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GREAT EVENTS IN
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Historic Homes in North Carolina.



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VOL. II.

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Historic Homes in North Carolina.

HISTORIC HOMES AND PEOPLE OF OLD BATH TOWN.

MISS LIDA TUNSTALL RODMAN.

BUNCOMB HALL,
MR. THOMAS BLOUNT.

HAYES AND ITS BUILDER,
RICHARD DILLARD.

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**'Carolina! Carolina! Heaven's blessings attend her!
While we live we will cherish, protect and defend her.'**

HISTORIC HOMES AND PEOPLE OF OLD BATH TOWN.

BY LIDA TUNSTALL RODMAN.

In the vicinity of the ancient town of Bath may be found rare old landmarks and traces of early colonial homes bearing testimony indubitable of the generous hospitality and good living of the people of that generation.

Much historical interest is attached to this section, Bath having been for a time the capital of the Province, residence of a Royal Governor, and headquarters of a bold and bloody pirate.

It was incorporated as a town in 1705, being the first in the State, forty-two years having intervened between the earliest settlement and the commencement of the first town. It consisted at the time of about twelve houses and is described as being "not the unpleasantest part of the country,—nay in all probability it will become the centre of trade, as having the advantage of a better inlet for shipping and surrounded with most pleasant savannas very useful for stocks of cattle. In this as in all other parts of the province there is no money, every one buys and pays with their commodities, the difference of their money is as one to three."

The earliest settlers being without roads sought the convenient shores of creek, bay or river for their residences, the waters forming a broad highway upon which transportation was carried on by means of various craft, the pi-

†Pronounced periangur.

rogue† being much in vogue at that time, this also accounts for the small number of houses in the towns, most of the population residing on the large plantations near by.

About two miles north of Bath is the old Ormond estate, the house built in early Colonial days is rapidly going to ruin, yet the handsome old stairway running down to a small paned window, with doors on either side, still remains as does the picturesque hip roof. The fired tiled mantle-piece, a gem in its day, has been destroyed. Some miles beyond this at Hunter's Bridge was another large plantation owned originally by one of the Ormond brothers, an old bachelor whose wealth excited the cupidity of his slaves, and while their master slept, they threw an immense feather-bed over him, jumping on it to complete the process of smothering and killing. Tradition says the negroes were apprehended and three of them burned at the stake in Bath Town. If this be true it is the only case of its kind on record in the State.

The Ormonds were an English family of wealth and distinction.

In another direction a few miles from Bath are still to be seen the foundations of a large brick house owned by the Rhoulhacs, the size and plan giving token of gay and generous French hospitality, for tradition has kept up the memory in all this country side of "grand balls in which gay ladies in rich brocades trod the stately minuets with their gallant partners."

Perhaps the quaintest house in existence to-day, is the old Marsh home, situated on the principal street of Bath

Town, and in good preservation. It was built in 1744 by Monsieur Cataunch for Mr. and Mrs. Whitmore. The chimney is of immense size, being seventeen feet broad. and four feet thick, having windows in it which open on closets having stone floors. The bricks and tiles of the chimney are of the same pattern as those used in the construction of St. Thomas Church and were brought from England.

In the rear of the building is a family burying ground where is interred Mrs. Mary Evans, niece of the Whitmores, the grey stone slab at the head of her grave is very quaint, as at the top surrounded by scroll work is carved a medallion of the fair lady herself. She has the figure and face of youth and is arrayed in the long pointed waist and tight sleeves of that era.

The incscription is perfectly distinct and reads thus :

“ Here lies the Body of Mrs. Mary Evans,
Who departed this life Jan. 31st, 1758, aged 19 years.”

Then follows a poem recording her youth and graces.

The beautiful Mary Evans died of a broken heart caused by the loss of her husband in a wreck at sea. The Whitmores being devotedly attached to her were so grieved that they moved away, selling the place to Jonathan Marsh, a large ship owner whose descendants still reside there.

Near the southern extremity of Front St. some remains are still seen of the old Fort, built about the time of the terrible Indian massacre in 1711, being the highest point in that locality it commanded the approach by land and sea, and furnished a place of refuge in time of danger when the

people were compelled to flee their homes for safety from the dreaded Indian outbreaks.

Fort Reading on Pamlico river, was also built about this time on the estate of Lionel Reading. Just opposite Bath on the South side of the river, where it attains a width of five miles, is Core Point named for the Coree Indians, and in 1722 an act of Assembly provided for laying out a public road from Core Point to connect the southern part of the Province with the northern. Several miles of this old colonial road remains in good condition.

Lawson, Surveyor General under the Crown, and Carolina's oldest historian, lived in Bath; it is noted as a singular coincidence that in his history he boasts that his colony was the only instance of a colony being planted in peace and without bloodshed of the natives little dreaming that in a few years he would be captured by the Indians while on an exploring expedition, and murdered in a fiendish way having his body stuck full of lightwood splinters and then set on fire.

Christopher Gayle, Chief Justice of the Colony, also a resident of Bath Town, writes to his sister in London, "that he was still living though by as signal a hand of Providence as this age can demonstrate.

About ten days before the fatal day (Sept. 22nd 1711) I was at the Baron's (De Graffenreid's) and had agreed with him and Mr. Lawson on a progress to the Indian towns; but before we were prepared to go a message came from home (Bath) to inform me that my wife and brother lay dangerously sick; which I may call a happy sickness to me, for on the news I immediately repaired home and

thereby avoided the fate which I shall hereafter inform you."

Neville's Creek on the outskirts of Bath perpetuates the name and site of the residence of the family of Mr. Neville, who were all murdered and scornfully treated by the savages.

Christopher Gayle in another letter speaks of leaving his "wife and sister in garrison at Bath Town," which was the Fort just mentioned.

An act of Assembly was passed making the 22nd of September a day of fasting in commemoration of the massacre of whites at Bath by Tuscarora and Core Indians.

Bath Town has the honor of having possessed the first Library in the State, as is seen by an Act of Assembly 1705, providing in the most rigorous manner for the care of the Public Library of St. Thomas Parish, this was the Library sent out by Rev. Thos. Bray founder and secretary of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel. According to the old record, "He did send to us a library of books for the benefit of this place, given by the Honorable the Corporation for the establishing of the Christian religion." This collection was valued at one hundred pounds and at first lead a wandering life, going from end to end of St. Thomas Parish; it finally settled down in Bath and its subsequent history is enveloped in obscurity.

Certain lands were early set apart as the Glebe of St. Thomas Parish, and a small creek near is called Glebe Creek.

There is a record that in September 1711 the people "having no minister met every Sunday at the house of

Christopher Gayle, a very civil gentleman, where a young gentleman, a lawyer, was appointed to read prayers and a sermon."

The act incorporating the Town, March 8th, 1705, provided that "convenient Places and Proportions of Land be laid out and preserved for a Church, a Town House and a Market place." Upon this land St. Thomas church was built, being completed in 1734 during the reign of George II. The bricks and large square tiles used in its construction were brought from England, and it is said Queen Anne gave to St. Thomas Parish the silver communion cup and the bell; the silver cup has long since disappeared and the bell which was cracked and broken having been recast, there is no record to place the seal of historic truth upon this otherwise pleasing tradition, though many believe it to be well authenticated.

An old resident writes, "the church stands a grim sentinel of the past, gloomy and rusty with age, with no steeple it presents a mediaeval aspect, producing a thrill of reverence and awe when we contemplate the officers of the English crown walking down the aisle to worship at its shrine."

It is indeed a mute witness of the days that are gone, and could it speak how many tales of history, romance and tragedy would fall upon the listening ear, for within its portals came soon or late all the people of the Parish and perhaps of the Province, the prattling babe to receive the sign of holy church, gay cavalier and blushing maid to plight their troth, and there must have been weeping ones who found the sting of death and separation just a bit more

keen, because they had left home and motherland for this new country so full of strange terrors.

A stone tablet on the wall is a pathetic record to the memory of "Mrs. Margaret Palmer, wife of Robert Palmer, Esq'r, one of His Majesty's Council and Surveyor General of the Lands of this Province."

It is claimed that Governor Hyde resided for a short time in Bath Town, and the records show a purchase of two lots by his successor Governor Eden and also a large tract of land on the opposite side of the river known as "Thistleworth," there are in addition, records of two marriage licenses granted by him, both facts furnishing some proof of his residence in Bath. His stay was probably of short duration, and perhaps he was quite glad to leave as it was while there that his political enemies accused him of having given countenance to the notorious Pirate Teach, or Black Beard.

Tobias Knight, Secretary of the Province and Judge of the Admiralty Court, resided in Bath Town and an old inhabitant writes, "near the mouth of the creek on its western bank stood the palace of Governor Eden, and from the creek to the steep bank was cut a subterranean passage through which Edward Teach, or Black Beard, in complicity with Governor Eden and his secretary Tobias Knight, received goods captured by Teach on the high seas and through this passage deposited in the cellar of the palace. What he did with them has never been known. Opposite the palace of the Governor was a rock wharf, the stone foundation still remaining, and buried in the mud just beyond this wharf is one of Teach's old cannons."

Beyond the mere accusation no proof has ever been found to tarnish the good name Governor Eden bears in history, he is described as a polished, genial and popular man, trusted and beloved by the people.

Tobias Knight, owing probably to his high position, was not convicted, but the proof was so conclusive of his guilt that he lost the esteem of his friends and countrymen.

Edward Teach was a giant in wickedness, and for a time the inland waters of North Carolina were the scenes of his infamous piracies.

On the shore of Pamlico river about a quarter of a mile from the mouth of Bath Creek was located his residence, some remnant of the brick foundation yet remaining.

Here he had his carnivals as well as in Bath Town where after one of his lootings on the Caribbean Sea, it is said he "worked the town firing indiscriminately upon all, or any one of its citizens, using such fiery oaths as never man heard before."

The King having promised a pardon to all Pirates who would surrender in twelve months, Teach took advantage of this, surrendering to Governor Eden, and obtaining a certificate, soon after at a court of Admiralty convened in Bath, he obtained the condemnation of a sloop "as a good prize," though he never held a commission. He now pretended to become respectable and settle down marrying his thirteenth wife.

One authority says she could not have been very inquisitive as to how many of her predecessors were still living.

After spending some time rioting on the Pamlico and in Bath Town, the old passion for piracy being so strong he

sailed on a cruise, on which, though the skull and cross bones were veiled, their horrid significance was no less evident to those who chose to read the facts. Returning with a large and valuable French ship loaded with sugar and cocoa, four men swore she had been found at sea without any person on board ; on this evidence the court of admiralty adjudged her a lawful prize to the captors. In order to elude an investigation the ship was declared unseaworthy and promptly consumed by fire. Unfriendly people said the Governor and the Judge received each sixty and twenty hogsheads of sugar as a *douceur*. Be that as it may, Teach remained on Pamlico river becoming bolder and more offensive to the lawabiding people who were more and more terrorized by his depredations. Governor Eden certainly had not the means at his disposal to make any effective resistance if he had wished to do so.

Application was secretly made to the Governor of Virginia to send a force to subdue the pirate, and Lieutenant Maynard of the Royal Navy was ordered to proceed to North Carolina in command of two sloops. A reward of one hundred pounds was offered for the apprehension of Teach and smaller sums for his officers and men. Teach had learned of the expedition in some way and was prepared, the encounter taking place near Ocracoke was very desperate and bloody, the exact spot is pointed out to-day by boatmen as 'Teach's hole.

Lieutenant Maynard displayed both courage and the skilled diplomacy of battle for finding his men fatally exposed by their position, he ordered them below, but to be ready for close fighting on the first signal. Seeing none

but the dead on deck the black old pirate, who had said there should be no quarter given or taken, with a fearful oath ordered his men to board her, as they did Lieutenant Maynard's crew rushed up in obedience to his signal and the fight was on. Maynard engaged Teach, first firing, and then each using dirks until Teach fell exhausted from many wounds. Lieutenant Maynard caused Teach's head to be severed from his body and hung on the end of his bowsprit, he then sailed up to the town of Bath where he landed his men. What rejoicing in the old Town and in all the country side over the death of this villian whose impudent robberies and murders were at last avenged.

We shall never know until the secrets of the Great Deep are revealed, how many innocent men and women with their little ones were forced to walk the plank while Teach commanded Queen Anne's Revenge or the sloop Adventure, or others of his ill-gotten craft. Small wonder he always kept supplied with good West India rum to drive from memory those white and agonized faces.

One term of the Assembly was held in Bath during Gov. Gabriel Johnston's administration in 1752 at which time an act was passed for facilitating navigation of the Port of Bath, the town was then prosperous carrying on a brisk trade with the West Indies and other ports.

Though so long an incorporated town Bath never possessed a court house, jail or pillory until 1766.

In 1765 George Whitefield, the eloquent English Evangelist, visited Bath, but he was so coldly treated by the people that he is said to have shaken the dust from his

feet invoking the curse of heaven upon the place and its inhabitants.

Whether attributable to this or to the natural shifting of men and events to more central and richer localities, it is certain that prosperity with brilliant wings outspread, flew away and has never returned to this picturesque old haven.

There are other places of interest in and near Bath Town but space forbids further mention.

BUNCOMBE HALL.

BY THOMAS BLOUNT.

Amid the fens and breaks and forests of juniper, covering the crest of the low divide running up from the sea, between Albemarle and Pamlico sounds, Kendrick's creek takes its rise. Slipping thence northwardly, into the open country, it winds between fertile hills dotted over with well tilled farms, and rushing through roaring gates, or whirring wheels, gliding past busy villages and sleepy woodlands, its amber tide pours into Albemarle sound, south of Edenton. Narrow of mouth, and no more than fifteen miles in length, this modest stream does not attract the attention of the passing navigator of the Albemarle, nor does it make any great figure in the topography of the country. Yet every foot of its shore line is pregnant with facts in the primal history of North Carolina.

During the Culpepper rebellion, and the unhappy administration of Seth Sothel, many hardy spirits slipped away from the North Albemarle colony, and settled along the banks of Kendrick's creek, preferring the solitude of the wilderness, and the society of the simple savage, to the doubtful protection of an unstable government administered by avaricious tyrants. In vain the authorities "commanded them back." They blazed a rugged trail from the mouth of the creek along its western shore, and on through the forest, to the banks of the Pamlico where Bath Town was later located, and planted a thin line of humble homes by its side; the seed-bud of that wondrous growth which has

since expanded into a mighty state. Along this rout, flowed for half a century the ceaseless tide of immigration coming up from the Virginia coast, and peopling the wilderness to the south and west. It was a part of the first mail rout in the province, and was the course taken by the impatient Governor Dobbs when hastening from Virginia to Newbern to take the oath of office, after being detained at Edenton "above a whole day by contrary winds so fresh he could not cross the ferry some eight miles." On the south side of this road, about three-quarters of a mile from the Tyrrell court house at Lee's Mills, was the entrance to the Buncombe Hall grounds, over which was suspended the famous distich :

" Welcome all,
To Buncombe Hall."

This was no empty invitation posted to make the vulgar stare. It meant rest and good cheer for any travel-stained pilgrim who would avail himself of it, dispensed with a lavish hand by the princely owner himself, to rich and poor alike. For no matter how humble the traveler, while he was within the gates of Buncombe Hall he was its master's guest, and as such was treated with the most courtly consideration. If a boon companion showed a premature disposition to depart, trusty slaves knew how to remove certain bridges on either side of the estate and the wooing of that guest's fair charmer was deferred to another day.

Near this same road, but a little higher up stream than the Buncombe plantation, Captain Thomas Blount of the first Chowan vestry, erected a mill in 1702. This man was a blacksmith and ship carpenter by trade. He came from

Virginia to Perquimans where he married Mary, the widow of Joseph Scott. During the winter of 1698-'99 he removed with his family to the "east side of the mouth of Kendrick's creek." Later he purchased "Cabin Ridge plantation" where the town of Roper now stands and immediately began the erection of a mill on the creek hard by. This was for a while the "one mill in the whole province" and in time came to be the industrial centre of the "South Shore" settlement. At it, was manufactured the lumber for many of the earlier buildings at Edenton, such as flooring for the first church (never used), material for the first court house, and much more. With a continuous service of two centuries rounded out to its credit, this mill is now the oldest developed water-power in North Carolina.

Captain Blount died in 1706 and Thos. Lee, marrying his widow, subsequently got possession of his mill and most of his other property.

To this circumstance is due the scattering of his immediate descendants to the four-winds and the opportunities of advancement which they thus found. Verily—

"There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out."

With one brief exception the mill remained the property of the Lee family until 1814, hence the place came to be called "Lee's Mills." The assembly which Gov. Gabriel Johnston called to meet him in Edenton in the winter of 1735-'6, was the first to which Tyrrell had sent delegates. Prominent among her representatives that year was Capt. William Downing of Lee's Mills, who was unanimously elected speaker of the house.

This Assembly fixed Tyrrell's court house at Lee's Mills where it remained until the erection of Martin county in 1774, when it was removed to the house of Benjamin Spruill on Scuppernong river.

At the first session of the court held at that place, which was on "third Tuesday in May, 1774," Colonel Edward Buncombe presented his commission from the Honorable Samuel Strudwick, Esq'r, dated December 18, 1773, appointing him Clerk of the court. He immediately qualified, giving bond in the sum of one thousand pounds, with Stevens Lee and Archibald Corrie as sureties. His successor qualified on the tenth day of February, 1777, hence Colonel Buncombe was the last clerk of the county court for Tyrrell under the colonial government. Mr. Corrie often performed the duties of the office as Colonel Buncombe's deputy. They were "Co-partners and merchants" at Lee's Mills.

It is said that Colonel Buncombe's fine Tyrrell estate came to him by the terms of his uncle Joseph's will.

Some years before Colonel Edward Buncombe was born, Joseph Buncombe went from England to St. Kitts hoping to improve his fortune. While there his brother Thomas sent him money with which to buy land. Being a bachelor "heart whole and fancy free" and hearing of the fair women and fertile lands of Albemarle, he sold his holdings in the "tight little island" to his brother, and came to North Carolina. On the 20th of March, 1732, he purchased from Edward Moseley one thousand and twenty-five acres of land in Tyrrell county, "bounded on the east by Kendrick's creek, and on the south by Kendrick's creek

and Beaver Dam branch." About this time he married Ann, the oldest daughter of Geo. Durant who had died in 1730. They made their home on the Tyrrell lands near what is now known as Buncombe Landing. On the 17th day of August 1735, Joseph Buncombe qualified as the guardian of Geo. Durant's children, giving bond in the sum of 2,994 pounds, with Stevens Lee and William Downing as sureties. On the 10th of September following he executed to these bondsmen an indemnifying deed covering all his lands and including several slaves. This deed recorded in the Tyrrell office 16th April, 1736, was the first instrument registered in that county.

Later we find Mr. Buncombe renewing this deed, and adding a sum of money "adjudged to be due him from the public" for slaves executed at Edenton. November 30th, 1739, he assigned negroes to his wife Ann and his daughter Mary. A few years later Thomas Corprew who had married Mr. Buncombe's widow, settled up the Durant guardianship. Mary Buncombe married a Mr. Sutton, and her mother who was born July 14th, 1714, died in 1741, leaving two sons by her Corprew marriage.

Colonel Edward Buncombe who was born in 1742, was probably sent when quite a young man to look after his father's St. Kitts' property. At any rate he married Elizabeth Dawson Taylor there April 10th, 1766. Their first child, Elizabeth Taylor, was born in St. Kitts, March 11th, 1767, and the second, Thomas, was born in North Carolina, February 3d, 1769, while the last child Hester, was born April 25th, 1771.

Colonel Buncombe's first public act in his new home was to sit as a member of an "Inferior court" held at the Tyrrell court house, "On the second Tuesday in May, 1769." His name appears last in the list of justices at this term, but he was one of the three who remained to sign the docket at the end of the session.

From these circumstances it would appear probable that Colonel Buncombe removed with his family to North Carolina as early as the spring of 1768. The story of his coming as popularly related, is as follows :

One Mr. Cox of Edenton learning that Colonel Buncombe had come into possession of the Tyrrell lands, went to St. Kitts and offered to buy the property. But young Mrs. Buncombe advised her husband that if it was worth all that trouble on the part of Mr. Cox, it surely was worth a visit from its owner before confirming a sale of it. Acting upon this suggestion Colonel Buncombe came to North Carolina, and was so much pleased with the place that he at once gave orders to Stevens Lee of Lee's Mills to build a house for him on the farm, while he returned for his family.

Considering the fact that lumber could only be sawed during the winter months, and that bricks were only made in the summer, and taking into account the fact that all processes of building at that time were very slow, it seems probable that this first visit of Colonel Buncombe's was made during the summer of 1766.

It has been said that the bricks used in the building were brought from England. But Governor Tryon wrote

that very year "We do not import lime, lumber or bricks, either from the northern colonies, or from England." There were brick yards at Lee's Mills.

One who had read the "Buncombe Notes"—an elaborate account of Colonel Buncombe's removal to North Carolina, preserved until 1874—says that in these it was related that the vessels in which he came were loaded with great quantities of valuable stores, farming implements, seed, stock, slaves, furniture, and all things necessary for the farm in the new country. These were landed at the place now known as Buncombe landing, at the east end of the beautiful ridge on which Buncombe Hall stood, some three-quarter of a mile to the west. Vessels trading with the West Indies, New York, Boston and other points along the coast came regularly to Kendrick's creek in those days for cargoes of lumber, and farm produce. So profitable was this trade, that Colonel Buncombe built a vessel of his own to engage in it, and on the 20th of September, 1775, the schooner "Buncombe" was registered at Port Roanoke, Edenton, N. C., Jno. McCrohon being her first master.

Just below the landing at Buncombe Hall the dark waters of the stream are unusually deep, so much so that the place was popularly said to have no bottom. This was called the "Guinea Hole" from a very pathetic circumstance said to have occurred there.

During the days of Mr. Joseph Buncombe a vessel from the West Indies was unloading at this wharf which had among her crew a young man who had "shipped" one trip in a Guinea slave trader. He recognized among the negroes handling the cargo, some natives of Guinea, whom

Mr. Buncombe had recently purchased from a New England dealer, and getting into conversation with one of the men, our wag managed to make him understand that he was but recently in the man's own country. After answering many eager inquiries as best suited his whim, the sailor was finally urged to point in the direction of Guinea. Either in a spirit of mischief, or intending to indicate that the place was on the other side of the world, he pointed over the stern of the ship down through the deep hole. The simple child of the Niger understood the gesture to mean that here was a secret passage to Guinea, and hugging his precious secret he took the first opportunity imparting it in all confidence to his fellow countrymen, who like himself were longing for their native jungles. Getting a long pole, they secretly sounded the place, and finding no bottom, they concluded the kindly looking young sailor had told them truly, so selecting a dark night when no one was watching, and loading themselves with weights, that they might sink quickly, plunged beneath the inky waters on their long journey to the other shore. Though their unfortunate lives were lost, may we not hope that they found an eternal abiding place in the presence of Him who said "Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Be this legend true or false there were among Mr. Buncombe's slaves some desperate men, who in their efforts to escape, slew their keepers, and were executed.

"It is along the borders of streams that men usually seat," wrote Thomas Woodward the first Surveyor General of Albermarle. This custom fixed the early roads paralled

with the water courses, and usually next to them. The one leading from "Edenton's sound" to Lee's Mills was no exception to the rule. It zigzagged along the edge of the hills next the stream until it reached the end of the long ridge composing the southern portion of the Buncombe estate, then leaving the creek it turned down the northern side of this, going in a westernly direction. It was on top of this ridge, and about half a mile west of the spot where Joseph Buncombe had lived, that Buncombe Hall was erected. As originally constructed, it was a long two story frame building, containing four large rooms, wide halls, and three cellars. It faced the road on the north and had on that side a rather pretentious double piazza, through which the lower hall was entered by wide double doors. The cooking was done in a great open fireplace in the east cellar, and the dining room was immediately above. The stairs leading to the upper chambers was entered through a door from the piazza. Later, and certainly during Colonel Buncombe's life, a long wing was erected from the south side of the west end of the building, making it L shaped. This new wing contained two large rooms on the first floor, and one above, which was entered by stairs leading up from the room next the main building. There were two cellars under this wing. The basement walls of brick, were about five feet above ground, and had small windows in the top. There were chimneys outside at the end of each wing, and probably one double chimney running up through the middle. The lower rooms had high ceilings, and were carefully finished inside, but the dormered walls of the second story were low, through

which numerous little windows jutted out, like many eyes peeping from under the heavy eaves of the quaint hipped roof above. In front of the building was a plot of ground devoted to the cultivation of flowers, oramental shrubs, and border plants. At the end of a pretty walk on the east side of this, was Colonel Buncombe's office. In the rear of the building broad piazzas extended the entire length of both wings. From this piazza the two rooms in the annex, or south wing, were entered. In the rear of the building, and on the broad hill-side sloping to the south-east, were the orchards of peaches and other fruits. To the west of this, nestling in a grove of virgin oak, and hickory trees, were the ample slave quarters. A few of these venerable oaks are still standing, majestic witnesses of a dead past. The branches of one of them has a spread of more than two-hundred feet, and its gnarled trunk measures eighteen feet in circumference above spurs. Near this stood the "smithy" and "wood shop" of the plantation. In these were manufactured many domestic utensils, the farm implements in use at the time, the carts, wagons great carry-logs, the light chair, or gig in which the master rode forth on journeys, and even the mahogany chariot, or carriage in which the mistress was wont to travel abroad could be repaired there. It is highly probable that in these shops were mended, and "made fit for use" the heterogenous collection of arms with which the fifth battalion was at first equipped. For the day after the election of Colonel Buncombe to the command of this regiment, the Provincial Congress sitting at Halifax appointed Stevens Lee and Hezekiah Spruill, a committee

for Tyrrell, "to receive, procure and purchase firearms for the use of the troops," and to have such as required it repaired with all possible dispatch. If one had stopped to rest under the shade of this old tree in those busy days at Buncombe Hall, he would have heard above the din of the anvil, and the roar of the forge, the quaint songs of many dusky damsels in the cabins hard by, as they busily "seeded" the cotton, carded the wool or sped the soughing spindles of many great wheels, while the clatter of resounding looms would have told him that the "tasks" of yarn from the spinners of yesterday, were supplying those of the weavers of today. These, with the dyers, the shoemakers and the tailors were all busy with the mighty task of equipping a regiment of fighting men. For they were here nearly a year, arming and drilling for the fray, and we are told that Col. Buncombe practically bore the expense himself.

The original deed from Edward Moseley placed the acreage of the Buncombe tract of land at one thousand and twenty-five acres, but when we remember that rent was paid on land in those days at so much per acre, and then taking into account the general callings by which the surveyor had bounded it, we need not be surprised to find two thousand acres in the tract, and to this Colonel Buncombe added until the estate consisted of four square miles of the finest farm, and timber lands in the Albermarle section. The land drained naturally, and was easily brought into cultivation, the removal of the forest growth being the chief difficulty. During the eight or nine years Colonel Buncombe resided on this property he made at least two

thousand acres of it fit for tillage. The Hall was so situated that one could view the entire plantation from the upper floor of the front piazza, and a magnificent sight it was said to be, those seas of golden wheat ripe for the sickle, surrounded by the gleaming green of great fields of corn just budding into tassel.

Colonel Buncombe was loyal to the crown, and supported the colonial government heartily, as is shown by his unwillingness to aid Governor Tryon in suppressing the insurrection of the Regulators, and the promptness with which he always discharged his duties, either as a militia officer, or member of the county court. But when Colonel Harvey came riding from Halifax, and his conference with Willie Jones on that eventful fourth of April, 1774, and lodging that night with Colonel Buncombe, poured out to him and Samuel Johnston, the story of Governor Martin's tyranny and with fervid eloquence unfolded to them his plans of resistance and defiance, not only was the impetuous young lion of Buncombe Hall won to the cause of popular liberty, but the calm, calculating prudence of the astute Johnston, surrendered to him. It was just two years and ten days later that Colonel Buncombe's adopted country called upon him to prove his faith by his works. On the 15th of April, 1776, the Halifax Assembly, of which Archibald Corrie was the sole representative from Tyrrell, elected him Colonel of the fifth battalion of North Carolina troops. He had just laid his loved young wife to rest within the sacred precincts of old St. Paul's at Edenton, and his bruised heart had turned for "surcease of sorrow" to the care of the three bright pledges of her love, their

children. But like the patriot soldier that he was, he never hesitated. Proceeding at once to gather about him a band of devoted men, who like himself, preferred the privations, and uncertain fortunes of the tented field, with honor, to inglorious submission to foreign tyrants, he equipped and drilled them with all possible dispatch, largely at his own expense. Then taking such order with his private affairs as the unsettled state of the country would permit, he bade his children adieu, and turning his back forever upon them, and the home which his ardent soul had sought so faithfully to make the aery of loves bright dream, he placed himself at the head of his regiment, and began that career which was to end so disastrously at German Town. Here he was wounded, captured by the enemy, and according to a letter of his sister, Mrs. Cain, dated March 23rd, 1780, died a prisoner of war at Philadelphia, 1779, aged thirty-seven years.

Of Colonel Buncombe's children, Elizabeth Taylor, the oldest, was sent when eleven years old, 1778 for education to Abraham Lot in New Jersey, Thomas and Hester were placed under the care of Mrs. Ann Booth Pollock of North Carolina. For many years after this Buncombe Hall became the prey of the spoiler.

While Colonel Buncombe was organizing his regiment, the Tories about Lee's Mills were very active. At their head was one Daniel Legget, who taking to himself the title of "Senoir Warden," went from farm to farm during the summer of 1776, and with notched sticks, tripple oaths, mysterious grips, and spelled-out pass-words, initiated all who would join him into a society for the pro-

tection of the Protestant religion, the maintainance of King George's authority, the assistance of deserters, and the protection of members from service in the patriot army. They were promised that as soon as Colonel Buncombe should march with his command, that Gen. Howe would certainly come to their assistance, and give over to their tender mercies his estate, and the property of all those who had enlisted with him. Gaining some strength, they began formulating a plan for assassinating all the chief men in the province, when their bloody purpose was disclosed, the ring-leaders apprehended, and lodged in jail at Edenton. One of them at least, one Llewellyn, was executed, and this so frightened Leggett that he had a fit of hysteria, and wrote Governor Caswell a most penitent letter, begging that his unprofitable life should be spared, and assuring him that his penitence was so great that he would ever after be incapable of harm. He appears to have escaped with his neck.

Elizabeth Taylor Buncombe, Col. Buncombe's oldest daughter was married, by Bishop Benjamin Moore, to Jno. Goelet of New York, October 23rd, 1784. Eight children were the result of this union, three being born prior to their removal to North Carolina, which was about 1793. About this time Colonel Buncombe's estate was divided among his three children. Mrs. Goelet's part being the south-eastern portion of the Tyrrell plantation, on which Buncobe Hall stood. It was probably during the minority of these heirs, certainly prior to 1811, that the public road was changed, and laid out through the middle of the farm running nearly north and south, leaving the Buncombe Hall

fully three hundred yards to the east, and side to the road. They planted long rows of shade trees, principally sycamores, along the top of the ridge between the house and the road, and on either side of the latter through the entire estate, making the change as attractive as possible, but there was no attempt at altering the house to front the new road. This could easily have been done, as either wing was about equal in length, and contained the same number of rooms. But there was no disposition to make any alteration. In fact the reverential affection of Mrs. Goelet for everything that had been her father's, made her exceedingly averse to any change in Buncombe Hall, the home he had made. And thus it remained until 1876, when the Connecticut carpetbagger began to demolish it. True the piazza on the north side had fallen away, but the building itself was practically as good at the close of tsi century of service, as when first erected.

After the division of the Buncombe property, the several parts were quickly taken by two or three good families, the Washington county Court House was erected at Lee's Mills, Mr. and Mrs. Goelet's large family of children, began to be "grown up," and altogether Buncombe Hall was again a social centre of first importance, on the "South Shore." In 1836 they erected a chapel in the centre of the little colony, placing it on the west side of the public road, and only a few hundred yards from the entrance to the Buncombe Hall grounds.

This church, St. Luke's, was the scene of the early priestly ministrations of Bishop A. A. Watson, as it also

was of Rev. Dr. George Patterson, who recently died in Tennessee.

About the centre of this church-yard, marked by a modest marble slab, is the grave of Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor Buncombe Goelet, wife of John Goelet, and oldest daughter of Colonel Edward Buncombe. Mrs. Goelet died in Greenville, N. C., at the home of her son, Dr. Peter Goelet, March 9th, 1840, being within two days of seventy-three years old. She was first interred in the family burying ground on the farm, but was later removed to the church-yard. By her side, and to her left is the unmarked grave of Mr. Jno. Goelet, her husband. Mr. Goelet was born in 1759, on the day of the fall of Quebec, and died at Buncombe Hall, October 6th, 1853, and was buried in St. Luke's churchyard by Rev. Dr. Geo. Patterson, two days later. Mr. Goelet was a man of small stature, and slight figure, but he had the voice of a Boanerges, being able to make himself heard at a great distance. He was remarkable for his activity in his old age, frequently walking to Plymouth and back, a distance of eighteen miles, in half a day, even after he was eighty years old. On the right of Mrs. Goelet is the grave of her seventh child, and third son, Major John Edward Buncombe Goelet, who was born January 4th, 1807, and died November 13th, 1857. This grave is also unmarked. It is highly probable that the plot contains the graves of others of the Goelet children, but the two I have mentioned are the only ones certainly identified.

In 1811 Mr. and Mrs. Jno. Goelet gave their daughter who married a Mr. Haughton, one hundred and seventy

acres of the Buncombe Hall land, as her portion, one of the callings being a sycamore now the north-east corner of St. Lukes churchyard. It was their son who in 1859 purchased the homestead, it having been sold for division. The terms of the purchase not having been complied with, it was again in 1868 sold by decree of court, this time to an adventurer from Connecticut, who obtained very liberal terms from his political friends of the court. He completed the payment of the purchase price, \$800.00, in 1874, perfecting his title. Pushing an old office building into the grove, between the house and the public road, he moved into this, not feeling himself equal to the presumption of residing in such a dignified looking building as Buncombe Hall was even in its ruins. To provide himself with spending money, he would sell with equal readiness, to negroes or political associates, a piece of the land, or a part of the house. Thus it came about that in 1878 there was nothing of the old building left save the naked framework of the dining room, and the kitchen walls under it. That nothing of its destruction might be wanting, the Norfolk and Southern railroad, whose track crosses the ridge about in line with the western walls of Buncombe Hall, dug away the earth on which it stood, to a depth of about five feet, leaving nothing to indicate its location save a slight depression at the side of the cut where the kitchen cellar was.

The last time I saw Buncombe Hall was in the spring of 1874, I had been sent to Lee's Mills on some errand by my father, and returning late, passed by the place after dark. The evening moon hung low in the west, its faint

light throwing indistinct shadows across the fenceless, fenel covered grounds, revealing the moss covered, sombre looking old building standing tenantless at the end of the long vista of sycamores. The upper windows, lined with the accumulated dust of years of neglect, threw back the light of the moon so brightly at times, that I nearly fancied these reflections were the spirit lights of ancient heroes holding high carnival in those silent upper chambers. About it, in perfect alignment were rows of great sycamores, their whitened branches pointing heavenward, like the bleached bones of many armed skeletons, hands uplifted. From the thicket jungle north-east of the house, containing the old burying ground, came the disquieting call of a lone whippoorwill, while way down by the Guinea hole on the creek, a horned owl sounded his melancholy note. Such were the last days of Buncombe Hall.

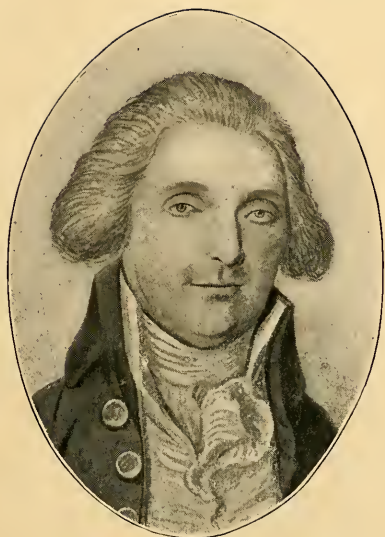
HAYES AND ITS BUILDER.

BY RICHARD DILLARD, A. M., M. D.

"Time has a Doomsday-book upon whose pages he is constantly recording illustrious names. Only a few stand in illumined characters never to be effaced." Each century has left us large legacies of wisdom and experience, but that which was useless has been reduced to dross in the merciless crucible of Time.

History is the essence of biography, and biography is the great open door to universal information. We cannot read too often the record of the truly wise, and virtuous; their deeds are of inestimable value to a Commonwealth. The soul only grows noble by the contemplation of the noble.

Gov. Samuel Johnston, the builder and master of Hayes, was of ancient Scotch lineage, and distinguished personnel. His commanding figure was well fitted to carry the fine head, and Jove-like brow which his portrait denotes. In early life he studied law under the distinguished barrister, Thomas Barker, of Edenton, and was soon appointed Deputy Naval Officer of the Province, an office which he filled with great ability, until removed by the royal governor Martin, for his decided revolutionary sentiments. The literature of an age undoubtedly impresses its stamp upon the characters who figure in it. The writings of Coke and Blackstone unconsciously affected every youth who studied law then. Gov. Johnston's strong forensic mind was evidently moulded, and illumined by them. His preeminent



GOV. SAMUEL JOHNSTON.

FROM A RARE OLD WATER COLOR IN THE HAYES LIBRARY.



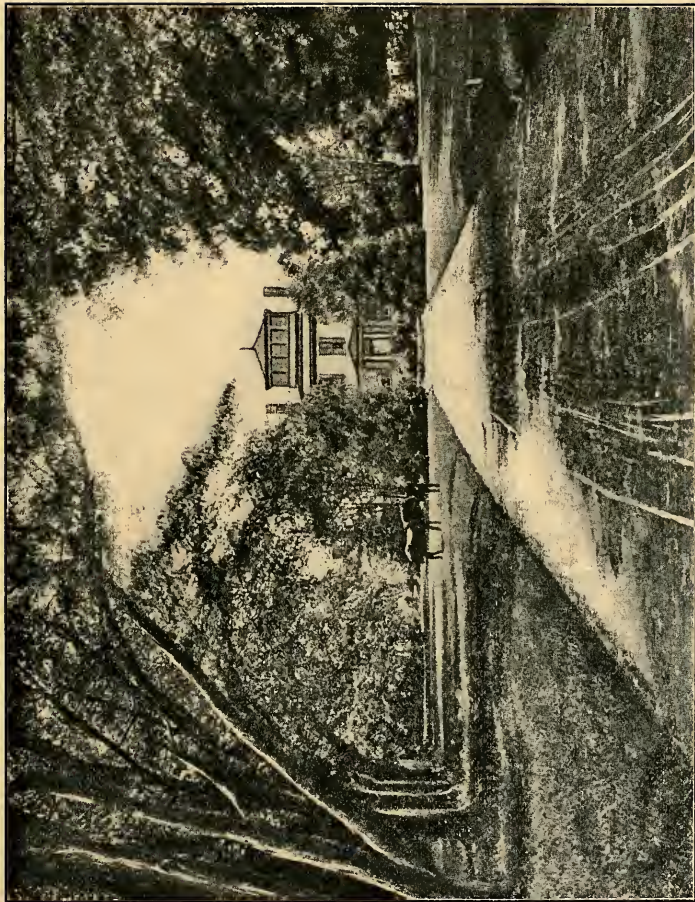
ability and shrewdness became famous throughout the province, and his name is inseparably connected with the early history of law, and equity in North Carolina. His great octopus mind seemed to reach out in every direction; he filled with distinction the offices of Judge and Governor, and was the first United States Senator from North Carolina. He was on a commission created by Congress to settle the boundary line between New York and Massachusetts, with Jno. Jay, Elbridge Gerry, Rufus King, and others. The result was so satisfactory that in the election of 1796 he received two votes from the State of Massachusetts for the Vice-Presidency. He presided over the Hillsborough Provincial Congress, and over the Convention of Fayetteville in 1789, which adopted the Federal Constitution. His associates were the greatest men of the time, and he was their peer. Governor Johnston was a federalist in politics, and helped to stamp strength upon our own State institutions. The revolutionary correspondence of Gov. Johnston, including letters from the Adames Jefferson, John Sevier, Anthony Wayne, James Madison, Robt. Morris and others, is an inviting and untilled field for the future historian, but it is too voluminous to publish here. I myself shall rest content, while humbly gleaning in this rich harvest of Canaan, to have my sheaves make their proper obsequies into those of my brother reapers.

His marriage to Miss Cathcart brought him additional wealth in the fine Caledonia estate on Roanoke River, and a large number of slaves. Both the Governor and his wife were hospitable hosts, and their elegant home became the resort of the cultured and refined. The distinguished

James Iredell, who wrote so charmingly of those days, was always glad of an opportunity to take tea, or spend the evening there, especially to meet the Governor's sister, Hannah, whom he subsequently married, and Mr. Barker, his old tutor, during his last years made frequent visits to Hayes to discuss the great political changes, which had taken place in the government. The affection between tutor and pupil became stronger and stronger, and when Mr. Barker died Gov. Johnston was his executor, and had him buried, by special request, in his own family graveyard at Hayes. As we view Governor Johnston down the long vista of time, he filled the full measure of Shakespeare's successful man, "Honor, wealth and ease in waning age." He was one of the ablest men the State has produced, and will live forever among the immortals who helped to mould her history.

Hayes, his beautiful seat, was built in 1801, and named for the home of that versatile and kingly knight, Sir Walter Raleigh. A fact in itself, which lends great interest to its history.

The homes of the early settlers indicated their type; here the cavalier prevailed, and he brought over with him his grand ideas of English life. Sir Christopher Wrenn, the famous architect of St. Paul's London, had for a long time set the fashion in architecture: the projecting second story; the gabled roof, and its most necessary embellishment, the lanturne or cupola, which was lighted up on the King's birthdays, and other festive occasions. This aerie in summer became the social heart of the mansion, just as the great fireplaces and inglenooks were the center for win-



HAYES, THE SEAT OF GOV. SAMUEL JOHNSTON.

NOW THE RESIDENCE OF MR. JNO. G. WOOD.



ter evening's amusements. When guests were present, tea would sometimes be served there, and the lord of the manor could spend hours there looking out upon the broad expanse of Albemarle Sound, watching for some overdue vessel, which was to bring him tidings and newspapers from England, or fruit and luxuries from far off Indies. Newspapers were scarce, and personal correspondence took their place. The elegant diction, and beautiful penmanship, are in striking contrast with the curt, typewritten, stenographic modern letter. By way of parenthesis, Col. Edward Buncombe was probably the exponent of the hospitality of Eastern North Carolina in those days. His gates always stood wide open, and above them he had inscribed, with great pride, his royal welcome. Whenever it was the good fortune of the stranger to lodge there, he would invariably find the next morning that the bridge across Kendrick's Creek had been taken up during the night, by the Colonel's orders, and that he was a prisoner in the castle to await the pleasure of his host. In passing it is an interesting study in philology to note that the modern word Buncombe or "bunkum" is indirectly derived from his name. A certain member of the Legislature from Buncombe County named Felix Walker, whenever a question was presented always persisted in making a speech, declaring that his constituents expected it, and that he was obliged to make a speech for Buncombe, hence its general use now meaning a pretended enthusiasm.

After the revolution, when our forefathers had accumulated wealth and slaves, a modification of their architecture became necessary to keep balance with their munifi-

cence, and they built with a spaciousness commensurate with their broad hospitality, and the pattern became classic, and for the most part Corinthian. Perhaps Hayes is one of the purest types of that style. It generally consisted of a large central mansion, with its huge portico, and columns, the wings connected to it by a colonade, or Grecian peristyle; the observatory taking the place of the lantern. The gardens were for the most part formal, and of the Italian pattern, laid out in hearts, and horse-shoes, and stars, and edged with box. The long avenues were bordered by cedars, or stately elms, and tulip trees. Then there was the summer-house covered with Lady Banksia roses, a suitable tryst for the amours of Florizel and Perdita, and off on the sunny sward stood the ever-warning sundial. The gateway to the carriage drive was wide and inviting, and the posts were usually surmounted by couchant lions, urns, or the American Eagle.

Hayes is seated in the midst of a lovely grove and lawn upon a broad plateau, with its gentle trend toward Edenton Bay, an estuary of Albemarle Sound. The shore line broken here and there by clusters of feathery cypress trees, forms enchanting vistas of ever changing water scenery, and the dignified old mansion nestled among its stately trees lends a picturesque serenity to the landscape. The grounds are laid out with artistic skill and beauty, and pictorial cleverness. The walks lead to surprises of arbors, bowers of roses, and beautiful groupings of shrubbery: And when the summer moon hangs in the sky like a cutting of silver, the waves kiss back at her a thousand broken reflections, and the sheen thrown upon the landscape trans-

forms trees and bowers into fairy islands, dells and grottoes more weird and beautiful than the caves of Ellora. In the spacious dining-room hang the portraits of Clay and Webster, (both by Bogle) Marshall, Peter Brown, Judge Nash, Badger, Governor Morehead, Governor Graham and Gaston, the poet statesman. The portrait of Clay was painted especially for Mr. Jas. C. Johnston, and was the last one of that famous statesman. In a personal letter to Mr. Johnston, Mr. Clay stated that he would not have had his portrait painted at that time of life for any other living man.

The library, which occupies one wing of the mansion, is of unique octagonal design and antique appointment: It contains more than five thousand rare books, manuscripts, etc., principally collected by Governor Johnston and is still sacredly preserved by its appreciative possessor, Mr. John G. Wood. There are many rare and costly old editions of various authors. Upon its walls hangs the portraits of Thos. Barker, (by Sir Joshua Reynolds,) John Stanley, Judge Iredell, Judge Ruffin the elder, Gavin Hogg, and around the cornice are busts of Washington, Marshall, Hamilton, John Jay, Zachary Taylor, Henry Clay, Dewitte Clinton, Webster, Walter Scott, Chancellor Kent, and James L. Pettigrew of Charleston, the erstwhile law partner of Gen. Pettigrew. The catalogue of books, though done with a quill pen, has the appearance of the most exquisite steel engraving. Mr. Edmund M. Barton of the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester, Mass., says: "The catalogue is a wonderfully quaint thing in itself; the collection of books is very fine; worthy of careful in-

vestigation and preservation, and would make an excellent foundation for the public libraries, which must, and are gradually coming up through the South."

This library is a tempting, and enchanting pasture, where the mind may browse to its content, like herds upon the green Sicilian slopes, or wander like a bee, to gather nectar from the poet's flowers, and where fancy may, with wanton joy, chase the golden butterflies of fiction, or of romance.

Mr. James C. Johnston, a son of the Governor, was the last of the family to occupy Hayes. He was a courtly polished man, and inherited much of the physique, and strength of mind of his father. He lived in great exclusiveness and elegance at Hayes, with his retinue of servants. It is said that an early disappointment in love consigned him to celibacy, and changed the whole tenor of his life.

Mr. Johnston was an extensive planter, and engaged also in milling and shipping. At the outbreak of the Crimean war, in 1854, prices of breadstuffs went up in a fabulous way. That year the sales of wheat and corn from his Caledonia farm alone, amounted to over one hundred thousand dollars, nearly all of which was profit. And Mr. Johnston was so gratified at the result, that in addition to the regular salary paid his manager, he presented him with his check for one thousand dollars. This incident alone will give some idea of his munificence. He had the highest appreciation of sterling worth of character, especially applied to those with whom his extensive business operations associated him, and when his trusted Attorney, Malachi Haughton of Edenton died, with characteristic

generosity he erected to him a handsome shaft in St. Paul's Churchyard, and inscribed thereon his estimate of him in these lines :

"A wit's a feather, and a chief's a rod
An honest man's the noblest work of God."

Mr. Johnston was an extravagant admirer of Henry Clay, and when the great commoner became embarrassed, voluntarily, and without his knowledge, paid off the entire indebtedness amounting, it is said, to over forty thousand dollars.

During the civil war Mr. Johnston was a Union man, and had but little sympathy with the ultra states right doctrine held by many.

If we are the reproduction of those who have preceded us, we cannot blame him too much for his political opinions. Rigidly reared under his father's influence, he had been taught to believe in a strong centralized government, and he held that there could only be complete strength in complete union of the component parts thereof.

When the war came with its bouleversement, the wrecking of fortunes, and the estrangement of friends, Mr. Johnston felt that he was neglected by his family, and became permanently alienated from them.

He died May 9th 1865, and by his holographic will, bitterly contested in chancery, by the ablest jurists of the day, his vast estate passed from his family forever.

"Here let us rest his case,
He's gone from hence, unto a higher court
To plead his cause."

RICHARD DILLARD.

Edenton, N. C.



Battles of Revolution Fought in North Carolina.

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Moore's Creek Bridge, | Feb'y 27th, 1776 |
| Ramsour's Mill, | June 20th, 1780 |
| Pacolet River, | July 14th, 1780 |
| Earles Ford, | July 18th, 1780 |
| Cane Creek, | Sept. 12th, 1780 |
| Wahab's Plantation <i>or Waxhams.</i> | Sept. 21st, 1780 |
| Charlotte | Sept. 26th, 1780 |
| Wilmington, | Feb'y 1st, 1781 |
| Cowans Ford, | Feb'y 1st, 1781 |
| Torrence Tavern, | Feb'y 1st, 1781 |
| Shallow Ford | Feb'y 6th, 1781 |
| Bruce's Cross Roads, | Feb'y 12th, 1781 |
| Haw River, | Feb'y 25th, 1781 |
| Clapp's Mill | March 2nd, 1781 |
| Whitsell's Mill, | March 6th, 1781 |
| Guilford Court House, | March 15th, 1781 |
| Hillsboro, | April 25th, 1781 |
| Hillsboro, | Sept. 13th, 1781 |
| Sudleys Mill, (Cane Creek.) | Sept. 13th, 1781 |

List furnished by Mrs. E. P. Proffitt, chairman

