

VOL. III

OCTOBER, 1903

No. 6

THE
NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET



GREAT EVENTS IN
NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY

HISTORIC HOMES
OF
NORTH CAROLINA.
PART III.



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THE NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET.

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MISS MARY HILLIARD HINTON. MRS. E. E. MOFFITT.

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"CAROLINA! CAROLINA! HEAVEN'S BLESSINGS ATTEND HER!
WHILE WE LIVE WE WILL CHERISH, PROTECT AND DEFEND HER."

RALEIGH

E. M. UZZELL & Co., PRINTERS AND BINDERS

1903

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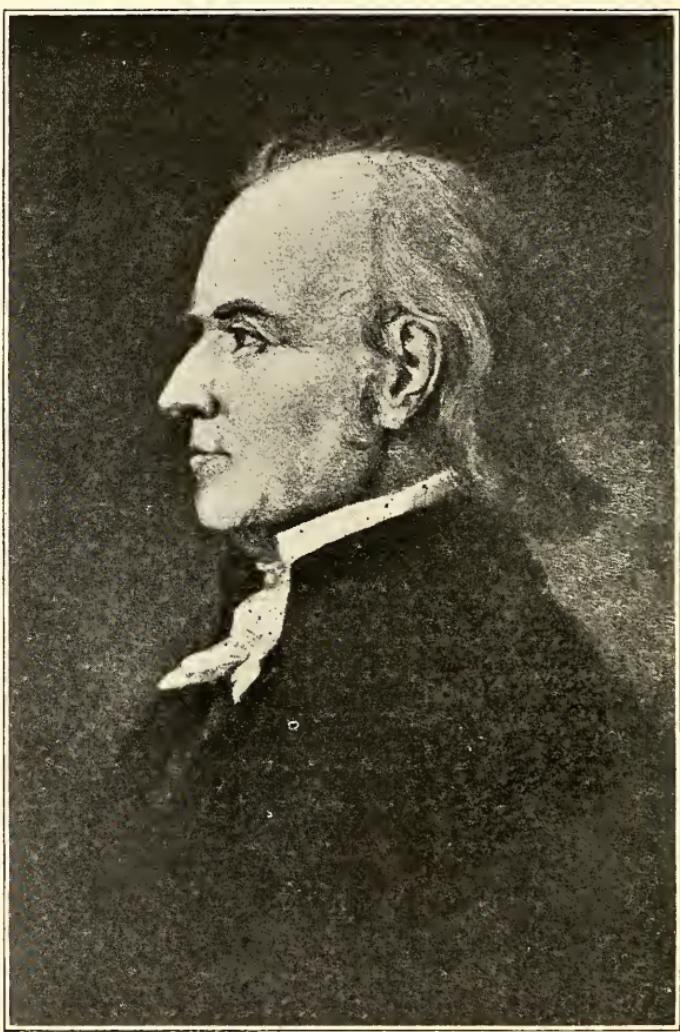
The object of the NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET is to erect a suitable memorial to the patriotic women who composed the “Edenton Tea Party.”

These stout-hearted women are every way worthy of admiration. On October 25, 1774, seven months before the defiant farmers of Mecklenburg had been aroused to the point of signing their Declaration of Independence, nearly twenty months before the declaration made by the gentlemen composing the Vestry of St. Paul’s Church, Edenton, nearly two years before Jefferson penned the immortal National Declaration, these daring women solemnly subscribed to a document affirming that they would use no article taxed by England. Their example fostered in the whole State a determination to die, or to be free.

In beginning this new series, the Daughters of the Revolution desire to express their most cordial thanks to the former competent and untiringly faithful Editors, and to ask for the new management the hearty support of all who are interested in the brave deeds, high thought, and lofty lives of the North Carolina of the olden days.

MRS. D. H. HILL.





GENERAL WILLIAM LENOIR.

FORT DEFIANCE.

BY MRS. RUFUS THEODORE LENOIR, SR.

This ancestral home, called by many of its friends "The Fort," is located in a lovely little valley some twenty miles from the source of the Yadkin river. It stretches along the river on either side for five miles or more and nestles among the slopes and foot-hills, sleeping, as it were, in perfect peace and security, while the blue mountains guard and keep watch over it on every side, its beauty ever changing—dark and grand in storm, brilliant when bathed in the golden sunshine, soft and fleecy when the purple mists hang over it; even the seasons vie with each other in bringing their own peculiar and precious gifts.

It was to this favored spot that General William Lenoir came soon after the Revolutionary War, and in time became possessor of almost the whole of it, giving portions of it to several of his children as they in the course of events married and left the roof-tree.

On account of its many natural charms and because of the congeniality and unity that existed between these families, the gayety and happiness of the younger members—of whom there were a goodly number—one of its lovers many years ago called it "The Happy Valley," and the name still clings to it. General Lenoir built his mansion in 1784-'85, and one

can hardly realize in this age of architecture that it was a wonderful structure in that day, the people in the surrounding country coming long distances to behold and admire it. He chose a site near an old fort, from which the place takes its name, and it is of this fort that I write, quoting in this article a description of the old home as it was a quarter of a century ago.

This fort was built on the east side of a table-land, on the very edge of a precipice. It was built of logs, in the early history of the country, when the Indians were numerous and troublesome. The women and children were often hurried into this refuge, while the fathers, husbands and sons defended them. The family cemetery, a beautiful and quiet spot, commanding a view of a great portion of the country, is on the site of this fort. The first one laid to rest there was a little child who died while in the fort. Many arrow-heads have been found about the place, hurled there, no doubt, from the bows of the warrior who made desperate efforts to hold the dark, deep forests which he loved and of which he had been lord so long, claiming them as his own by prior right; and stout and brave hearts they must indeed have been who contended with this relentless and obstinate foe. Whether the red man has been wronged we do not stop here to enquire, but he has been driven far westward, and his Happy Hunting Grounds are now broad and fertile fields. His bones and relics mark his retreating foot-steps. Across the river from the fort is an Indian burying-ground, in which have been found many curious treasures buried with their dead. Two

very large and heavy battle-axes were found in the creek below the fort many years ago, and one other relic worthy of mention, said to be the finest specimen of the kind known—a rare and beautifully polished stone eighteen inches in length, slender and shapely and tapering from the symmetrically curved head to the end, smooth and black as ebony—thought by those versed in Indian lore to have been held by the ruling chief as a badge of authority when sitting in council. Many others, showing wonderful ingenuity in workmanship and ideas of proportion and finish, are still preserved in the old home.

If these hills and streams and fields and mountains could speak, what tales would thrill us, of hardships, sacrifices and sufferings of the whites, and what cunning and cruelty of the red man, so exasperated by his wrongs! But I must not digress, but pass on to the old mansion, and by permission of the author of "*Hand in Hand Through The Happy Valley,*" I will give a description of it in her own words, as it was at that time. Mrs. Oertel says: "The home to which I would lead my readers is known by the very belligerent and bristling cognomen of 'Fort Defiance.' The name is far, however, from giving any idea of the spirit that pervades it or its inmates, but is derived from an old fort of that name, which in the early history of our country did service in the line of defence erected against the Indians. It was located here, just behind the spot where the residence now stands, upon the edge of a steep set-off, at the foot of which a creek flows. The former site of the fort is now the grave-yard,

where a goodly family group, members of four generations, are quietly waiting for the resurrection. A strange fascination clings about this curious old house. It is so quaint in construction and the air about it seems so thick with memories that we cannot help loving it. In the center of the building a spacious room running through the entire house, from which a stairway with heavy oaken banisters leads up to the second floor, is called 'The Hall.' A large fire-place with panel work above and around it fills up one end. In the corner the grim old clock stands, ruthlessly ticking away the hours and days and years—ticking slowly and solemnly, as if it had upon its beating heart a remembrance of the many lives it has 'seen come and go in this old home, whose hours of birth and death have been numbered from its dial, as if it had gained through all these years, watching the fleeting human shadows which have passed before it, a sense of its own steadfastness and of the importance of its mission.'

This "Hall" has been largely used as a dining apartment, although the family dining-room is at present to the right of it. If its walls could speak, what tales they could tell of merry times in the long ago, of the family reunions, the birthdays and the wedding feasts!

The antique sideboard which has so often groaned beneath the dainties piled upon it still keeps its place near the old clock; there seems to be a kind of comradeship between them, as if they could say "You and I" to each other, and a sort of stately, old-time spirit lingers about them both. There are doors, front and back, leading from the "Hall" into the

open air. Behind the smaller dining-room is a bed-room, and from it a second stairway leads to a suite of rooms above, from which again a second stairway rises to the old garret, a perfect curiosity shop in its way, being filled with all the paraphernalia, the waifs and strays of a family life a century old.

To the left of the "Hall" is the parlor, with a room attached to it, and a third stairway enclosed and winding, with odd little drawers in the wall all up the sides. There is no connection with this parlor part of the house and the rest except by way of the piazza, which stretches the whole length of the house, festooned with trailing vines, grapes and roses. Neither is there any connection on the second floor between the apartments to which the three stairways lead. The modern ideas of convenience find no place here in this respect. The kitchen and servants' room are detached from the house, as is the usual custom in the South.

"Roses either side the door, are
Growing lithe and tall,
Each one set, a summer warder,
For the keeping of the hall—
With a red rose and a white rose
Leaning, nodding to the wall."

From the central door a wide walk leads out through the garden. It is bordered on each side with spacious beds of flowers that seem to flourish here as nowhere else. Surely never anywhere else do leaves unfold and buds bloom where they meet with such a gracious, loving welcome as here. All the sweet old-fashioned flowers find plenty of room. The

old spicy pink, the sweet william, tulips and hyacinths, the hollyhocks, the jump-up-johnnies, the blue corn flowers, sweet-peas and poppies and great clumps of annunciation lilies are not crowded out, though they stand in close proximity to many of the new and more pretentious blossoms; and in the winter the cold-pit is full of the newest triumphs of floriculture.

At the end of the walk is a secluded nook, covered and shaded by century-old cedars and surrounded by the old-fashioned box, dark and cool at the hottest midday, jocosely called by the family "The Lovers' Retreat." Indeed, it has been said that in the course of events several engagements have taken place in this romantic and cosy corner. Around the entrance roses and lilac bushes flourish, while in the early part of the day on every side the eye is gladdened by the clean, pure faces of the morning-glories which run riot over everything.

Of course, to those who have lived here so long this garden is haunted ground, peopled to their loving ken with forms that others see not. Among them there is one, a—

"Little maid with wondrous eyes,
Not afraid, but clear and tender,
Blue and filled with prophecies,"

as she looked dreamily out at "life's unlifted veil," whose lovely, happy life was interwoven with its flower-life like warp and woof. Looking out beyond the garden bounds, on to the mountains, green pastures, rich harvest fields, and quiet, solemn woodlands lie. To the right the ground descends

rapidly to the same little stream of water before spoken of as running down below the family burying-ground. It flows through the barn-yard, giving drink, bright and fresh and clear, to the many full-uddered cows gathered therein. It is like the sweet idyl—

“The lovely laughter of the wind-swept wheat,
The easy slope of yonder pastoral hill,
The sedgy brook whereby the red kine meet
And wade and drink their fill.”

Beside this stream there stands several large old beech-trees with great overhanging branches and white roots, with their multitudinous arms stretched and intertwined in the most fantastic way. They have a weird, elfish look, especially by moonlight.

“On the left the sheep are cropping
The stout grass and daisies pale,
And the apple-trees stand dropping
Separate shadows to the vale;
Over which, in choral silence,
The hills look you their ‘All Hail’!”

Just behind the house, between it and the garden, stands a huge catalpa-tree. The old giant has basked in many a summer sun and braved many a storm. An aged grape-vine throws its snake-like form up the trunk and around its branches and gracefully intertwines its leaves and sprays with the large plain leaves of the tree.

Several smaller houses are grouped about, in one of which stands the loom, where wondrously fine fabrics are woven by hand—not only jeans and linseys, but fine dimities and table

and bed linen and tasteful carpets. Though in these days of steam machinery goods could be bought cheaper than they can be thus manufactured at home, and very much trouble be saved, still so many of the poor people around have been in the habit of depending on the old home for their subsistence in these various industries, that the present mistress feels it her duty to keep up the old customs.

In front of the house is a circle of grand old spruce pines. They are strong and vigorous and are magnificent in form and solemn and stately in their intensely dark-green foliage.

The mansion was built by General William Lenoir nearly one hundred years ago, the work of construction being commenced in 1785. It was a laborious undertaking in those days. The frame is of heavy oaken timber and still in a state of excellent preservation. General Lenoir lived at that time in a smaller house on the opposite side of the river. The nails were made by hand by the blacksmith on his plantation, and the most of the heavy lumber was sawed with a whip-saw.

The cornice which still adorns the eaves, the looking-glasses and other articles, were ordered from Liverpool. They were received at the port of Charleston and hauled all the long way in road wagons.

General Lenoir was born in Virginia. His grandfather was a French Huguenot—one of four brothers who were expelled from France at the time of the revocation of the Edict of the Nantes. He came to America in his own vessel, and in one of his voyages to or from his native country after-

wards, his vessel was lost in a storm, carrying him to a seaman's grave. General Lenoir was rather a stern man, of dignified demeanor, but it has been said of him that his manners towards the fair sex were like those of the knights of the olden time. He was exceedingly kind to the poor, and his doors were always open to receive the traveler, as there were no taverns in the country in those primitive days. Perhaps the best account that could be given of his life is contained in the epitaph upon his tombstone. The matter of the inscription was left to his friends and associates in public life. This is their estimate of him—their tribute to his memory:

HERE LIES
ALL THAT IS MORTAL OF
WILLIAM LENOIR,
BORN MAY 8TH, 1751.
DIED MAY 6TH, 1839.

In times that tried men's souls he was a genuine Whig. As a lieutenant under Rutherford and Williams in 1776, and as a captain under Cleveland at King's Mountain, he proved himself a brave soldier. Although a native of another State, yet North Carolina was proud of him as her adopted son. In her service he filled the several offices of Major-General of the Militia, President of the Council of State, member of both houses of the Legislature, Speaker of the Senate, first President of the Board of Trustees of the University, and for sixty years Justice of the Peace and Chairman of the Court of Common Pleas. In all these high public trusts he was found faithful. In private life he was no less distinguished as an affectionate husband, a kind father and a warm-hearted friend. The traveler will long remember his hospitality, and the poor bless him as their benefactor.

Of such a man it may truly be said that his highest eulogy is the record of his deeds.

A very interesting incident in connection with the battle of King's Mountain is related by the family. When the call

came for recruits, as Major Ferguson of the British army was coming up the country with his command, intending to embody and organize the Loyalists beyond the Wateree and Broad rivers, and to intercept the mountain men who were retreating from Camden, every man who had a horse started for the scene of action. William Lenoir was then living in Wilkes county and joined the forces under Cleveland. He was made a captain, and his two friends, Herndon and Jesse Franklin, afterwards Governor of the State, had also some official appointments. These three made a compact together that they would stand by and succor each other in whatever circumstances they might be placed. As the command was going up the mountain there came a man beckoning and calling, "Back! Back!" and he pointed out another way, which they took, and that proved to have been the only way by which Ferguson could have escaped. That man was quite unknown, had never been seen by any of them before and was never seen afterwards.

General Lenoir always said it was a providential interference—that it was God's will that the Federal forces should be triumphant, and so He led them by the right way to cut off the enemy's only chance of escape.

There is also treasured up in the old home an English officer's sword that General Lenoir picked up and brought home with him from the battle-field. It has a fine, keen blade, upon which is engraved this legend in Spanish:

"Draw me not without reason,
Sheathe me not without honor."

His wife was of an aristocratic English family and a thorough church-woman. She was so situated in life that she was cut off from all church association. But though true to her church and never uniting with any of the denominations around her, she had a large and loving heart, full of generous impulses, giving out its affection to all who called themselves Christians. She was so amiable and good that her children used to say "Mother not only forgives an injury, but really and truly forgets." She was a cripple and walked with crutches for the last ten years of her life, but she was always contented and cheerful.

Mrs. Oertel closes her description of the old place by saying: "A grandson of this worthy couple is now owner of the venerable home." This grandson, the youngest and last of his father's house, is still spared to it, strong and hale enough for one only two years from fourscore.

One is gone—a gentle sister, so closely allied to the old home and The Happy Valley—the "Aunt Sade" of all the connection and friends whom she loved—so faithful and so loyal to all the "family traditions."

"Life's work well done,
Life's race well run,
Life's crown well won."

She has been called to the peace and blessedness of Paradise.

Three generations bearing the same name—Rufus Theodore Lenoir—now live in the old mansion, and the happy frolics and joyous laughter of four-year-old Rufus Theo-

dore III. echoes through the halls that were for a time so quiet. The house has been necessarily remodeled and much of the quaintness and the "savor of the olden time" has given place to comfort and convenience.

Other changes there are. The old sun-dial that in the old, old time stood in the middle of the garden, surrounded by sweet-fringed pinks and thyme and camomile, is gone, and the old-time flowers are supplanted by others. The rows of lavender that so delicately perfumed the linen closet are "sweet memories of the past." But the dark old spruce pines, tall and stately, planted more than a century ago by the hand of the first master of the house, still stand around and woo the whispering winds. And the tulips, jonquils, crocuses, snow-drops and hyacinths, sweet heralds of spring—"the same fair things lift up the same fair faces"—coming forth out of their winter's sleep, perfume the air and gladden the hearts of all beholders, as they have done, year by year, since they were planted by dear hands a century ago. But the restlessness and aggressiveness so apparent everywhere has found its way into this "Happy Valley," and the sound of the falling of giant trees on the mountain sides, the noise of the ruthless saw and the steam whistle are heard on every side.

But God's works remain. His mountains stand around unchanged in form, the same soft mist hangs over them, the balmy breezes blow, the bird-songs thrill the air, and the same quiet peace—foretaste of God's perfect and eternal peace—broods over all. May the same peace abide ever in the hearts

of all those who know and love "The Happy Valley," ever bearing in mind that this same favored spot, this sweet vale that no works of man can destroy, is a precious heritage from the old Revolutionary soldier and hero, General William Lenoir.

Oh, if by Jesus' pity
We gain the Heavenly Rest,
And find the loved and sainted
Who slumbered in thy breast,

Shall we the Crystal River
See gleam in land so fair,
And learn, Sweet Vale, thy beauty
Had helped to bring us there?

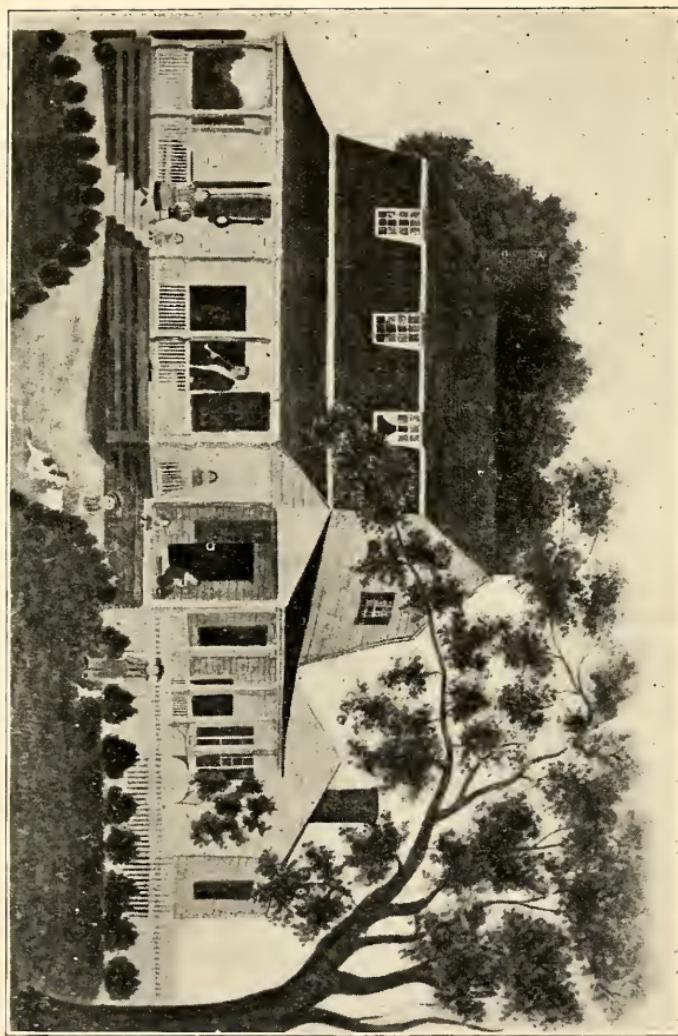
That all thy charms so goodly,
By a gracious Father given,
Were pledge of joys eternal
And perfect peace of Heaven?

PANTHER CREEK.

BY MRS. HAYNE DAVIS.

About the year 1750, Joseph Williams and Rebecca Lanier of Granville county were married. They moved to what was then Surry county and settled about three miles from the "Shallow Ford" of the Yadkin river. They owned a large body of land and many slaves. They seemed to prosper in every way. In the course of a few years came the call to arms. Joseph Williams responded at once and was soon in command of a regiment and served all through the war. Mrs. Williams, who had three sons, took charge at home and managed all things well. Before leaving for the war, Colonel Williams had laid in all kinds of supplies for his family, and we have little idea what that meant in those days of plenty and comfort. After a time came the news of the approach of the army of Lord Cornwallis. Mrs. Williams had an infant of only two weeks old, her fourth son, and as the British army approached, she took her children and an old negro woman and sought refuge in the woods, where she remained until the army had crossed the river at the Shallow Ford. When she reached home she found that all of her supplies had been entirely destroyed by the army, nothing having been left. They were not as ruthless as many invaders, as her home and the quarters of her negroes were not

PANTHER CREEK.



burned. We can hardly imagine what it must have been to her to be again under a roof. Her infant child, named Nathaniel, had contracted a heavy cold while they were in the woods; and, not having even the barest necessities of life left, and her husband away in the field, she decided to return to Granville county, where her family lived. How she was to make the journey was a most serious question, and one that we cannot realize. It tried her to the uttermost, but her brave heart did not quail; and after arranging for her two oldest boys and the negroes, she mounted a horse with her sick baby in her lap and a boy of two and one-half years behind her, and, alone, made the long journey to Granville in safety, much of the country being forests and a great deal of it swarming with Tories, but she was unmolested and at last found the rest which we can see she sadly needed. Her child was ruined by the exposure, the soft place in his head never closing, and although he lived to be over twenty years old, was a constant care to his mother, who was devoted to him. To the end of his life she kept him in her own room.

Her family were French Huguenots, who left France after the revocation of the Edict of the Nantes. Among other things, they brought their Huguenot Bible, which was lost when the old homestead, Panther Creek, was burned. Colonel Williams' Revolutionary uniform and cocked hat and many other relics were destroyed at the same time.

After peace was declared the Williamses began life again at Panther Creek. Colonel Williams was still active in the

field, several times helping to drive the hostile Indians back. On one of these expeditions his command camped on what is now the site of the city of Knoxville. Colonel Williams is said to have remarked, "Some day a great city will be here." He raised a family of ten sons and two daughters. Several of his sons were graduated at the University of North Carolina.

1. Robert, "a man of distinguished attainments, great research and acute intellect," was a member of Congress from 1797 to 1803. He was the Adjutant-General of the State during the War of 1812. He built the brick house in Raleigh down on Fayetteville street, owned by Mr. Roulhac afterwards, and then by Dr. Kemp Battle.

2. Joseph. He owned a large body of land in what is now Yadkin county, across the river from the town of Rockford. Among his descendants are James D. Glenn, of Greensboro, and Robert B. Glenn, of Winston.

3. John. He made the trip with his mother across the State on horseback. He settled in Knoxville, Tennessee. He was colonel of a Tennessee regiment and fought at the battle of Horseshoe Bend under General Jackson against the Creek Indians. He was Senator from Tennessee and Minister to Guatemala. While he was serving in the Senate, his son, Joseph L. Williams, was a member of the House of Representatives. Captain Richmond Pearson Hobson is his great-grandson.

4. Nathaniel, born during the Revolution and ruined by

exposure when only two weeks old, when his mother fled from her home on the coming of the British army.

5. Lewis. He entered public life in 1813 as a member of the House of Commons and was re-elected in 1814. In 1815 he was elected member of Congress and served continuously until 1842. He died in Washington in 1842. He never married.

6. Thomas, Lewis' twin brother, moved to Tennessee and was long Chancellor there.

7. Alexander lived in Greeneville, Tennessee, where he owned many broad acres. Judge Snead of Knoxville is his grandson.

8. William owned the Strawberry Plains Plantation in Tennessee, which, during the War Between the States, was ruined by the Yankees, nothing but the land having been left. Major Stringfield of Waynesville is his grandson.

9. James died comparatively young.

10. Nicholas. He inherited the home, Panther Creek, where he spent his days in ease and affluence, dispensing a most lavish hospitality until the end of the Civil War, which brought with it the changes which broke up so many Southern homes. The home was built in the old colonial style, and the garden was famous for its hedges, flowers and shrubbery, of which I am told but little except the tin box is left. Mr. Nicholas Lillington and his family live at the old place. Mr. N. Glenn Williams, another grandson, who owns much of the land, lives near.

11. Rebecca, the oldest daughter, married Colonel Wimbish of Halifax, Va. She was one of the two first pupils of the Salem Female Academy.

12. Fannie married Colonel John P. Ervin of Nashville, Tennessee. His sister was the wife of John Bell, the last Whig candidate for the presidency.

The Williams family were famous as high-toned men and women, always ready to answer with their best to the calls of State and country, and their descendants are numerous in many parts of the South.

From DeBow's Review, November, 1860, page 583, by James Colton, the following extract is taken:

THE RESIDENCE OF NICHOLAS WILLIAMS UPON THE YADKIN.

"Approaching the house, the scene before him reminded the writer of some of those splendid old baronial possessions in England which have been so graphically described by Sir Walter Scott in his brilliant stories of olden times.

"The forest of oak, pine, cedar and chestnut formed a complete circle, leaving an open space of about ten acres, in the midst of which the mansion—a neat and antiquated-looking building which was commenced before the Revolution and finished after its close—almost entirely hid from view by wide-branched oaks, which flung their gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious greensward.

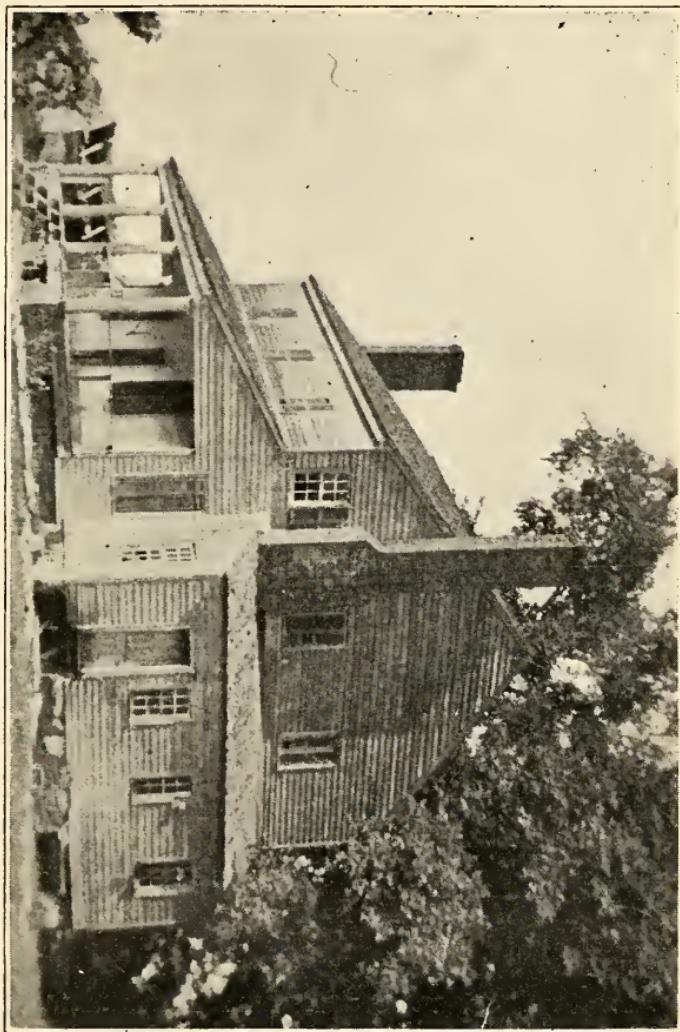
"On our left, as we approached the mansion from the large gate of the outside enclosure, is a meadow of tall, waving

grass, and on the right is a lovely flower garden—shrubbery which Thurston might have envied, environed by a beautiful juniper hedge. No one who has read Milton's *Paradise Lost* can look upon a beautifully arranged garden without being so richly reminded of the charming Garden of Eden, which his strong imagination so richly bodied forth in that immortal poem."

CLAY HILL-ON-THE-NEUSE.

BY MARY HILLIARD HINTON.

As one journeys east from the capital of North Carolina over the Tarborough road, he sees on the right, after crossing Neuse River, a quaint colonial house standing high on a hill clearly outlined against the southern sky—a speaking memorial of a Revolutionary patriot, prominent during the latter part of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, and of a fascinating period that has passed away forever. This is “Clay Hill,” the home of Major John Hinton of the Revolution. The antiquity and the very air of departed better days, and the gloom, which permeate this landmark of Wake county’s early history, suggest courtly manners, stiff brocades, powdered coiffeurs, high-heeled slippers, knee-breeches and huge buckles. Later the uniforms of buff and blue, and the intrusion of the Tories. What a contrast to the valley below, where progress and invention have left their stamp! There a modern iron bridge spans the Neuse, and the quiet is broken by the mighty rush of water over the dam, the buzz, ever constant, of an up-to-date electric plant, the puffing of a gasoline launch and the occasional passing of an automobile. “Clay Hill” has witnessed many stirring events, and numerous interesting scenes have occurred within its walls. Could a fuller record of its past history be



CLAY-HILL-ON-THE-NEUSE.

obtained, how valuable it would be to a student of social life in North Carolina, since the mode of living here represented the customs of the higher aristocratic circle in this inland section. Here a lavish hospitality was dispensed, some of the most influential men of that time in the State—names familiar in our history—having at one time or another partaken of the courtesies of its genial host. Here gay hunting parties, sumptuous dinners and large weddings were some of the occasions of gathering together the distant planters, statesmen, soldiers and their families—the beaux and belles of long ago. Here has been known the vandalism of two wars and the secret meetings of the Ku-Klux Klan.

Major John Hinton came of an old and honored English family. He was the eldest son of Colonel John Hinton, one of Wake's pioneers and Revolutionary soldiers, and of Grizelle Kimbrough, his wife. He was born in Wake county, March 14, 1748. During his childhood his home was a log cabin, (the door of which was in the top of the house, entered by means of a movable ladder), surrounded by thousands of acres of primeval forest full of wild beasts and roving Indians. This section was the hunting-ground of the Tuscaroras. Near the site of Hinton's old home can still be found traces of an Indian burying-ground. There were no neighbors in that vast wilderness. Later, however, from the east came Colonel Joel Lane, whom tradition styles "a dressy widower," and settled at Bloomsbury; while some ten miles to the west Colonel Theophilus Hunter, senior, founded "Hunter's Lodge." Between these families existed the most

friendly relations, resulting in marriages. Eventually the family of Nathaniel Jones located at "White Plains," about fourteen miles away. Then, too, came Nathaniel Jones of "Crabtree," not a blood relation, though connected by marriage with the builder of "White Plains."

Major Hinton, being the eldest son, soon learned self-reliance. While his father was adding to his vast landed estate by taking up new grants of land, he also took up numerous grants from Earl Granville. These contained about six hundred and forty acres each, the usual amount bestowed on the early settlers of the Province of Carolina. After coming into possession of his inheritance on the death of his father in the spring of 1784, he was regarded as one of the three wealthiest men in his county, as well as one of the most influential. There were large tracts owned by him around the present town of Raleigh. On March 26, 1776, Colonel John Hinton sold his son John a tract of land containing 640 acres on Neuse river, for "the sum of one hundred pounds proclamation money," which shows the value of real estate at the beginning of the Revolution. He owned a number of slaves who were fresh from the jungles of Africa. These ignorant savages were soon enlightened in the arts of civilization and proved useful servants. As a proof of the kindness of their master, these slaves were devotedly attached to him.

On June 27, 1765, at the early age of seventeen, John Hinton, junior, married Pherebee, daughter of John Smith, the founder of Smithfield, North Carolina, and Elizabeth

Whitfield, his wife. The bride was but sixteen, having been born October 16, 1748, and childish even for her years. Often she was frightened by the boyish pranks played by her husband. They settled at "Clay Hill," where they lived happily till the war-cloud overshadowed the colonies.

"Clay Hill" is the second oldest house now standing in the county, the home of Colonel Joel Lane at Bloomsbury (now Raleigh) being the oldest. Major Hinton erected "Clay Hill" *before* the Revolution. It is well built, only heart timber having been used, while the nails are of wrought iron. Though more than a century and a quarter old, it is still in a fine state of preservation, and there is no reason, if care could be taken, why it should not stand many years longer. At that time in this sparsely settled back country it was really an elegant residence, without a superior. Such work then was a tremendous undertaking; on a river that is not navigable, with no town near by and only deep, muddy roads leading to the outer world, made the task of building almost impossible. The name naturally implies the character of the soil of that particular eminence—red clay. The grounds were covered with the greenest grass, shaded by stately sycamores, tall elms, and cedars. A neat white paling surrounded all. The main entrance faced the rising sun. A porch, whose slanting ceiling is plastered, supported by four small fluted columns, extends the length of the front side. From this point one has a fine view of the surrounding landscape: for miles can be seen the graceful undulation of the hills, intersected with

valleys, crowned here with forests, there with well-tilled fields. Through it all slowly flows the Neuse to join the Trent at New Bern. Bathed in the golden sunshine of autumn, softened by blue and purple tones, this is a goodly scene to gaze upon, recalling vividly that fairer "Land of the Sky." The single front door opened into the parlor; on the right a door led into the small but inviting dining-room; into this opened the butler's pantry. Through this butler's pantry all meals were brought from the outside kitchen (since destroyed) over the stone-paved walk. Back of the dining-room was a bed-room without a fire-place. The builder of "Clay Hill" deemed such a luxury as a fire in one's sleeping apartment unhealthy! Adjoining this was a dressing-rooms and closets. The parlors opened into a square back hall. From this a stair-case, with a quaint, plain balustrade, leads to the upper story. Here are a large hall-room and three chambers. In the lower hall are two out-doors. In this hall the last mistress of "Clay Hill" on summer evenings sometimes served tea from the daintiest china. The wainscoting on the first floor was high, but was replaced later by some about nine inches deep. The rooms, whose walls are hard-finished, are high-pitched; the wood-work is ornamented, but is not elaborate. The small windows have tiny panes and blinds. In the plan of the whole, convenience was regarded. There is a cellar in which were stored choice wines. Originally the house was painted white, the blinds green. The furniture was mahogany and walnut. The silver was of the severely plain colonial style, exceedingly white and only marked with

the initial "H." A certain ladle has been in the family for generations and descends to the eldest son, who has always borne the name John. It is now in the possession of the seventh of the name, a resident of Georgia. The family Bible also passed to that branch. There was a large collection of handsome cut-glass and elegant china, a set of India china and other dainty pieces.

Guests at "Clay Hill" could never forget the lavender-scented linen and the spotless napery. A few books composed the library. There were many substantially built out-houses on the premises—in fact, all necessary to the management of a large, well-ordered plantation. Some of these are still standing. On the south was the garden—a typical old-fashioned one, intersected by carefully kept walks bordered with all kinds of flowers. Here bloomed in profusion roses, jonquils, hyacinths, crape myrtles, snow-balls, lilacs, sweet betsy, honeysuckles and lavender, the very air being redolent with their heavy perfume. All the herbs found a place here, viz., tansy, rue, thyme, sage, mint.

John Hinton, junior, never wavered—his feelings were with the patriots. Though loyal to the Crown till tyranny reigned, he decided to defend the rights of his native land, risking life and fortune in the long struggle. On August 20, 1775, the Provincial Congress met at Hillsborough and made preparations for the approaching conflict. On September 9th Congress appointed officers for the minute-men in the different counties. The officers chosen for Wake were: John Hinton, Colonel; Theophilus Hunter, Lieutenant-Colonel;

John Hinton, junior, First Major; Thomas Hines, Second Major. Major Hinton was present with his regiment at the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, February 27, 1776, and took an active part in that decisive engagement.

During the war Major Hinton was compelled to leave his family and home to the mercy of those most ruthless invaders, the Tories, but happily they escaped alive. On one occasion, when he happened to be at "Clay Hill," a band of Fanning's fiends, knowing of his presence and that he had in his possession funds of the unrecognized government, came upon him at night. The guide to this band was an enemy whom Hinton had once found stealing at his fish-trap in the Neuse and fired at him. It was never forgiven. This man remained in the yard as a sentinel while the gang forced an entrance into the house, breaking a panel out of the front door. Major Hinton saw the hopelessness of his position, but determined to defend his sick wife and helpless children at all odds. In the fierce struggle they fired upon him, wounding him badly. They demanded that Major Hinton should relinquish at once his precious charge, but he refused to comply; whereupon they seized him, tying his hands in front, bound him to an arm-chair and beat him unmercifully; still that strong will yielded not. As a last resort they threatened to hang him and made preparations for the act. In the meantime a thorough search was made. The coin, tied in bags, was locked in the secretary. Suspecting this, they said they were going to break into it. It was then that his wife said: "Don't break it open; I shall unlock it." Throwing a

blanket around her, she rose from the bed, unlocked the desk, lowered the lid and slipped the bags of money under the blanket and retired to the bed safely. In the interval Major Hinton, unnoticed, undid with his teeth the knots in the ropes tied on his wrists, and, slipping out of the house, dispatched a message to his brother, Colonel James Hinton, to come at once with his troop of horse to his aid. Thinking of some silver spoons that had not been hidden, Mary, their little daughter, snatched them up, and, escaping from the house in the darkness, rushed into the garden and concealed them in the bed of pinks, thus saving them. The vandals seized upon the patriot's wearing apparel and the frightened slaves, and after finding their victim gone and hopes baffled, departed amid volleys of oaths which waxed but the stronger when the stolen clothes were found to be much too large. Colonel James Hinton and his troop, coming up at this critical moment, started after the Tories in hot pursuit. They finally succeeded in overtaking them on the Hillsborough road, nearer that town than Raleigh, and capturing some, hanged them to trees by the roadside as a reward for their fiendish conduct. Then they returned to "Clay Hill" with the slaves.

In 1779 Major Hinton represented Wake County in the General Assembly and again after the Revolution.

In 1788 our legislators decided to have a permanent instead of a migratory capital. Wake being the most centrally located county, it was voted that the site selected should be within her boundaries. Nine commissioners were chosen to

locate the seat of government. Only six acted. They were Frederick Hargett, Chairman; Joseph McDowell of "Quaker Meadows," William Johnston Dawson, James Martin, Thomas Blount and Willie Jones. It was Major Hinton's desire to have the capital on the banks of the Neuse where the little hamlet of Milburnie once stood. His brother-in-law, Colonel Joel Lane, was equally ambitious to obtain the vote in favor of the present site on his land some six miles west of the Neuse. These two were among the seventeen tracts offered. On the first ballot the votes were cast as follows: Hinton's tract on the Neuse, three votes; Joel Lane's, two; the land of Nathaniel Jones of "White Plains" (near the present village of Cary), one. They adjourned to meet the following day, March 30, 1792, when Joel Lane found his land accepted, while Major Hinton's obtained but one vote. The decision was a most bitter disappointment to the latter, and from that time a coolness existed between the two families, supposed by some to have been due to the conduct of Colonel Lane on that occasion. Tradition claims that he gave a dinner to the commissioners and that they partook too freely of the choice wines to vote clearly. Had Raleigh been situated on the river its scenic beauty would have been enhanced, though probably the course pursued has given better health to its inhabitants.

The slaves formed an interesting, unique group in that colonial home. There was "Blind Jim" (totally sightless), who always saddled Major Hinton's riding horse and brought him to the front door. Then there was that couple who came

from Africa and who never learned to speak English well—Old Mingo and “Mammy Kizzy,” who was a princess, the daughter of a king on the dark continent. She wore bouquets of natural flowers in the holes in her ears. As a dairy-maid she excelled. She instructed the children and grandchildren in that especial branch of housekeeping. Jeffrey was another trusted slave. Major Hinton once sent him up the country horse-back. He was much astounded some time later to see him return horseless. Upon inquiry he learned that Jeffrey had swapped the horse for some reputed wonderfully fine species of peas! They were planted and found to be equal to representation and ever after went by the name of “Jeffrey’s peas.” The carriage driver, Buck, was a brother of “Uncle Brisco,” who was Colonel John Hinton’s body servant during the war, belonged to the “Gunny (a corruption of Guinea) stock,” and was a remarkable negro. He drove “Peacock” and “Phœnix” to the second carriage brought to Wake. It was a high vehicle, entered by means of steps lowered from the back. The old cook was an unusual character. One day she went into the cellar for something for dinner, and could not resist the temptation of partaking of the rum. When found and reproved, she replied, “So I suits master, I don’ keer.” She prepared to perfection the Major’s ideal spring dinner, “a boiled chicken and a bag-pudding,” as well as his favorite salad, a bunch of lettuce leaves and mint tied with a shalote and dipped in dressing. There was one Johnson, an uncle of President Andrew Johnson, who was employed to superintend the women spinning.

Of the many weddings which occurred at "Clay Hill" the first was that of Mary Hinton to Henry Lane. Their daughter, Margaret Lane, was also married here to the brilliant lawyer, Moses Mordecai. She was married in white satin, Empire style, and her trousseau contained enough handsome silk and satin gowns to satisfy the fastidious bride of the twentieth century. It was here that Judge Henry Seawell, nephew of Nathaniel Macon, came a-wooing and won his beautiful bride, Grizelle, second daughter of Major Hinton. These rooms in those days echoed with the exquisite music of his violin. He had a most serious rival in Theophilus Hunter, junior, of "Spring Hill," wealthy, aristocratic and of prominent position, whom her parents preferred to the poor but handsome and gifted young lawyer, who came to the county with only his license and a horse. This partiality was shown by the treatment bestowed upon their respective steeds. When Theophilus Hunter, junior, rode over to "Clay Hill" to pay court to the choice of his heart, his horse was taken promptly, stabled, fed and groomed, while Henry Seawell's was allowed to remain tied to the rack and paw the earth in his fury and craving for feed and water! At a hunting party the latter was given a bird gun and the poorest stand in the country, where deer were never known to pass. Growing weary of ill luck, he retired to the house in quest of another *dear*, with domestication the object this time. He was more successful with the change, and that day won his suit. They were married at "Clay Hill," April 17, 1800, by Cargill

Massenburg. After the marriage Major Hinton highly approved of his son-in-law.

Major Hinton was a devoted Churchman, religiously observing all the feasts and fasts of the Established Church. There is now in existence a prayer-book containing his autograph. He was tall, large and fine-looking—a perfect gentleman, very refined, with elegant manners.

One of the favored members of the household was the favorite dog, "Venture," an immense animal that always accompanied his master on his rides, faithfully guarding his horse when tied.

Major John Hinton died October 19, 1818. He is buried at "Clay Hill." The grave-yard is back of the garden, surrounded by a rock wall. His grave is marked by a plain granite head and foot piece and bears a simple inscription, now nearly obliterated by time's touch. Beside his lie the remains of Pherebee Hinton, his wife, who died December 19, 1810. Their children were:

1. John Hinton of "Stoney Lonesome," who married Sally, daughter of Colonel Needham Bryan.
2. Mary, who married Henry Lane. Her remains are interred at "Clay Hill."
3. Samuel, who died soon after graduating at the University of North Carolina.
4. Grizelle, born May 26, 1782, known to a large circle of relatives as "Aunt Seawell," who married Judge Henry Seawell of "Welcome," Wake county.
5. Willis, who died young.

6. Betsey, who inherited "Clay Hill" and died unmarried in May, 1865.

Betsey Hinton, called by a host of loving relatives "Aunt Betsey," was the youngest child and a fine Christian character. As a housekeeper she had no superior. With her lived Mrs. Grizzy Ryan, youngest daughter of Colonel Joel Lane. An overseer attended to the plantation. In the sixties the old home experienced another warlike intrusion. It was in the spring of 1865, when Sherman's Army was indulging in its "vandalic march," that the families on the adjoining and distant plantations flew to the Capital for safety. No art of persuasion could prevail on the mistress of "Clay Hill" to leave, believing her presence would protect her property. Some slaves and a few white women and children alone remained with her. The enemy were scouring the country. One night she retired, to be awakened by soldiers breaking into the house at a late hour; the yard and every building were filled with Federal soldiers. An entrance was forced into her very room and this lady of eighty-odd years was driven from her bed. After ransacking the premises, they departed to apply the torch to the paper mill at Milburnie.

The great change of fortune and the weight of years were more than even that brave spirit could endure. She died a few weeks after the surrender. After her death the place passed to the nearest relatives out South, who sold it, and thus this historic home became the property of strangers, wholly unappreciative of its quaintness and history. What a sad change! To-day the fences and garden have disappeared,

many trees have been cut down, cotton is cultivated on the once beautiful lawn, some of the out-buildings have been burned, others are dilapidated, and there are signs of decay and neglect about the old homestead itself.

There are no descendants of Major Hinton's sons now living in North Carolina, the name in that branch having become extinct in the State.

It is to be lamented that we Americans do not retain the English custom of entailing the family seat and revering every relic that bears on a noble past.

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