The North Carolina Booklet.

GREAT EVENTS IN.....
NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY.

Colonial New Bern.

—BY—

MRS. SARA BEAUMONT KENNEDY.

PRICE 10 CENTS. ☙ ☙ ☙ *$1.00 THE YEAR.*

The North Carolina Booklet.

GREAT EVENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY.

The Booklets will be in the following order:

1. Virginia Dare,
   Maj. Graham Daves.
2. Colonial New Bern,
   Mrs. Sara Beaumont Kennedy.
3. Liberty, Property and no Stamp Duty.
   Col. A. M. Waddell.
4. Edenton Tea Party,
   Dr. Richard Dillard.
5. Betsy Dowdy's Ride,
   Col. R. B. Creecy.
6. The Hornets Nest,
   Hon. Heriot Clarkson.
7. Green's Retreat,
   Prof. D. H. Hill.
8. Monsieur Le Marquis de LaFayette,
   Maj. E. J. Hale.
9. An Admiral and His Daughter,
   Dr. K. P. Battle.
10. Pettigrew's Charge,
    Capt. S. A. Ashe.
11. Reminiscences of a Blockade Runner,
    Hon. James Sprunt.
12. Ku Klux,
    Mrs. T. J. Jarvis.

Tales of the Cape Fear Blockade
James Sprunt

One Booklet a month will be issued by the **North Carolina Society of the Daughters of the Revolution**, beginning May 10th, 1901. Price $1.00 a year.

EDITORS.
MISS MARTHA HELEN HAYWOOD, MRS. HUBERT HAYWOOD,
RALEIGH, N. C.

NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET.

VOL. I. JUNE 10, 1901. NO. 2.

COLONIAL NEW BERN.

BY

MRS. SARA BEAUMONT KENNEDY.

RALEIGH:
CAPITAL PRINTING COMPANY.
1901.

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

PREFACE.

THE COLONY OF PALATINATES WHO, WITH THE SWISS, SETTLED IN NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA.

In that lovely and picturesque portion of Germany, situated on both sides of the river Rhine, lay the country formerly known to history as "The Palatinate." Its inhabitants were Protestants, and in the Thirty Year's war of religion between the Romanists and Protestants, Heidelberg, the principal city of the Palatinates, was laid a heap of smoldering ruins by the Spanish under Tilley, and its University was plundered of its great library which was presented by the conquerers to Pope Gregory XV.

Later on, the French, under Louis XIV., laid waste this country. A distinguished writer says: "The ravages of Louis XIV., in the beautiful valley of the Rhine, were more fierce and cruel than even Mohametons could have had the heart to perpetrate. Private dwellings were demolished, fields laid waste, cities razed to the ground. But three days of grace were allowed to the wretched inhabitants to flee their country. And soon the roads were blackened by innumerable multitudes of men, women and children flying from their homes in the dead of winter, often feeble, naked and starving, leaving their marks in bloody foot-prints on the snow. Many died of cold and hunger, but enough survived to fill the streets of the cities of Europe with lean and squalid beggars who had once been thriving merchants and farmers."

"England, ever the refuge of the oppressed, opened her arms to the people. Twelve thousand sought shelter there. Many of them, with the aid of "Good Queen Anne," were enabled afterwards to form homes for themselves in America. Among these were those Palatinates who accompained De Graffenried's colony of Swiss and founded New Bern."

[See Bernheim, page 43.—EDITORS.]

COLONIAL NEW BERN.

A long point of land bounded north and south by a strip of shining river. And on this land a virgin forest draped in long gray moss; here and there a tangle of vines, a rainbow blending of parti-colored blossoms, with brilliant grosbeaks and red-winged blackbirds darting like living flowers through the golden sunshine leaving a trail of song behind, or whip-poor-wills and chuckwill-widows calling wistfully to each other through the lonesome darkness. And out beyond the apex of the tongue of land the two rivers, blended into one wide current, flowing ceaselessly to the distant waiting sea. This was the Dream-world between the Neuse and the Trent, in the Carolina country, where one day civilization was to join hands with nature.

And while the birds sang and the flowers bloomed here, in the old world across the ocean war's crimson banners shadowed the Swiss hills and the fair German valley of the Neckar, until hundreds of these persecuted people began to dream—dimly at first, then with pathetic eagerness—of peace and safety in some distant land where religious thought was free and where the tyrants heel pressed not so heavily. The Swiss, moved by this hope, sent a brave and intelligent man, Michell by name, to seek them a new nesting place in America, and awaited his return with longing. But the Germans turned their eyes toward England where Queen Anne, because of what they had suffered for Protestantism, was willing to give them shelter. Thither they went, hundreds of them, but they did not take deep root in

English soil, and were readily persuaded to try their fortunes with the Swiss emigrants who were preparing to go to the new world. The man who laid this plan before them was Christopher de Graffenreid, a nobleman of Switzland, who was at the court of Queen Anne, making preparations for the transportation of the Swiss colony which he was to head. The Germans had become rather a problem to Queen Anne who listened with favor to his proposition to take some six hundred of them in conjunction with his own party. Contracts were drawn up, and Mitchell having reported favorably on a site between the Carolina rivers, the combined company sailed away into the west, following always the sunset banners that seemed ever to wave from the ramparts of a new stronghold of liberty. Who may tell how many romances were consummated as the young people of the company sat in the shadow of the sails or lingered in the moonlight on the decks of those slow-sailing vessels? And yet again who will ever be able to count the bitter tears wept in secret for some lost love left behind in the land of tyranny; for in selecting those who were to go with him, De Graffenreid chose only sound and healthy persons of both sexes. And so the lad by the mast, with his head on his arm, and the girl in the stern looking back to the dim horizon line were thinking, perchance, of a pale faced maid or a cripple youth who had been rejected in the general selection.

"I will go back for her when I have made a home for her here in this new country," the lad kept saying to himself.

"I shall die out here in this loneliness, and never see

him again," the girl said over and over to her heart, with the hopelessness of helpless womanhood.

After a long voyage the vessels came to the haven which they sought; and after some hardships and delays the colonists reached that tongue of land lying in dreamful beauty between the two rivers, and the soft December days of 1709 were filled with the sound of a white man's axe as the primeval forest made way for civilization.

The town founded thus was called by De Graffenreid, NEW BERN, after the Swiss capital in the far-away heart of the Alps.

In the De Graffenreid purchase there were ten thousand acres for which he and Michell paid "to the lords Proprietors ten pound purchase money for every thousand acres, and five shillings yearly as a quit rent to each thousand acres." And on his part De Graffenreid agreed to set off "by metes and bounds 250 acres of land for each of the one hundred and twenty German families, and to supply them with certain cattle, implements of agriculture and other necessaries of life in a wild country." Reimbursement was to be made to him for these by the farmers the second year after the founding of the colony.

Things seemed to have gone well with the New Bern colony during the first year. Other settlers, chiefly English, bought land among them, and there was a decided step forward in prosperity. But all the while the Indians were watching them jealously; and in September of the second year there fell that dread massacre that was so near to blighting the colony of Carolina. In the New Bern district more than a hundred people died by Indian tortures.

Among them, perhaps, perished the girl whose heart still wearied for her lame lover whose infirmity had separated them.

When the blow fell De Graffenreid and his surveyor, Lawson, were on an exploring expedition up the Neuse, and were captured. Lawson was tortured and finally put to death, but De Graffenreid was spared because of the superstitious fear with which the savages regarded the coat of arms, blazoned on a golden star, which he wore about his neck. The Indians took it for some kingly symbol, and feared to harm him further. And so they made terms with him exceedingly favorable to themselves, and sent him again to New Bern. The words of De Graffenreid's own journal bring this terrible adventure most strongly home to us:

"One day when the weather was fine and there was good appearance that it would last, Surveyor-General Lawson proposed to me to go up Neuse River, hinting that there were plenty of wild grapes there, which we could gather for replenishing ourselves. We could see likewise whether the river Neuse could be navigated in its higher course, and could visit besides, the upper country. I had long been anxious to find how far it is from here to the mountains. I accordingly resolved to take the trip, being assured that no savages lived on that branch of the river. But to feel safer we took two Indians to guide, which we knew well, with two negroes to row. So we went peacefully on our way. We had already gone a good two days journey and were near the village of Coram when we met Indians armed as for hunting, and we had hardly turned backwards

when such a number came out from the bushes and they overtook us so suddenly that it was impossible to defend ourselves. They accordingly took us prisoners and led us away. Such a rare capture made them proud; indeed they took me for the Governor of the Province himself, and we were compelled to run with them all night across thickets and swamps, until we came to Catechna or Hencocks-towne, where the king called Hencock was sitting in State.

"The king stood up, approaching us and speaking to us very civilly, and they discussed at last whether we were to be burned as criminals or not. They concluded negatively, inasmuch as we had not been heard as yet, and at midday the king himself brought us to eat a kind of bread called 'dumplings' and venison.

"In the evening there came a great many Indians. The 'Assembly of the Great,' as they called it, (consisting of forty elders sitting on the ground around a fire, as is their custom), took place at ten o'clock in a beautiful open space. There was in the circle a place set apart with two mats for us, a mark of great deference and honor. We therefore sat upon them, and on our left side, our speaker, the Indian who had come with us. The speaker of the assembly made a long speech, and it was ordered that the youngest of the assembly should represent the Indian Nation, the king putting the questions. We were examined very strictly concerning our intention, and why we had come hither. Also they complained very much of the conduct of English colonists, and particularly Mr. Lawson, charging him with being too severe, and that he was the man who had sold their lands.

"After having discussed at length, they concluded that we should be liberated, and the following day was appointed for our return home. The next morning we were again examined, but one Cor Tom being present, the king of Cor village, he reproached Mr. Lawson for something, and they began to quarrel with great violence, which spoilt things entirely, though I made every effort to get Lawson to quit quarrelling. I did not succeed. All at once three or four Indians fell upon us in a furious manner. They took us violently by the arms and forced us to set upon the ground before the whole of them there collected. No mats were spread for us. They took our hats and periwigs and threw them into the fire, and a council of war being held we were immediately sentenced to death. On the day following we were taken to the place of execution. Before us a large fire was kindled. Whilst some acted the part of conjurors others made a ring around us which they strewed with flowers. Behind us lay my innocent negro, and in this miserable situation we remained that day and the subsequent night. I was wholly resolved to die, and accordingly offered up fervent prayers during the whole day and night, and called to mind as I could remember them, even the least sins. I tried and recalled all what I had read in Holy Scripture—in short I prepared myself the best I could to a good and salutary death. I found in the meanwhile a great consolation in considering the miracles which our Lord Jesus had made, and I addressed forthwith my ardent prayers to my Divine Saviour, not doubting that He would grant them, and perhaps change these savage hearts—harder than rocks—so that they would pardon me,—what indeed happened by God's miraculous Providence.

"On the morning of the next day on which we were to die, a great multitude was collected to see the execution. Thus began our Long Tragedy which I would like to tell, if it were not too long and dreadful—but—since I begun, I will go on. In the centre of that great place, we were seated on the ground, the Surveyor-General and myself, bound and undressed with bare heads, and in the front of us a great fire; near it was the conjuror or High Priest, (an old grizzled Indian—the priests are generally magicians and can even conjure up the devil), a little further was an Indian savage standing. He did not move from the spot, with the knife in one hand and an axe in the other. It was apparently the executioner. Around us sat the chiefs in two rows; behind them were the common people, upwards of three hundred in number—men, women and children—with faces painted red, white and black, who were jumping and dancing like so many devils, and cutting a variety of infernal capers. Behind us stood armed Indians as guards, who stimulated the dancers by stamping with their feet and firing their guns. Yes indeed, never was the devil represented with a more frightful appearance than these savages presented as they danced around the fire. I uncovered my soul to my Saviour Christ Jesus and my thoughts were wholly employed with death.

"At length, however, I recollected myself and turning to the council of chiefs, made a short discourse, assuring them that the great Queen of England would avenge my death. I further stated whatever I thought fit, besides to induce them to some mitigation. After I had done speaking, I remarked that one of the notables, (who was a rela-

tion of King Taylor from whom I bought the land where New Bern now stands), that, that notable spoke earnestly, apparently in my favor, as it came out. Then it was forthwith resolved to send a few members to their neighbor, a certain King Tom Blunt of the Tuscaroras. The result was, as will be seen, that I was to live and that poor Surveyor-General Lawson was to be executed, Thus God in His mercy heard my prayers. I spent that whole night in great anguish awaiting my fate, in continuous prayers and sighs. Meanwhile I also examined my poor negro, exhorting him the best way I knew—and he gave me more satisfaction than I expected—but I left Surveyor-General L., to offer his own prayers as being a man of understanding and not over religious.

"Towards 3 or 4 in the morning the delegates came back from their mission and brought an answer, but very secretly. One or two of them came to unbind me; not knowing what this meant, I submitted to the will of the Almighty, rose and followed him as a poor lamb to the slaughter. Alas! I was much astonished when the Indians whispered in my ear that I had nothing to fear, but that Lawson would die, what affected me much.

"They also liberated my negro, but I never saw him since. I was forbidden to speak the least word to Mr. Lawson. He took accordingly leave of me, and told me to say farewell, in his name, to his friends. Alas! It grieved me much to leave him thus. I tried to show my compassion by a few signs.

"Some time after the man who had spoken in my favor, led me to his cabin where I was to be kept quiet awaiting

further orders. In the meantime they executed the unfortunate Lawson. As to his death, I know nothing. Some said he was hung, some said he was burnt. The Indians kept that execution very secret. May God have mercy on his soul.

"The next day the notables came to tell me of their design to make war in North Carolina. They advised me that no harm would come to Chattooka * (the old name of New Bern) but that the people of the colony ought to go into the town or they could not answer for the evil that could happen—good words enough—but how was I to let the people know, since none would take a message for me. A few days later the savages came back with their booty. Alas! what a sight for me to see—men, women and children prisoners. The very Indian with whom I lodged, happened to bring with him the boy of one of my tenants, and much clothing and furniture which I well knew.

"Alas! what was my apprehension that my whole colony was ruined, especially when I had privately questioned the boy. He cried bitterly, and told me how this same Indian had savagely killed his father, mother and brother, yes, his whole family. * * I had to remain six weeks a prisoner in this hateful place, Catechna—I was once much perplexed. All men had gone to that plundering expedition, the women, some to gather wild cherries, others to dig some kind of roots called "potatoes," which are yellow, very good and dainty. On that day I was all alone by myself in that village. * * I accordingly said my prayers

* The Chattawka Indians from whom New Berne was bought were in alliance with the Tuscaroras, and removed with them after this Indian war to New York, carrying with them their name now so famous in educational circles.

and then examined the *pro* and *con* as to whether I should take flight or not, and found at last, it was best to stay. Experience showed that I made a wise choice. * * The barbarous expedition being ended, on the Sunday following their great Indian festival, having concluded a treaty of peace with these people, they brought me a horse. Two notables escorted me to Cor village, gave me a piece of Indian bread and then left me. Thus have I escaped from the cruel hands of this barbarous nation, the Tuscaroras. Thence I had to foot it homeward. Quite lame, shivering with cold, nearly dead—my legs so stiff and swollen that I could not walk a step, but supported myself on two sticks, at last I arrived at my small home in New Bern.

"When my good people saw me coming from afar, tanned like an Indian, but on the other hand considered my blue jerkin and my figure—they knew not what to think—the men even took up their arms—but when I came nearer quite lame, walking with two sticks, they knew by my look that I was not a savage. When I saw them so puzzled I began to speak with them from afar. They hollowed to the others to come, that it was their Lord returned whom they thought to be dead. And so all came in crowds, men, women and children, shouting and crying out, part of them weeping, others struck dumb, with surprise. Thus I was at last at home, and in my private room, gave ardent thanks to the Good God for my miraculous and gracious rescue."

For a while De Graffenreid remained with the colony, pushing it to success by his strict adherence to the terms of neutrality in the constant quarrels between the English and the Indians. But his terrible experience during his cap-

tivity at the time of the massacre haunted his memory, until he wished no longer to make his home beside such barbarous neighbors; and finally he sold his vast interests to a wealthy and influential gentleman named Thomas Pollock, for eight hundred pounds, and returned to his Swiss mountains, preferring, no doubt, to risk the evils of tyrannical and religious persecution rather than the tortures of the fagot and the scalping-knife. Tradition has tried, in a vague way, to associate a romance with his stay in America; but there seems to be no ground for this. He was most probably married when he came here, for it is stated that some of his descendants remained in this country; and he would have no children old enough for such a step had he not been already a married man when Queen Anne sold him his landed rights.

When he was gone there was much regret, but the town which he had founded did not languish under the new regime. Houses were built, streets were laid off and fields were cleared. Emigration continued to pour in; prosperity came with favorable seasons and fine crops; the rift in the forest widened as the population increased; the broad, shady streets of the town soon stretched from river to river; warehouses were opened, ships from many ports anchored in the harbor of the two rivers; and so trade and commerce joined hands with agriculture to lift the little town to wealth and importance. And so it was that toward the middle of the century we find the royal governors making it their capital, convening here their legislatures and council sessions. The preacher and school-master followed the wharves and warehouses, bringing in their wake the refine-

ments of education; and finally fashion came to give her finishing touches to a community that had picked up the golden apples in the race for success, and yet had come first to the goal.

The royal governors of the province, with their splendid personal surroundings, their mal-administrations, their unjust taxations, came and went upon the scene like the figures of an ever changing kaleidoscope. It was perhaps not until the days of Governor Tryon—"the Great Wolf of North Carolina"—that New Bern reached its zenith of social brilliance. Tryon was a soldier by taste and training, but his charming wife and her beautiful sister, Esther Wake, a noted toast and belle, had all the social desires of admired and petted women; and with them to direct matters the Governor's receptions took on the semblance of court functions. Perhaps it was their ambition that fanned the flame of Tryon's wish for a suitable government residence in New Bern. The people at large were in a ferment of dissatisfaction against the administration of public affairs, and were already groaning under a burden of taxation that sapped their private incomes and left them discontented and rebellious. In many ways this spirit was manifested, those who strove to adjust matters and do away with the existing evils being called "Regulators." It was these men who, a few months later, struck on the field of Alamance the prelude to that national march of freedom which began at Lexington and ended at Yorktown.

But despite this public disquiet and his own personal unpopularity, Tryon, spurred on by his wife and sister-in-law, set himself to gather money for the erection of a palace

that would eclipse anything in the colonies. His proclamation of the repeal of the odious Stamp Act, which had been a fire-brand in each of the thirteen colonies, so pleased the people that when the legislature assembled shortly after, the members were ready to listen favorably to any plea the governor might make. Tryon recognized the spirit of conciliation; and Lady Tryon and beautiful Esther Wake, with fine dinners and pretty blandishments of flattery, so wrought upon the members that they voted a liberal appropriation for the building of the long wished-for palace. This appropriation was afterwards increased by the council, and still further added to by Tryon who diverted certain public moneys into this channel.

To a pioneer people with small wealth, except among a favored few, the taxes levied to raise this money was a hardship not easy to bear. But the haughty governor cared little for this, and his agents ground the money out of the people, and the palace rose majestically in the white moon shine and the sifting sunlight beside the Trent and New Bern town. A minute description of this palace is not necessary to this article. Suffice it to say that it consisted of three buildings, the center one holding the council halls and apartments of state, the two wings, which were connected with the main building by curved, covered colonades, being the domestic and residence portions. The main building was two stories high, with a flat roof on which was a promenade and an aquarium. The material was brick, the chimney breasts and cornices being of white marble exquisitely carved. It was pronounced the finest structure in British North America. The architect was a Moor by the

name of Hawks whom Tryon induced to come to New Bern for this especial work; the material was all imported from Europe. Here for a time the Royal governors dwelt, and here was focused the wit and wealth, the beauty, and the fashion of the whole colony. But after the going of Martin, the last ruler to hold authority in Carolina under the king's seal, the history of the palace changed. For a time it remained closed; but after the Revolution the authorities allowed it to be used as a school, the academy having been burned. Of this school the Rev. Thomas Irwin, one of the most unique characters of his time and place, was principal. In the cellar directly under the council chambers, was stored a quantity of wood and hay. Here there came one day a negro woman hunting eggs. The pine torch she carried set fire to the hay and the whole pile of Tryon's palace, except one of the wings, was burned. So passed away in flame and smoke what would have been for long generations a land-mark for history, a Mecca for the antiquarian. The wing which was saved has served many purposes since it fell from its high estate, being at one time a warehouse, at another a dwelling, and yet again a stable where General Washington's horse was stalled when he visited New Bern in 1791. Later it was repaired and used by the Episcopal Church as a parish school and chapel. It is the property of the Daves family, long prominent residents of the community.

About the palace must always cluster romantic memories and legends. For the upper classes its opening marked the golden days of the colonial period. Throughout the country there might be the rumblings of the gathering

political storm, but in the palace where fetes and levees and music and dancing, dainty dames, with powdered heads and rustling brocade, greeted their brilliantly clad cavaliers in the reel or minuet; there were feasting and wine drinking in the garlanded banquet rooms; jesting and dancing in the wide halls, and at the curtained windows and in the starlight on the promenade upon the roof there were whisperings of lovers, and down-cast eyes and blushing cheeks and—mayhap—stolen kisses. And all of life seemed a-shine with jewels and set to a strain of minuet music. Here, on this narrow strip of land where, less than fifty years before, the only human trespasser was the half nude Indian hunter, the arts of civilization met in a brilliant focus. Gallants in silk and velvet sighed on bended knee for beauty's cast-off ribbon as a love favor, or fought fierce duels with their rivals for a rose or a glove; for swords hung loose in their scabbards in those days of periwig and powder, and "trifles light as air" moved men to blows. Nor was the merry-making confined to the palace. In the houses of the wealthier merchants and planters there was an open-handed hospitality that has never been relinquished by their descendants. In some of these houses the furnishings and table service were plain and unostentatious; in others, sumptuous—fine upholstering and massive silver plate, heirlooms from former days of grandeur in England. Here and there was a lady who took her airing in a coach driven by liveried servants, but the large majority went to the palace levees in "chairs" borne by footmen. Constant intercourse with the mother country kept the "quality folk" in touch with English fashions, so that

Tryon's "drawing rooms" were mimic reproductions of those of St. James.

The character of the population had changed materially since the Pollock purchase. New Bern had long ago ceased to be a Swiss and German settlement. Some of these first comers had, indeed, become substantial citizens, but many more had faded out before the in-coming of the English. One who writes with seeming authority has this to say about the Swiss:

"While in New Bern I frequently saw the Ipocks who lived in the vicinity. They were an obscure class of people, resembling Gypsies in appearance. I was at the time not aware that the Ipocks belonged to the Swiss nobility who came over with the founders of New Bern. I have since been informed that such is the fact—the original name being Ebach in Switzerland." The strange character known throughout the community as "Mother Ipock" or the "Witch of the Neuse," was of these people. She was a protege of the palace at the same time that it had another striking personality—Colonel Ferguson, nephew to Martin, the last of the royal governors. A lady's man, a fop; Ferguson was the champion rifle shot of the world, and one of the most brilliant cavalry officers who wore the red during the Revolution. He fell at King's Mountain where the tide of war was turned in America's favor.

Such was colonial New Bern, the child of romance, the abiding place of the spirits of adventure and chivalry. She gave to the State some of her most distinguished builders and defenders. Many of the names known in the annals of the nation were first household words in New Bern,

graven on her door plates, and later on the marble slabs under the moss-draped elms in that portion of her domain called "God's Acre."

Here are still to be found some of the mementoes and landmarks of those dead and gone colonial days. Here is still that unburned wing of Tryon's palace which links us to the past; here is Pollock Street, perpetuating the name of him who took up De Graffenreid's burden of colony building. Here, too are some of the dwellings erected by the men of that lost time—the Gaston home, the Nash place the Hughes and Ellis houses, the Pollock and Burgwyn homesteads, and others that have withstood the ravages of time and the assaults of war. The scene of many stiring events since those days of periwig and brocades, New Bern's chief glory must ever be the white stone of history she set up in the flowery wilderness in these past but unforgotten days of colonial splendor.


61
65