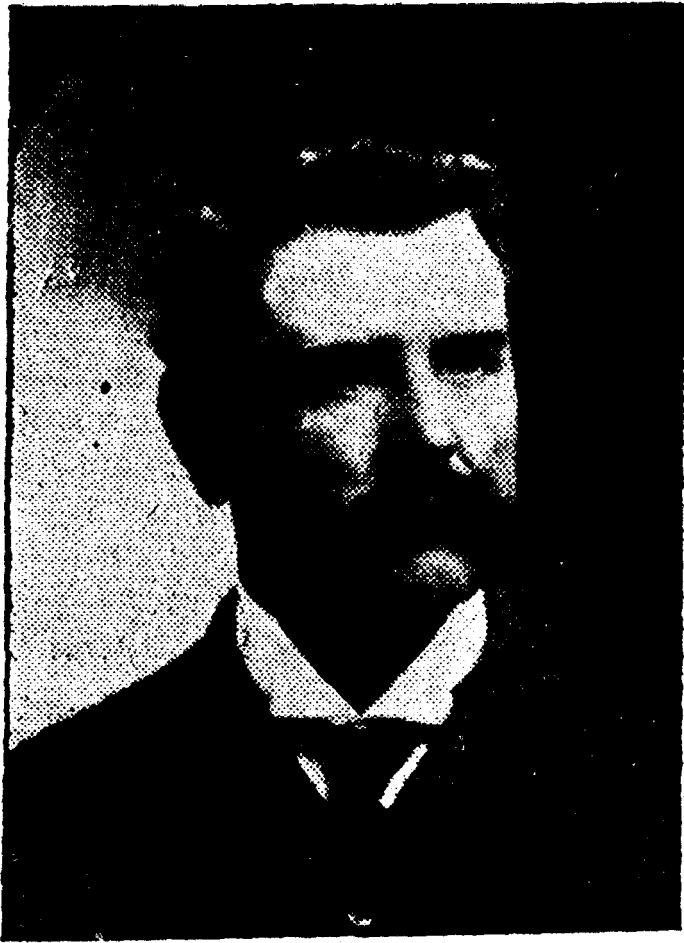
surgeon for the Southern Railway, surgeon for the Penitentiary convict camp. In 1888 he was married to Miss Nannie B. Edwards and they now have four children.

*Dr. Wm. P. Horton.*

The subject of this sketch was born in Watauga county in 1867, was raised on the farm and was educated in the public schools and academies. He studied medicine under Dr. Council and at the Baltimore College of Physicians and Surgeons. At first he located at Southerlands, and in 1892 he moved to North Wilkesboro. He has been physician for the Southern Railway and he is now physician for the county. He was married to Miss Emma Wynn and they have four children.

*Dr. James M. Turner.*

Dr. Turner was born in Iredell county on the 30th of April, 1858, was raised on the farm and was educated at Cool Springs Academy. For a short time he taught school in this State and Tennessee. He studied medicine under Dr. John Anderson and at Louisville University where he graduated in 1881. He first located in Davie county and remained there for more than five years, then moved to Wilkesboro in 1886 where he has since lived. He has been Co. Supt. of Health at least half of the time since he has been in the county. He is half owner of one of the first roller flouring mills established in the county. Dr. Turner has taken much interest in the material development of the town and county and owns considerable property. He has been married twice, first to Miss Mollie E. Howell who died in 1887; in 1889 he was married to Miss Sallie Bledsoe.



DR. JAS. M. TURNER.

He has had eight children, three by his first wife (two of whom are dead), and five by his last wife.

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DR. COMEDORE L. HAMBY was born in Rowan county June 23, 1857, was educated in the common schools and academies of his section. He graduated at Louisville Medical College in 1886. He first located at Trap Hill where he remained there ten years and then moved to Myers where he now lives. For the last six years he has been a member of the U. S. Examining Board of Surgeons for pensioners. In 1878 he was married to Miss Evaline Darnall and they have six children.

DR. F. H. GILREATH was born in Wilkes county March 15th, 1869, was educated at Moravian Falls Academy and at Vanderbilt University and at the Medical University at Nashville where he graduated in 1898. He served for more than three years as Stewart in the U. S. Army at Fort Myre. In 1901 he was appointed by the Superintendent of the Penitentiary as physician for the convict camp in Mitchell county.

DRS. R. W. S. PEGRAM and L. P. SOMERS are among our county physicians but the author is unable to give sketches of them. Both are members of the U. S. Board of Examining Surgeons.

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## SCHOOLS OF WILKES COUNTY.

BY C. C. WRIGHT, CO. SUPT. OF SCHOOLS.

WILKES county has had and now has a number of excellent schools of high grade. Among these are Moravian Falls, one of the oldest higher institutions of learning in the county. It flourished for a number of years under the wise and prudent management of Rev. G. W. Greene and in later years of Rev. W. R. Bradshaw, F. B. Hendren, Rev. J. J. Beach, Profs. Patton, Surratt and others. Another one worthy of mention is Boomer High School, which for a number of years was prosperous under the care of Profs. A. E. Booth and W. S. Surratt. The school is now in the hands of Prof. J. A. Boldin and bids fair to be one of our best schools. The college at Trap Hill and the Institute for quite a while did great good under the management of Prof. Wagoner, Smith and others sending out many teachers for the public schools of this and adjoining

counties. The schools in the towns, Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro, have usually been under the care of competent and able instructors and in the main have been successful. The Blue Ridge Institute now under the care of Rev. W. R. Bradshaw bids fair to be the leading preparatory school in western N. C. There are academies at Beaver Creek, New Hope, Cross Roads, Sulphur Springs, Peach Orchard, Buggaboo and Ronda but for some time no school has been taught in these save the public school.

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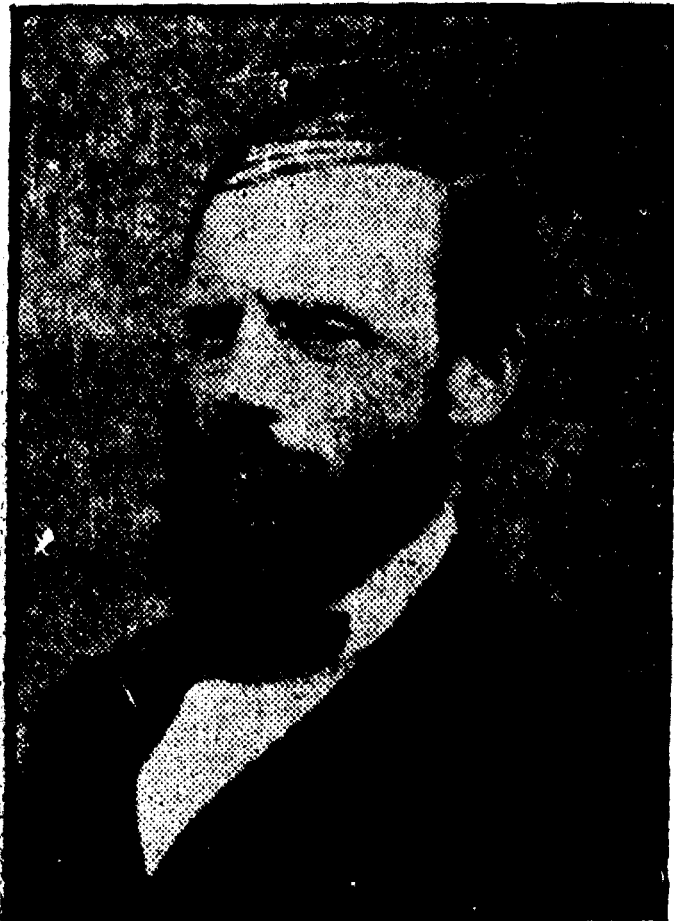
JAMES GORDON HACKETT.

JAMES GORDON HACKETT is one of the prominent citizens of the county. He was appointed by Gov. Aycock as one of the Penitentiary Directors. He was one of the promoters of the Jefferson turnpike. He is the brother of Richard N. Hackett.

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### CALVIN J. COWLES.

Mr. Cowles, the subject of this sketch, is one of the pioneer citizens of this county. Probably he knows more of the history of the county than any other man now living. The author of this work is



CALVIN J. COWLES.

largely indebted to him for his assistance in getting up this volumn.

He was born at Hamptonville in old Surry county Jan. 6th, 1821. When 18 years old he entered his father's store as a clerk where he spent most of his time until he was 21 years old. In his school days there were no free schools and he got his education at the old field subscription school and by studying his books at home. At the age of twelve he was afflicted with white swelling from which he has suffered more or less ever since. He was appointed by Congressman Lewis Williams as cadet to the Naval academy at Anapolis but declined in favor of his step brother.

In 1846 he moved to Wilkes and put up a store at the mouth of Elk hauling his goods in wagons from Fayetteville, N. C., and Columbia, S. C., the nearest railroad points at that time. He was the first man in the county to deal in roots and herbs. In 1858 he moved to Wilkesboro.

During the war Cowles was an avowed Union man but would have been conscripted into the Confederate service had it not been for his physical disability. After the war he took a prominent part in reconstruction. In 1866 he was a candidate for a seat in the Constitutional Convention but was defeated. In 1867 he was again a candidate for the same position and was elected and was made President of the Convention, receiving 101 of the 109 votes cast. The convention was composed of 87 native Carolinians, 18 carpet baggers and 15 negroes all elected by the people under martial law. To this Convention we are indebted for our present constitution (with a few changes), including our splendid court system. (Hon. J. Q. A. Bryan was a member of this Convention.)

During the Ku Klux regime Mr. Cowles went to

Gen. Grant for aid in protecting life and property in the State.

In '67 Cowles was a candidate for the State Senate but was defeated by one vote.

In '68 he was a candidate for Congress but was defeated by Nathaniel Boyden.

Cowles was a director of the W. N. C. R. R. and only lacked one vote of being elected president.

In '68 he was appointed by President Johnson as Assayer in charge of the mint at Charlotte, which position he held for 16 years. In '75 Congress failed to make any appropriation for the mint, and the Collector of Internal Revenue sold the property for \$7,000. Cowles was successful in getting the sale canceled.

Mr. Cowles has been married twice; first to Martha T. Devaul by whom he had eight children three of whom died in infancy; in 1868 he was married to Ida A. Holden, daughter of ex-Governor Holden; by his second wife he has eight children—five living and three dead.

For the last few years he has lived the life of a private citizen in Wilkesboro. He is the largest real estate owner in the county and one of the largest in the State.

