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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

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HOPEWELL SECTION

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ALEXANDER.



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES  
OF THE  
EARLY SETTLERS  
OF THE  
HOPEWELL SECTION  
AND  
REMINISCENCES OF THE PIONEERS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS BY  
FAMILIES, WITH SOME HISTORICAL FACTS AND INCIDENTS  
OF THE TIMES IN WHICH THEY LIVED.

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THE ONLY WAY TO PRESERVE HISTORY IS TO REDUCE IT TO WRITING  
WHILE THE CHIEF ACTORS ARE LIVING, AND HAVE TAUGHT  
TO THEIR POSTERITY WITHOUT EMBELISHMENTS.

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Written at the request of Revolutionary Descendants by  
J. B. ALEXANDER, M. D.

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CHARLOTTE, N. C.  
Observer Printing and Publishing House,  
1897.

## TO MY WIFE

Annie Lowrie Alexander, who had an aptitude for genealogical pursuits, and was fond of tracing family relations. And had she been permitted to have joined in the preparation of this work, it would have been more attractive to the general reader, and more accurate in detail. Trusting this offering may stimulate the descendants of her friends to further prosecute the work of gathering up all the facts pertaining to the first patriots of America, this little book is dedicated to her memory.

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY SETTLERS IN HOPEWELL CONGREGATION.

There is no more historic place in America than Mecklenburg county, and in the county no spot so conspicuous for men of daring and chivalric deeds in Revolutionary times as the Hopewell settlement. This section was settled by that sturdy Scotch-Irish element who appear to have been born in the Presbyterian faith, strongly imbued with a love of liberty, religious freedom, and fair play. The majority of the pioneers came from Maryland and Pennsylvania. The section of which we write is bounded on the west by the Catawba river, taking its name from the tribe of Indians who roamed over this portion of North Carolina long after the white people established homes on its borders; bounded on the east by a high ridge without a single water course running across it for twenty miles. The rain falling on the west side flows into the Catawba, and all on the east side to Rocky River. In the early days of the settlement the southern and northern boundaries extended respectively for a few miles north of Charlotte to Beattie's Ford, twelve miles northwest of Hopewell church. The lands were well watered, somewhat rolling, much of it prairie in fine grass and wild pea-vines, very fertile, and all capable of easy cultivation, except a small area covered with "nigger-head rock." It was once believed that only a wild and rugged climate and scant soil could produce the highest type of manhood, but the heroes of the Revolution, and their descendants in the last great struggle between the States, prove that it is more in the race than in the locality. It would have been a surprise to us if those pioneers who braved the wilds of the unknown wilderness and the blood-thirsty savages, had not made themselves a name for posterity to be proud of when they

settled in this locality, on the extreme limits of western civilization—Mecklenburg having no western limit.

Hopewell church was organized in 1765, cotemporary with Rocky River and Sugar Creek. It was here that the spirit of civil and religious liberty first became manifest, taking deep root in the hearts of the people, and culminated in the world-renowned Declaration of Independence in the town of Charlotte on the 20th of May, 1775.

Most of the signers of the Declaration, absolving their country from the crown of England, were members of the Presbyterian church, nine were ruling elders, and one a minister of the gospel. They lived to a ripe old age, and transmitted to their posterity a full account of the transactions of the ever-memorable 20th of May as the most important act in the wonderful drama that gave birth to American liberty. So that if no other proof but tradition of such a character, it should be sufficient to establish its validity in the minds of all unprejudiced persons.

Hopewell church being a central point of this interesting locality, and having suffered the irreparable loss by fire of all the church records for seventy-five years of her existence, it is now impossible to replace them, and as anything pertaining to the church's early history will be of interest, I take pleasure in appending a manuscript written by John McKnitt Alexander, an elder of Hopewell. Mr. Alexander having held many positions of honor and trust, adds interest to all subjects with which his name is connected. Without apology or further explanation his paper is subjoined.

“The people of Hopewell having in the autumn of the year 1791 obtained part of the ministerial labors of the Rev. Samuel C. Caldwell, the majority of them felt themselves happy in him as their teacher, and viewed themselves as being highly favored of their Creator in sending them such an earnest and zealous well-wisher of souls, to break the bread of life unto them. But there was a certain few, whom, though they appeared to be very willing to have

the doctrines of the Gospel explained to them, yet to have the necessity of inward, practical and experimental religion pressed upon them, and to be warned of the fatal consequences of a neglect thereof, in so warm and pathetic a manner as was customary for the Rev. S. C. Caldwell to do; this to them was very disagreeable; however, it was borne with some degree of quiet until May, 1802, when the late and glorious revival made its first public appearance in Hopewell. The loud cries of penitents, who were convinced of their guilt and danger, pleading for mercy, roused all their slumbering prejudices into wakeful activity. Little else but murmurs and reproaches could now be heard from them. Those loud cries continuing occasionally to be heard, and frequently taking place under warm addresses, their worthy pastor bore equal, if not superior blame, consequently their murmur against both the preacher and the penitents became incessant, accompanied with insidious and bitter opposition. Yet this ill treatment, the reverend and worthy Samuel C. Caldwell bore with much patience for several years; but at length, being grieved at heart with their continued and increasing murmurs, at the close of the year 1806, he withdrew from those sons of strife, left them to enjoy their silent Sabbaths, and betook himself to a more peaceful habitation. This gave rise to the following lines:"

January, 1807.

1. "Seventeen hundred ninety-one  
Fair Hopewell Church quite vacant lay,  
A stated Teacher she had none  
To guide her in the Heavenly way.
2. To God then did she raise her cry  
Our gracious God her prayer heard,  
Nor did her humble suit deny,  
But sent the Teacher she desired.



3. Yea also blessed his labors so,  
While day and night he did us warn  
To fly from everlasting woe,  
That numbers to the Lord did turn.
4. For several years we thus were blest  
While he and we shared mutual joy;  
We hoped our bliss thro' life would last  
Without cessation or alloy.
5. But soon (base wretches) we abused  
The goodness of our gracious God,  
The bliss despised, His grace refused,  
Spurned at the favors He bestowed.
6. And now behold deserved woe,  
Abused bliss must be withdrawn,  
Satan, our most malicious foe  
The seeds of discord soon has sown.
7. Base pride and envy rose in haste  
To urge the fatal crisis on,  
Our beauteous house again lies waste,  
While a kind Teacher we have none.
8. In nature's wilds we now may stray  
Like silly sheep when left alone,  
And Satan make an easy prey,  
Our faithful monitor is gone.
9. In vain we ask in silent walls  
For council how to 'scape the snare;  
In vain for aid the feeble calls,  
There's no kind friend or Shepherd there.
10. No more we hear his pleasant voice  
Proclaim those messages of grace,



Which makes the mourning soul rejoice,  
And fills the comfortless with peace.

11. Adieu, adieu, thou pleasant place,  
Where we were wont to seek our God,  
To hear His word, to pray and praise,  
And feed on bounties bought with blood.
12. A long adieu, thou silent dome,  
In thee no more we find our food,  
For Bread of Life we now may roam  
And on thy gates write 'Ichabod.'
13. Lord it is just we humbly own,  
That we should feel Thy chastening rod,  
Under our heavy guilt we groan,  
Nor can we bear the heavy load.
14. O, thou our condescending God  
To whom or where can we apply,  
Thou art Thyself that living bread  
Without which we must faint and die.
15. Cast us not off we humbly pray  
But keep us near Thy sacred side,  
And that we never from Thee stray,  
Let Thy good spirit be our guide.
16. Tho' for Thy favors most divine,  
Basely unthankful we have been;  
Yet Thou art God, mercy is thine,  
For Thy name-sake forgive our sin.
17. In Thee alone is all our hope  
For present good, and good to come  
To Thee we daily would look up  
And hope in Thee to find our home.

18. Ye humble souls who mourn your loss,  
    Tho' you are deprived of wanted food,  
    He that for sinners bore the Cross  
    Can make it work your future good.
19. Trust ye in Him for all you need,  
    He will your every want supply,  
    Who gave Himself your souls to feed,  
    What real good will He deny.
20. And you whose blinded zeal and pride  
    Despised the plainest Gospel fare,  
    And did those humble souls deride  
    Whose cries for mercy filled the air.
21. Go boast the victory you have won,  
    Silence profound you have obtained.  
    Proclaim the wonders you have done,  
    And glory in your mighty gain.
22. And when your sons no Sabbath keep  
    But spend that day in pleasures vain.  
    Then say, these are the fruits we reap  
    Of the deep silence we did gain.
23. But when upon a dying bed  
    With dread eternity in sight,  
    Dare you trust Him to be your aid  
    Whose service now is your delight?
24. Yea at the final trumpet sound,  
    Dare you defend His gloomy cause?  
    Should you victorious then be found  
    All Hell would sound your loud applause.
25. But sure of this you must despair,  
    Then flee that ancient rebel's cause,

And to His standard quick repair,  
Who rules all nature by His laws.

26. Our own rebellion and submit,  
Bow to His sceptre, plead His grace,  
His grace can all your sins remit,  
And fill you souls with joy and peace."

## CHAPTER II.

Among the early settlers of this particular part of Mecklenberg county, no name is more prominent, or descendants more numerous than the Alexanders. James Alexander was of Scotch-Irish parentage, and lived in Maryland. His first wife was Margaret McKnitt. Their children were, Theophilus, born November 10, 1716; Edith, born January 10, 1718; Keziah, born May 9, 1720; Hezekiah, born January 13, 1722; Ezekiel, born June 17, 1724; Jemima, born January 9th, 1726; Amos, born January 13, 1728; John McKnitt, born June 6, 1733; Margaret, born June 6, 1736.

The children of James and Abigail Alexander (second wife) were, Elizabeth, born November 17, 1746; Abigail, born May 4, 1748; Margaret, born April 30, 1750; Josiah born August 3, 1752; Ezekial, born October 21, 1754.

Of this large and interesting family, all of whom no doubt, were patriots, but one lived in the boundary of which we write—viz: John McKnitt Alexander. His name is so conspicuous in the history of his country, that it is necessary to speak more at length of him and his family than many others of equal virtue, but who did not appear at the front so prominently in the stirring times of the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century. John McKnitt Alexander was born and reared in Pennsylvania, dating his birth in 1733, he was 21 years old when he came to Mecklenburg in 1754. He had learned the tailor's trade while a minor, and followed this avocation for a number of years, taking cattle and hides in exchange for work, which he would carry to Philadelphia to find a market. There he would purchase broadcloth and other fine material to make into suits for the more wealthy class of his customers. He was also a surveyor, and it is more than probable that

he surveyed the greater part of all the lands taken up by the early settlers. The writer remembers an old road, or rather the signs of it left by washing rains, surveyed from Alexandriana (the postoffice and name of his residence) to Mill Grove in Cabarrus county. The roads were made as straight as the nature of the ground would admit. During one of his trips to Pennsylvania, in 1759, he married Jane Bain. He had built a home on what was afterwards known as the Statesville road, nine miles northwest of Charlotte. His house was the general rendezvous for the intelligent and patriotic for many miles in all directions. It was here the patriots were accustomed to meet and consider the condition of the country for months before the political climax was reached. After much deliberate thought these patriotic pioneers agreed to meet in Charlotte as the most central point and give expression to their deliberations, where, on the 20th of May, 1775, the just celebrated Declaration of Independence was promulgated amid the shouts and huzzas of a populace fully prepared to indorse it with their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. Mr. Alexander being the Secretary of the Convention, was the custodian of all the documents and papers, including the ever memorable original draft of the Mecklenburg declaration, which was destroyed by the burning of his house in the year 1800. He was one of the most pronounced and active patriots in the State; not only a member of the Colonial Congress, having in charge the welfare of the public, but as a local officer, looking after the interest of the county—he must have been a very busy man. Notwithstanding so much of his time was occupied with public affairs, he did not fail to exercise a healthful influence in organizing Hopewell church, of which he was a Ruling Elder, and for many years was a pillar in the church. After having faithfully served his country for many years, and attaining a ripe old age, he passed away to receive his reward in the year 1817. He was buried in Hopewell graveyard

by the side of his wife who had preceded him several years. They raised five children, William Bain, Joseph McKnight, Abigail Bain, Jane Bain and Margaret, all of whom raised families.

William Bain Alexander married Violet, a daughter of Major John Davidson. They lived at the old homestead, where they were very prosperous. He owned 6,000 acres of land, had large herds of cattle, horses, sheep and hogs. The pasturage of this time was almost limitless, where the finest of beef and pork was raised almost without cost. Wool was a prime article of produce, occupying a similar place then to what cotton attained after Whitney's invention of the cotton gin. He was a successful farmer and business man. He was Recorder of Deeds for many years, and did as other officers of the time, carry the papers to his home and do the work there—meeting the people at the court house on Saturdays. His handwriting is well known to-day by the county officers, who handle old papers every day. He was an active member of the Hopewell church, and for many years an Elder. He was Postmaster at Alexandria for more than half a century, and for the convenience of his neighbors who lived several miles away, he would carry their mail to church and empty the pouch on a table where it was distributed to the proper owners. At this time comparatively few newspapers were taken, the mail consisting chiefly of letters. The price of letter postage was 25 cents, consequently not many letters were sent through the mails. Envelopes were unknown.

Mr. Alexander and wife were remarkably fortunate in their family. They had fourteen children—seven boys and seven girls—none of whom died until the youngest was twenty-nine years old. But at this writing—1896—all have passed away except one, and she is in her ninety-third year. As they were amongst the leading citizens of the Hopewell section and also of the county, a short notice of



each is given, to bring this historical sketch within the memory of people now living.

Joseph McKnitt Alexander, the oldest of the children, was born in 1792. He built a home one and a half miles east of Hopewell Church, where he operated a farm with success. On this farm he made the brick for Hopewell church—probably the second building that was erected there. The first was built of logs, and was shaded on all sides as to accommodate the large crowds who were in the habit of assembling there during revivals and camp-meetings. He married Nancy Cathey, a daughter of Colonel Cathey, near Beattie's Ford. They had but three children, viz: DeWitt Clinton, John Davidson and Violet. The family moved to Maringo county, Alabama, in the year 1835. Here the children married, all engaged in farming and became very wealthy. John Davidson is the only one now living. Their offsprings are scattered over the South.

Jane Bain Alexander—the eldest daughter—married Captain John Sharp, and moved to Tennessee. They were prosperous, had several children, who were well educated. The family were short lived; and owing to difficulty of traveling and communication at this period we know but little of the family history. A son, William Sharp, was a highly educated physician and accomplished gentleman. He died at an early period. Two sisters, Margaret and Jane, both married men by the name of Hall, raised families of whom we know nothing. Robert Davidson Alexander,

Robert Davidson Alexander, the third child, was born August 9th, 1796. He built a home on the Salisbury road, one mile east of Alexandria, was a successful farmer, a Justice of the peace, and a Member of the County Court for many years; was a devoted Christian, an Elder in Hopewell church, and was frequently a representative in the Church courts. He married Abigail Bain, a daughter of Rev. Samuel C. Caldwell, in 1829. They raised five children, three died in infancy, one, Lottie, an accomplished young woman, passed away at the age of 22,



in 1878. Four are now living, viz: Rev. S. C. Alexander, D. D., pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Monticello, Ark.; Agnes married Dr. W. B. Fewell, and lives near Rock Hill, S. C., where they enjoy the shady side of life surrounded by a large family; Dr. J. Brevard Alexander built an elegant home six miles north of Hopewell, where he operated a farm and practiced medicine for thirty-five years, except four years from '61 to '65 spent in Confederate States Army. In 1858 he married Miss Annie Lowrie, a daughter of Samuel Lowrie, who lived on the Beattie's Ford road, sixteen miles from Charlotte. They raised six children—Robert is on the farm; Samuel died at the age of 19, while preparing for the ministry. The family moved to Charlotte in 1890, that is, James, Dixie and Annie Lowrie; Lucy married J. H. Halliburton and lives in Durham. Mrs. Alexander died February 21, 1893, and was buried at Gilead by the side of her maternal kindred—the Johnston family. She was woman of positive character, and fine mental attainments. She was much esteemed by all her neighbors. His daughter, Dr. Annie Lowrie Alexander, who is now in practice, was amongst the first women physicians of the South, having graduated in Philadelphia in 1884. William Davidson Alexander lives at the old homestead, a successful farmer and influential citizen. He married a daughter of Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey, of Tennessee, and has three sons and one daughter living.

Margaret Davidson Alexander married David Henderson, of Sugar Creek. They have long since passed away. Three sons and one daughter remain. Dr. J. McKnitt Henderson died twenty years ago. Andrew R. Henderson lives in Gaston county, two miles west of Hopewell church, at which place he holds his membership. Dr. William Bain Henderson moved to Alabama many years ago, where he now resides. Jane married E. C. Davidson. She is now a widow, lives fourteen miles northwest of Charlotte, on the Beattie's Ford road; has five children living, with whom she is spending the evening of her day.

J. Harvey Henderson, the youngest of the family, now resides in Charlotte, pleasantly situated with his daughter and three sons.

Sarah Davidson Alexander never married. She spent her life visiting among her large connection, where she was always a welcome guest. She made several visits to her kindred in Alabama and Tennessee, always on horseback. With a pair of saddle-bags and "poke" hung from the horn of her saddle to carry her clothes, she did not hesitate to take a trip of 500 miles. At the period of which I write the only mode of travel was on horseback. She passed away in 1863.

William Bain Alexander built a home on the headwaters of Long Creek, four miles east of Hopewell. He married Theresa Alexander, a daughter of "Blind" Billy Alexander. They were of the same name, but were not related. They died many years ago, leaving three children, who are now living within the bounds of Hopewell, with a numerous posterity. Mrs. Alexander inherited from her father an opthalmic disease which has proved a sore affliction to the fourth generation.

Rebecca married Marshall McCoy and located one mile east of the church. He was a successful farmer, very popular in his neighborhood, entertained lavishly, and was a deacon in Hopewell. They raised a large and interesting family. But three out of nine children have deceased. The eldest son, John F. McCoy, was missing in the battle of Gettysburg, supposed to have been killed. The other members of the family reside within the boundary of which we write. Mr. McCoy was killed by the explosion of blasting powder at a copper mine, near his house, in 1855. Mrs. McCoy is still living, in her ninety-third year; her physical condition is feeble, but her mind is perfectly clear, and she relates incidents of her past life with wonderful correctness. She is cheerful and happy, awaiting her change.

John Ramsey Alexander learned the wagon-making

trade, which he followed for many years, and was also a successful farmer. He married Harriet Henderson, a woman of deep piety, and greatly beloved by her neighbors. They had a beautiful home ten miles north of Charlotte, on the Statesville road. They raised seven children, who were an honor to their parents. The oldest, Amanda, married Rev. W. W. Pharr, D. D., a Presbyterian minister, who was very popular with the people. "Bettie" married Dr. Watson Rankin, of Cabarrus, a fine physician. They raised an interesting family. Nancy moved to Florida and married Capt. Stewart. She is now a widow, in the orange business. Sophia married John Sample and moved to Tennessee, where both deceased without children. Andrew H. married Miss Jennie McLean and moved to Florida. They have two sons and one daughter. Thomas Lafayette began as a clerk in a store in Charlotte in 1852. Married Mary Connon, of Missouri. By close attention to business, he is one of our largest merchants, and possessed of a handsome fortune. His wife died in 1893. Three children survive to cheer him in his declining years. Francis Ramsey, a handsome youth, was captain of a company in the Fifty-sixth Regiment, North Carolina troops. He led his men in many battles for the Confederate cause. On 17th of June, 1864, while leading a charge he was killed, near Petersburg, Va. The old veterans speak of him with profound respect, and say he was the bravest of the brave. His body was brought home and interred in Hopewell graveyard, close by the side of his ancestors, who won imperishable renown nearly a century before in the Revolutionary War. Capt. Frank Alexander was a worthy descendant of such a heroic ancestry. The parents have passed away, and their home is in the hands of strangers.

Elizabeth married Dr. Isaac Wilson, who settled on or near the dividing range that runs north and south, between the Catawba and Rocky rivers, four miles east of Hopewell. He cultivated a farm and did a large

practice, extending over probably one-fourth of the county. He was a member of Hopewell for many years, a very prominent physician, and influential citizen. They had six children. The two youngest—Thomas and Gilbreth, both gave their lives in the cause of the Confederacy. Joseph is a successful farmer near Beattie's Ford. Dr. J. McCamie Wilson has been in constant practice near Davidson College for forty years. James Wilson is a farmer two miles northeast of Hopewell. Isabella, a very bright and intelligent woman, married Andrew Parks, and moved to Statesville, where she recently died. They all reared families and are amongst our best citizens. Mrs. Wilson died of erysipelas during the terrible epidemic in 1845. The doctor passed off in 1886; much esteemed and beloved by his neighbors.

James McKnitt Alexander located and established an excellent farm with all the appurtenances for comfort and a prosperous living, six miles east of Hopewell. He was an excellent farmer and fond of the chase. He kept good horses and a fine pack of hounds, and frequently indulged in fox hunting, but not to the neglect of his farm. Like all of his brothers and sisters, he was a consistent member of Hopewell church. He married Mary Wilson. They raised a family of six children—only three are now living. He died of typhoid fever in 1855. A few years afterwards his widow married Dixon Kerns, a worthy gentleman of the neighborhood; he also proved a good farmer. They raised four children, but one of whom survives. Mr. and Mrs. Kerns now reside in Iredell county, north of Davidson.

Abigail married Henderson Robinson; prepared a home and farm three miles east of Hopewell; had scarcely begun the race of life when they both fell victims to the terrible scourge of erysipelas that visited the Hopewell section in 1845. This epidemic was fearful in its ravages. The people were almost panic stricken. Deaths were so numerous it was difficult to have the dead decently buried.

Isabella married Dr. Calvin Wier. They built a home

on the Statesville road five miles east of Hopewell. Her health was always delicate, and soon succumbed to that dread disease, consumption. After her decease Dr. Wier moved to Mississippi, and in a short time passed to the great beyond. No representative succeeding.

Benj. W. Alexander established a home in sight of the old homestead, six miles east of Hopewell; was a successful farmer and business man for many years a civil officer, member of the county court and colonial of militia. He married Elvira McCoy. They raised four daughters and one son to adult age. The oldest daughter, Jane, married Theophilus Cannon of Cabarrus, and died while young. They left four children. Antoinette married Martin Barringer, and died without issue. Melvina married Rev. Watts. She is now a widow, living with her son in Statesville. Alice, the youngest, married Chalmers Rankin, of Mooresville, where they are happily situated with several children. John McCoy was a brilliant young man, had just finished his junior course in Davidson College, when he was cut off in the bloom of youth. Colonel Alexander and wife continued with us until the clouds of Civil War had passed over, and they quietly and peaceably fell asleep in a full hope of immortal life.

George Washington, the youngest, was married three times, his last wife, Sally Jetton, only left children. They are all living and prove a comfort to an invalid mother. Bain, the oldest son, married Jane Gillespie. They live on the Statesville road near his mother. Joseph and Jetton have not married, and live with their widowed mother, taking care of her. The only daughter—Minnie—married MacCannon, and live in Cabarrus county. Mr. George W. Alexander was an excellent farmer, also a surveyor. Their home is situated on the Tuckesege road, four miles east of Hopeewell. Mr. Alexander passed away several years ago. His widow survivors, an invalid—fortunately well cared for by her sons.

Dr. Joseph McKnitt Alexander, second son of John Mc-



Knitt Alexander, was born ————— 1774. He was surrounded with the best advantages possible in early life. Every advantage was given to acquire an education; he graduated at Princeton; studied medicine and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. Nature was prodigal in bestowing her gifts, his mind was not only quick to perceive, but was logical and well trained. He married Dovy Winslow, a daughter of Moses Winslow, a wealthy and educated gentleman of English parentage. A story of those early days is told that Robert Davidson, a son of Major John Davidson, was a favored suitor for the hand of the fair Miss Dovy; that he was so enamored and worshipped so devoutly at her shrine, he wanted others to know of his good fortune in the prospective, and he invited his friend Dr. Joe to visit her with him; but alas for the course of true love, his friend knocked him out the first round and carried off the prize. Dr. Joe met with a sad affliction in the loss of his estimable wife soon after the birth of their only child, which he called for his wife's father Moses Winslow. He and the little son made their home with his brother, William Bain Alexander, for many years, in fact, until Dr. Winslow was married. Dr. Joe's practice was very extensive, covering a large territory. He had certain points or stopping places for the public to know where he could be intercepted. His life was a laborious one, but he had the satisfaction of doing much good to the suffering. As might be expected, he was a member of Hopewell, and after having spent a long life in the service of his fellowmen, he was quietly gathered to his fathers, in the year 1841, in the 67th year of his age.

Dr. Moses Winslow Alexander, a son of Dr. Jos. McKnitt Alexander was born at Alexandriana, the homestead of his grand father, in 1798, May 3d. His mother having died while he was an infant, he was nursed and cared for by his uncle's family, and was one of the family. After he was grown up and educated he studied medicine, adopting the profession of his father, and practiced with

him. He married Violet, a daughter of General Joseph Graham. They built a home a short distance west of Alexandriana. He engaged very extensively in farming; also owned and operated a farm in Alabama. They had a large family of children, several of whom died before reaching maturity. Graham and Wistar, with Emily and Eliza, passed away in the bloom of youth. Junius, a very popular young man, fell a victim in the first epidemic of dysentery ever experienced in this section, in 1855. This epidemic continued for two years, partially abating in winter. It is estimated that at least 1,000 persons died with this disease in Mecklenburg county during the warm months of '54 and '55. A peculiarity of the disease was, it was much more fatal in the white race than in the colored.

Hamilton LaFayette was a highly educated gentleman, graduated in Princeton, studied law, and volunteered as a private soldier in cavalry service in the Confederate army. He lived but a short time after the termination of hostilities. Dovy married Rev. H. B. Cuninghame, D. D. They lived at Alexandriana, built an elegant house and tilled a small farm. Dr. Cuninghame was pastor of Hopewell from 1844 to 1855. They left no children. Isabella married Dr. W. J. Hays, of Lincoln county, an educated and courteous gentleman. He was an elder in Unity church, an earnest friend and advocate of the truth of religion without ostentation. About 1860 they moved to Mecklenburg, and for a few years resided at the homestead of his wife's father. For the last twenty-five years they have resided in Charlotte. They have but one son living, Junius, who is married and lives in Fort Mills. The doctor and his good wife are still with us, enjoying life, surrounded with hosts of friends.

Sophia and her sister, Mrs. Julia Smith (whose husband died in the service of the Confederacy) live together, in an elegant home on one of the thoroughfares of the city, where they dispense a Christian charity that is appreciated



by all good people. They are very popular with both old and young, as evidenced by the hundreds of friends who visit at their home.

Alice, one of the most estimable ladies of this large connection, married Dr. G. W. Graham, one of the most popular gentleman in the city. He does a lucrative practice in his specialty, as an oculist and aurist. They have an elegant home, where they delight to welcome and entertain their friends.

Captain Sydenham B. Alexander, the youngest son, has been more prominently before the public than any other of the family. He graduated in Chapel Hill, and entered the Confederate army as captain of an infantry company, in which he did good service. After the war he was a successful farmer. He purchased a farm three miles west of Charlotte, where he became noted for raising fine stock, especially horses and cattle. He mingled much with the people and was very popular. He was elected several times to the State Senate, where he contributed greatly to the building of a system of good roads, with which his name will always be associated. He was a pronounced Alliance man, and in favor of all Alliance demands, including the restoration of silver as a money metal. He was twice elected to Congress, serving in the House of Representatives four years. He married a Miss Nicholson from the eastern part of the State. His wife died several years ago, leaving six children. His father, Dr. Winslow Alexander, died in 1845, February 27th, being the first victim of the fearful epidemic of erysipelas that was so fatal in the Hopewell section. His mother survived her husband many years, lived to train her children till all had established characters of virtue and usefulness.

Abigail Bain, daughter of John McKnitt Alexander, married Rev. Samuel C. Caldwell, in the year 1792. They lived for a short time on what is known as the Albert Wilson place, seven miles northwest of Charlotte. Mr. Cald-

well preached at Hopewell and Sugar Creek. Later on he built the brick house one and a half miles northwest of Sugar Creek church. He discontinued his services at Hopewell in the year 1806, a full account of which is given on a former page. They had two children, Thomas and Jane. Soon after, while the children were helpless, their mother was called away. In a few years Mr. Caldwell married Elizabeth Lindsay, of Greensboro. They had seven sons and one daughter.

One of the first wife's children, Dr. D. T. Caldwell, located in Charlotte to practice medicine. He was a good man in every sense of the word, an excellent physician and courteous gentleman, an elder in Sugar Creek. He married Harriet Davidson, daughter of Hon. William Davidson, of Charlotte. They had eight children, but four of whom are now living. Baxter and Alice live together in the old homestead—neither married. Sarah Jane married George Donald and lives in Greensboro. Minnie married John Springs Davidson. They live at the old Davidson homestead near Hopewell. Jane, the only daughter of the first wife married Rev. W. S. Pharr. They lived near Ramah Church, where he preached (also at Mallard Creek) for a half a century. They had but one son, the Rev. S. C. Pharr, D. D., a most eloquent preacher. Mrs. Pharr died of consumption when her son was but a small boy. Rev. W. S. Pharr continued until after the close of the Civil War, when he too passed into rest. Rev. Dr. Pharr married Margaret Springs. She is now a widow living with one of her sons. Of Rev. S. C. Caldwell's second wife's eight children five were preachers of the Gospel, two lawyers and one a merchant. As they did not live in the Hopewell boundary, we pass them by.

Jane Bain, daughter of John McKnitt Alexander, married Rev. James Wallace. He preached at Providence church for many years. They had several children, who moved to Alabama in the early part of the present cen-

tury. Mrs. Wallace when called home was buried in Providence graveyard. Their son James while attending the classical school at Sugar Creek church, taught by Rev. S. C. Caldwell, in 1809, delivered an original speech at the closing of the school, the subject of which was, "The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, May 20, 1775." Many of the audience there assembled had been spectators, and some had been signers of the famous document, when it was promulgated in Charlotte. At this time no one would have thought of denying the truth of the transaction when so many living witnesses of the fact were present. Mr. Caldwell, the teacher, was a ripe scholar, had at this time been in the ministry eighteen years, being surrounded by these witnesses, and coming in almost daily contact with some of the signers, and having married a daughter of the venerable secretary of the convention, it is unreasonable to suppose that he would have sanctioned a speech by his pupil (and nephew) unless he treated his subject fairly and truthfully. The late D. A. Caldwell, a gentleman of fine attainments and much esteemed for his integrity, testified that he was present at the school closing, heard the speech, and that it was approved and endorsed by all present.

Margaret, a daughter of John McKnitt Alexander, married Colonel Alexander Ramsay, of East Tennessee. They lived at the junction of the Holston and French Broad; built an elegant home and lived in affluence. His home and postoffice he named Mecklenburg, in honor of his wife's nativity. They raised four children. His two sons occupied high positions in social and literary life. Dr. James G. M. Ramsay wrote the *Annals of Tennessee*, which is the standard history of the State. The doctor was an ardent Confederate, and for his patriotism he suffered great loss, by the enemy burning his house and a valuable library.

## CHAPTER III.

The Davidson family occupies an important place in history. Robert Davidson, of Pennsylvania, married Isabella Ramsay; they were of Scotch-Irish parentage, raised in the Presbyterian faith. Robert died while quite a young man, soon after the birth of his second child. His widow, with the two children, moved to Rowan county, N. C., in the year 1740. Here she engaged in farming, and contracted a second marriage with Mr. Henry Henry, an educated and polished gentleman, a graduate of Princeton, who was teaching school on the Yadkin, near Salisbury. The two children received their education here; and John also learned the blacksmith trade. In 1760, John, hoping to better his financial condition, having a good and lucrative trade moved to Hopewell neighborhood, bringing his sister Mary with him to keep house for him, located on the east side of the Catawba river, where later in life he built the elegant brick residence, which in still later years was the home of his grandson, A. B. Davidson. This splendid mansion was accidentally burned in 1886, while occupied by John Springs Davidson, a great grandson of the builder, Major John Davidson. Major John Davidson became quite a prominent character in Mecklenburg history during the Revolutionary period, and also afterwards in developing the agricultural and iron industries of the country. He was a signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence; and served in both the State militia and Continental armies. He was promoted to the rank of major. After the war he was prominent as a magistrate, as a farmer, and as a pioneer in starting and developing the iron interest of the country. Ordinary iron was then worth ten cents a pound, and being a master blacksmith, he had a fine op-

portunity to amass a fortune. He married Violet, a daughter of Samuel Wilson, a neighbor who came from the north of Ireland about 1740. Mr. Wilson belonged to the nobility of England. In after years his family was visited by a nephew of General Sir Robert Wilson, but the acquaintanceship was not kept up, as this occurred long before steam was applied to navigation. They had three sons and seven daughters.

Isabella married General Joseph Graham who was present in Charlotte on the 20th of May, 1775, and testified to the truthfulness and validity of the Declaration promulgated on that memorable occasion. He was the first sheriff of Mecklenburg county. When not disabled by wounds, he was constantly in the service of his country till the close of the war. Our common country will ever cherish his memory with a feeling of gratitude for his patriotic devotion to the cause of freedom. The exact spot on the great road leading to Salisbury about four miles from Charlotte is still pointed out where General Graham was shot down and left for dead by Tarlton's command, the evening of the battle when Cornwallis entered Charlotte, September 26, 1780. He was discovered by a young woman while out hunting her cows—"Aunt Susie Alexander." She managed to take him home with her, and dressed his wounds. His military career having been written in the histories of the State, will not be repeated in these sketches. But one of General Graham's large family lived in Hopewell territory—Mrs. Dr. Winslow Alexander, whose family has been already accorded a place in a former chapter. Governor W. A. Graham, though not a resident, was so closely connected with the Hopewell people, that a few words will not be considered out of place. He was among the last who possessed that physical mould of features characteristic of Revolutionary worthies that we see in the portraits of the great men of a hundred years ago. That rugged, stern, inflexibility of character formerly stamped so boldly



in the features of the framers of our Republic, has disappeared, been supplanted by what is called a more refined civilization. Governor Graham was a dignified, courtly gentleman of the old school, and was held in high esteem as a statesman. He filled at different times almost every position of trust—State Legislature, Governor, Secretary of the Navy, United States Senator and Confederate State Senator. During his long political course, not a breath of suspicion was ever whispered against his good name. To pass unscathed through such an ordeal, shows extraordinary integrity and faithfulness in the performance of public duty. His name will ever be cherished with pride by all Carolinians.

Sally Davidson married Rev. Alexander Caldwell, a son of Rev. David Caldwell, D. D., of Guilford, N. C., who exercised a wonderful influence in behalf of the patriot cause, and also of religion and education in North Carolina. Mr. Alexander Caldwell's mother was a daughter of Alexander Craighead, the noted minister who taught the people to resist tyranny, who suffered himself to be driven from Maryland and Pennsylvania for his preaching opposition to kingly tyranny; when he came to Mecklenburg the people heard him gladly, and accepted his political teaching, the same as his religious teaching. A great deal is due the memory of Mr. Craighead, for the lessons of liberty he taught the people, that in a few years developed into the out-spoken Declaration of Independence, that astonished the British no less than it did the people of other colonies, who thought our people hasty, and action premature. Mr. Craighead ceased from his labors in 1762, and was buried in the graveyard of Sugar Creek. Yet the lessons he taught bore fruit to the satisfaction and happiness of our people, and all good people love to honor his name as a benefactor indeed. Rev. Alexander Caldwell was possessed of a mind of great brilliancy, a popular preacher, an earnest worker, he soon finished his course, and passed away while quite a young man. His wife was

left a widow with three children to raise, viz: Patsy, John, and Alexander. Mrs. Caldwell and children returned to her father's where they were cared for and resided until her son Alexander built a home and took her to live with him, where she continued until her course was run. This family were remarkable people, born with that cast and mould of feature that belonged to an earlier and more rugged civilization, they were self-reliant, never shrank from responsibility. Their longevity was remarkable. They reached an average of nearly ninety years. Their mental acumen—inherited from their father—was far above the average; so also was their physical stamina; they scarcely knew what fatigue meant. By nature always polite and courteous, would not offer an insult to any one, but were prompt to resent an indignity from whatever source. Major John H. Caldwell was a man of more than ordinary activity; a successful farmer, a warm advocate of internal improvements, State and county fairs, railroads, etc. He worked large contracts in railroad building. He accumulated a large fortune for the times in which he lived. He married Mary, a daughter of Andrew Springs, who was noted for being an excellent farmer; keeping everything remarkably tidy and clean, as well as making a profit out of all his crops. Mr. Caldwell lived for some time three miles east of Davidson. Here he made the brick for the college and all the college buildings. The price paid for brick delivered was \$3.75 per thousand. He also made the brick for the mint in Charlotte. He was a great reader, especially of history, and had a tenacious memory, rendering him quite an encyclopedia. They left but one child, Mary, who married Dr. J. M. Davidson. They now reside in Charlotte, surrounded with some of their children, grandchildren, and many friends. After the demise of Mrs. Caldwell, the major bought a plantation from Jacky Davidson, known as Long Creek Mills. He resided here for several years operating his farm, but had the most of his slaves working



contracts on the North Carolina Railroad. After disposing of his farm, he moved to Charlotte, where he continued to reside until his physical system became exhausted, and he passed away in the house of his brother D. A. Caldwell in the year 1879.

David Alexander Caldwell bought and cultivated a farm six miles north of Hopewell and five miles east of Cowan's Ford. He was trained on the farm of his uncle, Robert Davidson, as an overseer and general manager. His uncle was a very early riser, and would have his nephew in the fields ready for work with horses and hands, as soon as sufficiently light to see the rows. His uncle taught him to get up soon, but never taught him to love early rising. While building up his farm, Mr. Caldwell would engage in spirited squirrel hunts for a wager—of small amount—a bushel of fruits and candy, or a pot of apple jack. The young men of the neighborhood would get up a "scalp" hunt. Like any other game or contest, they would choose two leaders, or "captains," who would select their respective friends for the hunt. Whichever party got in the most "scalps," enjoyed the treat at the expense of the defeated side. In counting "scalps" certain rules were agreed upon. Thus, a squirrel, a crow, partridge (their bills) were each counted 1. A fox, or deer, was counted 10. A hawk or wild turkey counted 5, etc. After a three weeks hunt the evidences of game taken was so numerous that it was not uncommon to see them brought in three bushel bags for the judges to count. After victory was awarded to the most successful, the entertainment began. Several of these friends were literary gentlemen, and while testing the merits of the punch, would discuss the eminent writers of the day. Others again would indulge in story and song until a late hour before they would disperse for the night.

Mr. Caldwell married the widow of his cousin, Rev. Robert Caldwell, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Statesville. Her maiden name was Mar-

tha Bishop, of Virginia. She was a woman of splendid character. Her mental attainments were of a high order, and her Christian virtues have probably never been excelled. She had a bright and cheerful disposition, scattered sunshine in the pathway of life as naturally as sunbeams fall upon a garden of flowers—all unconscious of the happiness bestowed. She was greatly beloved by all who were fortunate enough to know her in her country home. They reared but two children. Dr. John Edward Caldwell lives at the old homestead, where he is engaged in the practice of medicine and farming. He has never married. Sally received a liberal education, had advantages that few ever enjoy. No better teacher than her mother was to be found, but when grown she went to Edgeworth Seminary, in Greensboro, N. C., where she led her class. She married Dr. Edward White, of Fort Mills, S. C. He entered the Confederate army in 1861, and gave his life for the cause we loved so well. His widow resides in Charlotte, where much of her life has been spent in taking care of her aged parents and uncle, who passed away several years ago. She enjoys an enviable reputation as a teacher, and is much beloved by her pupils. Like her parents, she has a brilliant intellect, and a mind well stored with knowledge; thoroughly conversant with the literature of past ages as well as the present.

David A. Caldwell was probably the best cultured man in the county. He read extensively, but not promiscuously. The Reformation, the Scotch Covenanters, Cromwell's regime, the Puritans and the results of their immigration to America, were themes and subjects with which he was perfectly familiar. In his younger days he was particularly fond of Scott's novels for historical romance, Byron and Burns for poetry. Possessed of a logical mind and retentive memory, he was ever ready to draw whatever he desired from his great store-house, the contents of which had been so carefully prepared during a long life. Religiously he was a devoted Presbyterian, and

a Southern Presbyterian, yet he had a charity as broad as Christian faith, and had convictions so decided that when he had formed an opinion no amount of policy could swerve him from duty as he saw it.

To show his decision of character and devotion to principle, a reminiscence is given. About the 15th of April, 1865, as General Vaughn's cavalry were homeward bound, fourteen of them partook of Mr. Caldwell's hospitality, by spending the night with him, where both men and horses were well cared for—except one of their horses was fed too liberally with corn, which produced founder, leaving the animal unfit for service. The captain of the squad examined Mr. Caldwell's stables and said he would take a certain bay horse, the only buggy horse the family had, and allow Mr. Caldwell to make out the best he could with the sick animal lying in the yard. Mr. Caldwell objected, but offered a certain claybank horse. The captain said: "Mr. Caldwell, we appreciate your hospitality, and am sorry to take your horse, but you know necessity knows no law." Mr. Caldwell answered firmly: "I will kill any man who puts his hand on my horse." The captain dismounted, and with a courteous smile, walked directly up to Mr. Caldwell and said: "Let us have no foolishness; don't you know I have fourteen men, you are all alone, and if you kill one of my men the others would kill you? Surely you would not sacrifice your life for a horse!" With a dignity and courage I never saw surpassed, he turned, and pointing his finger in the captain's face, his eyes flashing with determination to defend his rights, said: "No, not for a horse, but for the principle, I will do it without hesitaiton." The captain said: "Boys, let his horse alone." He was a man of refined manners, courtly, dignified, yet approachable by the humblest human being, with a hospitality that knew no bounds; hence it is no wonder that his country home—Glenwood—(surrounded with all the comforts that wealth and good taste could furnish), was a resort for the educated and refined,

not only for his immediate section, but from other counties and other States. It was always a pleasure to hear Mr. Caldwell talk on any subject, especially poetry, politics, history or religion. He was once a candidate for the Legislature on the Whig ticket, was defeated in the election, but received every vote cast in his precinct. This speaks volumes for ones character at home.

He reached his ninety-third year before his course was run, when, surrounded by many friends, who comforted him in his declining years, he quietly fell asleep, feeling assured that his Savior would keep that which he committed to His care, and that real life was only begun, where his wife had preceded him a short time. What manifestation of wisdom, to prepare in time for a habitation in eternity! Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell were devoted Christians, cheerful and happy.

Patsy Caldwell grew up to maturity in the family of her grandfather, where she lived with her mother until she married Col. John H. (usuall called "Jacky") Davidson, in 1820.

They lived for quite a number of years on Long Creek Mill Farm, eight miles north-west of Charlotte. It is uncertain when the first mill was built, but it was prior to the Revolutionary war. It was built and run by Mr. Long. Col. John H. Davidson bought the property and built the present mill—about 150 yards lower down the creek than the one operated by Mr Long. This was probably in the year 1820. Elections have been held here for almost a century. It was here in a walnut grove the farce of "militia drills" was witnessed for more than half a century before the war of the Confederacy. Three or four times a year these musters were held "according to law." A drum and fife furnished the music; and as to the drilling, it was a laughable burlesque. Scarcely half the men were "equipped" according to law, but were readily excused, if an excuse was offered. This was also one of the places for collecting taxes, and while the sheriff would be taking

in the taxes and giving receipts, the candidates for the various county and State offices would harrangue their fellow citizens on the prominent issues of the day. It was at these public speakings that the mass of the people got their political information. Newspapers were high priced, and but few postoffices, consequently the claims of political rivals had to be made known on the "stump," and in fact the people were fond of this excitement, frequently becoming so warmed up in defence of their chiefs as to engage in fierce personal combats. Whiskey, cider, watermelons and ginger cakes were regarded as essentials on these interesting occasions, and whichever candidate "treated" most liberally was "remembered" most kindly on election day: These happy ways and customs have passed away with the civilization of a former period, and in their place we only have the modern picnic, with whatever that embraces.

Colonel "Jacky" and Mrs. Davidson lived happily here for fifteen years. They raised two children, Alexander and Margaret. They moved to Perry, Maringo county, Alabama, in 1835, where Colonel Davidson became very wealthy, and was an honored member of the society of the "new country," as Alabama was then called. Margaret married a Mr. Pitts, a gentleman of fine attainments. They reared an excellent family. Henry and Alex Pitts are now leading representatives of the bar of Alabama. Alexander Davidson was a fine scholar, a very successful farmer, and served several terms in the United States Congress. Mrs. Patsy Caldwell Davidson was possessed of a strong mind, and probably not behind her two brothers in intellectual capacity or mental attainments. It is a great blessing to have had such an ancestry.

Elizabeth Davidson—called "Betsy"—married William L. Davidson, a son of Gen. Wm. Lee Davidson, who was killed February 1, 1781, at Cowan's Ford, while resisting



Cornwallis as he crossed the Catawba river.\* Mr. Davidson and wife lived three miles east of Davidson College. Here he operated very successfully a large farm, raising everything that would thrive in our climate. He experimented with silk culture—planted an orchard of *Mulberry*, a species of the mulberry, to feed the silk worms. He also built houses especially for the worms to work in—to spin the cocoons. He succeeded admirably in raising the silk, but the price paid for the raw material was so small, it would not justify the labor and expense attached to the industry. There was quite a silk fever passed over the country about this time, (1844), but only a few persons went to much expense in trying the experiment. It only lasted a year or two until every one abandoned the idea of silk farming. One or two elegant gowns and a few pairs of fine stockings were all that survived of this attempt to make silk culture a part of our industries. Mr. Davidson donated the lands for Davidson College, and was one of its chief supporters; did a great deal to get it under way. The college was named in honor of his father, Gen. Davidson. He was a man of fine physical proportions, and also of mental attainment, wielding great influence in the upper section of the county. It was his custom to entertain the senior class after their final examination, by having them to dine with him—not forgetting to have a number of ladies grace the occasion. This oasis in student life was ever looked forward to with anticipated pleasure. After spending the best years of his life in the home of his youth, surrounded with the friends of his early manhood, and done much for the cause of education, his beloved wife having been called home, he moved to Alabama, and engaged in farming on a larger

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\* George Davidson came from Pennsylvania—date unknown—probably about 1740. He married Polly Brevard, a daughter of John Brevard, and was a sister of Adam and Dr. Ephraim Brevard. Gen. Wm. Lee Davidson was a son of this marriage.

scale. During his life he did much for his friends. He gave a home to his nephew, John Caldwell, at the age of nine years, and provided for him till he reached his majority. Mr. Davidson died about the close of the Civil War, leaving a good name that will be honored by all who were fortunate enough to have known him. Mr. Davidson did not live within the boundary of which we write, but having married a daughter of Major Davidson, and having associated with the Hopewell people, and exercised a good influence there by his great force of character, we deemed it proper to give this short sketch as due him, and also due his wife's kindred. He had no offspring to perpetuate his name.

Rebecca, daughter of Major John Davidson, married Captain Alexander Brevard, of Lincoln county, (Captain A. Brevard was the son of John Brevard, who was born in 1730, and died 1790; buried in Centre graveyard. These dates were copied from the tombstone by Colonel William Lee Davidson, April, 1896. Ford's sketches states that the widow Brevard had seven sons in the patriot army, and for this crime the British burned her house and destroyed her property. The discrepancy is only as to dates). He certainly came of a patriotic family, and was himself engaged in nine decisive battles. After the war Captain Brevard eschewed public life, and quietly settled down to farming and operating a furnace for iron works, castings, etc. They raised five sons and three daughters, viz: Ephraim Joseph, Robert, Franklin, Theodore, Mary, Harriet, Elluisa. None of this family—children of Rebecca Davidson—ever resided in Hopewell territory, and we will only say this was a family of more than ordinary standing in the community, well educated, and were held in high esteem for their integrity, and forwardness in developing the resources of the country. The captain his wife and all the children have passed away, but their posterity does honor to the Revolutionary stock from which they sprung. Dr. R. J. Brevard, and Hon. Frank-



lin Brevard McDowell, are worthy representatives of the family, now reside in Charlotte.

Mary, (known as Polly), daughter of Major John Davidson, married Dr. William McLean, surgeon in the Continental army. They raised a large family, were well educated. Two of the sons were eminent physicians, viz: John and William. Rebecca was the only one of the family who lived in the Hopewell boundary. She married Dr. Isaac Wilson, and lived four miles east of the church. She died childless. Dr. William B. McLean lived in Lincoln county, eight miles west of the church. He did a large practice in the territory of which we write. He raised a most interesting family. His son, Dr. Robert McLean resides at his father's homestead, a mile or two west of Cowan's Ford. 'Aunt Polly McLean,' as the kindred called her, lived many years after her husband's decease. Inheriting longevity from her paternal ancestors, she attained to a great age. Her home was in Gaston county. The McLeans were noted as handsome men, as well as for their sterling integrity. Dr. William B. McLean was remarkably handsome, (and without vanity), an elder in Unity church, and greatly beloved by his friends and associates. We may give some reminiscences of Speight McLean's gallantry when sketching the Latta family.

Violet Davidson married William Bain Alexander, an account of whose family has already been given in a former chapter.

Margaret Davidson married Major James Harris, and moved to Alabama.

Robert Davidson, son of Major John Davidson, founded a home, worthy of the name, one mile west of his father's elegant mansion. He married Peggie, a daughter of Adlai Osborne, from Centre congregation in south Iredell. The Osborne family was noted for patriotism, intelligence, and unswerving integrity. Mr. Davidson and wife had no children, but they acted the part of parents in

raising several orphan boys; amongst those they were permitted to raise was Mrs. Davidson's nephew, James W. Osborne, a grandson of Adlai Osborne, of Revolutionary fame. The Hon. James W. Osborne was qualified by his attainments in literature and in legal lore, to have filled any position within the gift of the American people, with credit to the country and honor to himself. As a Superior Court judge, he had no superior, and as an advocate, was without a peer. His eloquence was so appreciated and admired that he was called the Demos-thenese of Western Carolina. The writer has heard him often before a jury, where by his pathos as well as his argument, a jury seldom failed to render a verdict in favor of his client. His speeches in ecclesiastical courts (he was an elder in the Presbyterian church) were always of a high order, being perfectly familiar with church codes, he wielded a wonderful influence. This high order of intellect that was so marked in Judge Osborne's progenitors has not been lost, but is continued with unabated intensity in his two sons, Hon. F. I. Osborne, Attorney General for the State, and the brilliant successor to his father's name, James W. Osborne, of New York. Mr. Davidson was a large farmer; owned several thousand acres of the most productive land bordering on the Catawba river; and was probably the largest slave owner in the county. He was a very humane master, and his servants were devoted to him. He and his wife, "Aunt Peggy," as every one called her, lived to a ripe old age, and were buried in the family plot marked out and occupied by his father, Major John Davidson, close by the family mansion. Mrs. Davidson was known far and near for her "goodness." She was "full of the milk of human kindness," and she was never heard to speak ill or disparagingly of a living soul. Surely her joys of bliss were blooming before she passed through the gates.

## CHAPTER IV.

John Davidson, (commonly called Jacky), son of Major John Davidson, married Sally Brevard, a daughter of Adam Brevard, a brother of Ephraim, the author of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. They lived near the old homestead, four miles northwest of Hopewell church. They raised a large family, an account of those who remained in our territory is given. Adam Brevard Davidson, the oldest son, married Mary Springs, daughter of Jack Springs, a wealthy planter of South Carolina. They resided at the old Davidson mansion, where they had born to them sixteen children; several of whom are now deceased. Three of the boys, John Springs, Robert and Richard, were in the Confederate army, and were noted for their bravery. Mr. Davidson was a successful farmer, liberal spirited, and accumulated a very large estate—worth probably half million dollars. He invested heavily in Confederate bonds, railroad stocks, etc., all of which melted away with the result of the war, reducing his estate to less than one-fourth of what it was in 1860. Soon after the war he moved to Charlotte, where he continued to reside, until July 4, 1896, he was called away—being like a shock of corn fully ripe, much esteemed and beloved. He was in his eighty-ninth year, and was buried in the Davidson burial yard, near Rural Hill, with his ancestors. Mr. Davidson was an elder in Hopewell church, a strong advocate of agricultural fairs, and inaugurating whatever was for the best interest of the State.

Dr. Matthews Davidson married a Miss Sylvester, and moved to Florida. He was a man of deep piety, and did not hesitate to lead in acts of worship. The inclination to such a pious and godly life was inherited from his

mother, who made the Bible a daily study for many years. She was deeply impressed with the idea that God would gather all the Jews back to Jerusalem, and their Kingdom be re-established.

Dr. William S. M. Davidson lived, at what was known as the Samuel Wilson place, three miles northwest of Hopewell. He married Jane Torrance, daughter of James Torrence. She lived but a short time, leaving one son, James Torrance Davidson, who died while a young man. Dr. Davidson married the second time a Miss Reed, of Alabama. She lived but a few years and died without issue. He then married Mary Johnston, of Lincoln county. Dr. Davidson did a large practice, his territory extending from Long Creek to the Iredell county line. After a busy and useful life he passed away in 18—, and was laid to rest in Hopewell burial ground. His widow survived him until the winter of '96, when she was laid to rest.

Constantine Davidson, the youngest son, studied law, and located in Charlotte; but when war was declared against Mexico in 1846, he promptly volunteered, raised a cavalry company and served through the war. He now abandoned the law and engaged in farming, near the old homestead. He married Jane Henderson, a most amiable and Christian woman. They raised three sons and two daughters. Mr. Davidson was accidentally drowned in the Catawba, in 1892, in his seventy-fourth year. His widow and son Egbert continue to reside on the farm, fourteen miles from Charlotte, on the Beattie's Ford road.

Isabella Davidson married Warren Moore, a most excellent Christian gentleman, and elder in Unity church, in Lincoln county. They raised an interesting family; none of whom lived in Hopewell boundary.

Mary Davidson married a Mr. Doby, and moved to Alabama.

Jacky Davidson, the father of this family, sustained a severe injury when a young man, by a tree falling on him.

breaking his skull in a shocking manner. In an unconscious condition, his brains oozing out, his nephew, Dr. John McLean, just returned from the University of Pennsylvania, was summoned to operate on what appeared to be a dying man. The operation was a success. Whether a silver plate was introduced in place of skull removed or not, it is a fact that through a long life he was called "Silver-head Jacky." A most unseemly gully or trench across his head never failed to attract the attention of children and strangers. It is probable Mr. Davidson had the most stentorian voice of any man in the State. He could call any of his servants by name two miles distant, and give a message, which would be promptly heeded. He was a man of great energy, and made a success of whatever he undertook. After a long and peaceful life he was laid to rest by the side of his wife who preceeded him several years, in the family burial ground. The passing away of these patriarchs appears like setting a centennial mile post to mark specific eras in our civilization. With their decease many of the old customs that were common in their day cease to exist, and unless recorded in biographical sketches, will never be known in the future.

Benjamin Wilson Davidson, youngest son of Major John Davidson, was born May 20, 1787. In honor of the famous Declaration of Independence, of which Major Davidson was a signer, he always called his son Independent Ben; his birth occuring on the twelfth anniversary of the great event. He married Betsy Latta, a daughter of James Latta, who lived two miles west of Hopewell church; an account of which family will be given later on. Mr. Davidson and wife established an elegant home four miles northeast of the church, and had for neighbors Rev. John Williamson, James Torrance, Thomas Kerns, etc., making a most excellent neighborhood. They raised six sons, viz: Robert Franklin, John Ramsay, James Latta, William Lee, Joseph Malcolm, Benjamin Howard.

Robert Franklin was born 1819. He located in



Charlotte when quite a young man, and engaged in merchandising. He married Elizabeth B. McCombs. They raised five children, viz: Benjamin Wilson Davidson, died March 15, 1890. Samuel McCombs Davidson, a highly educated gentleman, now engaged teaching school in Charlotte. Alice Brandon married Richard Moore, a merchant in the city. Mary Virginia, at home with her father. Like a dutiful daughter taking care of him in the evening of his life. Fannie Bright, married Mr. Newsom, of Crescent City, Fla. Mrs. Davidson passed away many years ago, much esteemed and beloved. Mr. Davidson continues, but in very feeble health. He has been a man of great energy, and has done much to advance the interests of the city. He was Mayor from 1861 to 1865.

John Ramsay Davidson, son of Benjamin Wilson Davidson, was born August 2, 1821. He married Eugenia Mecaughnehey, of Rowan county. They lived at the homestead of his father. They raised three children, viz: Annie Augusta, single, and takes care of her father who is in the decline of life. Joseph Wilson Davidson moved to Alabama after the close of the war, where he married and has an interesting family. Angerona Davidson married Mr. Kendall, of Wadesboro.

This was indeed a lovely family. Mr. Davidson was an elder in Hopewell, and all his family were members. The family is now scattered, and the elegant homestead has passed into hands not connected with the Davidsons, although good people and strong Presbyterians. This is a world of change.

James Latta Davidson was a man of powerful physique, kind, courteous, and the very soul of honor. He married Miss Sarah Springs, and settled south of Charlotte. He died when quite a young man, without children. His widow married Zenas Grier, and was soon a widow the second time. She now resides in Charlotte.

William Lee Davidson, son of Ben. Wilson Davidson, was born February 10, 1825. He was a man of striking



appearance, handsome as Apollo, of fine address and elegant manners. He graduated at Davidson College in 1842, and located in Charlotte, preparatory to the practice of law. In 1846 when war was declared against Mexico, he volunteered and went to the front with that patriotic ardor inherited from Revolutionary ancestors, but the tropical climate was too debilitating even for so strong a constitution as he possessed, and forced him to return several months before the war closed. It was several years before his health was permanently restored. When the war between the States began in 1861, he raised a company, with his brother, B. H. Davidson, as lieutenant, was assigned with the Seventh North Carolina Regiment, enlisted for the war.\* Captain Davidson fully understood the situation, and acted the part of a brave soldier to the termination of the war. For the fighting qualities of his regiment, it was known as the 'bloody Seventh.' As field officers were killed or disabled Captain Davidson was promoted to major, lieutenant colonel and colonel; which last position he held at the close of the war. He was taken prisoner in '64, and sent to Fort Delaware, Point Lookout. While there he was drafted with fifty other Confederate officers and sent to Morris' Island, in Charleston harbor, and placed under fire of Confederate guns. This diabolical act of the Federal Government was so outrageously offensive to ordinary civilization, that the English Consul forbade the execution of such a fiendish order. After the war Colonel Davidson married Annie Irvin Pagan, of South Carolina. Her great grandfather was killed at Fishing Creek, near Chester, S. C., during the Revolutionary war. They had seven children,

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\* Capt. Wm. Lee Davidson's company was equipped for service by the liberality of his brother, Robt. F. Davidson. The blood of patriots always shows up at the front. Mr. Davidson was too infirm to go in person, but promptly furnished the sinews of war for those who were physically able for active service.

viz: James Latta Davidson, Mary Pagan Davidson, Zeb. Vance Davidson, Bessie Irvin Davidson, Annie Lee, Lelia Faysoux, William Lee Davidson, Jr. Mrs. Davidson died in Lincolnton. Since her decease the family has moved to Chester, S. C., where they continue to reside.

Dr. Joseph Malcom Davidson, son of Ben. Wilson Davidson, after graduating at Davidson College, studied medicine, and located in Charlotte. He married Mary daughter of Major J. H. Caldwell. She possessed a brilliant intellect, highly accomplished, and very pretty; she had many suitors and admirers among the elite of the fashionable circles, and was the reigning belle of Washington City for a longer period than has been accorded to any other lady. Her father being wealthy and fond of literature, she had every opportunity to improve her mind by travel as well as books. She made acquaintances in many places of fashion and elegance. They have reared a remarkably pleasant family of children, viz: Bessie married Dr. Bradfield, John Caldwell, Harry Wilmer, Josephine, and Lelia Maud. Without saying anything disparaging to others, this is the most handsome and intellectual family the writer has ever been acquainted with. Dr. Davidson and wife have much to be grateful for in such an excellent family of children to bless and comfort them in old age.

Benjamin Howard Davidson was the youngest son of Ben Wilson Davidson. When quite a small boy—after the decease of his father, and the marriage of his mother to Major Rufus Reid—he was taken by his Uncle Robert Davidson, and raised as if he had been his own son. He was given a classical education, and entered the mercantile line of business with his brother Robert in Charlotte. He married a northern woman. At the breaking out of the war Mr. Davidson joined with his brother, William Lee Davidson in raising a company, and was a lieutenant in the company. No braver soldier ever followed the Confederate flag, or one more devoted

to the cause we held so dear. Lieutenant B. H. Davidson was killed in the battle of Sharpsburg, September 17, 1862. It is an undisputed fact that the descendants of Revolutionary sires were the best soldiers in the Confederate army. So far as known not one proved untrue to the cause of the South. This appears still more strange when we admit the fact that four hundred and fifty thousand men from the South entered the Northern army. These were chiefly lineal descendants of Tories or foreigners who came to this country after the struggle for independence was ended.

Benjamin Wilson Davidson, the patriarchal head of this division of the Davidson family, must have been a remarkably handsome man, and of more than ordinary brain power—if allowed to judge from his posterity. Mr. Davidson died in 1829, being only 42 years old. His widow married Maj. Rufus Reid, of Mt. Mourn, by whom she had one daughter, who married Richard A. Torrance.

Isabella Ramsay, who married Robert Davidson, and after the death of her husband moved to Rowan county, N. C., and there married Henry Henry. She who was the maternal ancestor of all the great Davidson family, raised several children by her second marriage, all of whom moved West except one daughter who accompanied her mother, after the decease of Mr. Henry, to Maj. John Davidson's, her son. Here Mrs. Henry remained the balance of her days and was buried in Baker's grave yard. Here the Henry daughter, half sister to Maj. John Davidson, married — — Little. They had a son called Henry Little. He was a millwright, built screw presses for packing cotton, lived in Lincoln county, where the name of Little is proverbial for the number who bear the name.

## CHAPTER V.

As has been observed in a previous chapter, Robert Davidson, while living in Pennsylvania, had two children, viz: John and Mary. After reaching his majority, John and his sister left their mother in Rowan county, she having formed a second marriage, as already stated, and come to the western part of Mecklenburg. Some time after John married Violet Wilson. Mary married James Price. They lived near Baker's graveyard. But little more than a genealogy can be given of this interesting family. They had three sons and one daughter, viz: John Davidson Price Thomas Price, William Price and Rachel Price.

J. D. Price married Jane Beatty. They had five children, viz: Rachel, married Ezekiel Alexander; Margaret, married Ephraim Alexander; Mary, married John Potts; Jane, married John Whitley, and Kisziah, married George Little.

Tom Price, son of James and Mary Price, married Mary Duckworth. They lived fifteen miles northwest of Charlotte, on the Beattie's Ford road. William Price moved to Tennessee. Rachel Price married John Bell. This family is probably of more prominence than some others, and will be given a more extended historical sketch. They lived eight miles north of Hopewell Church, and four miles east of Cowan's Ford, on the Catawba river. Mr. Bell was a skilled blacksmith, and a high-toned Christian gentleman. His wife, Rachel, was all that a good husband could desire. They had a number of children, but one boy, John Bell, Jr., married Melissa Alexander, and they raised one son and two daughters. Polly, Jennie and Sally never married, but spent useful lives and were greatly beloved for their good works. To nurse the sick and wait on the suffering was their peculiar calling. Mar-

tha married James Goodman, a good, Christian man. They raised four sons and three daughters. Rachel Bell married Alexander Gibson, a good, Christian man.

The descendants of Jas. Price and Mary Davidson were amongst our best people, noted for Christian integrity and charitable deeds. The son of Lamira Bell, who married David Fiddler, occupies the old homestead.

Jane Price, daughter of John Davidson Price, married John Whitley. They raised two sons, viz: Decater and Robert Davidson Whitley. The husband and father died before the youngest son, Robert D. Whitley, was born. Robert Davidson, an uncle of Mrs. Whitley, took her and the children and contributed much to supporting the widow and orphans. The family moved to Alabama, and after several years Mrs. Whitley and her son, Robert D., returned to North Carolina. Mr. R. D. Whitley purchased the Long Creek mill farm and married Esther McCoy, daughter of Marshal McCoy, and built up a delightful home. After the close of the war his wife became an invalid, and lived but a few years. She was a finely educated lady, and was much beloved by her neighbors. Mr. Whitley acted wisely in selecting a second wife, to marry Martha McCoy, a sister of his first wife. She proved a mother indeed to her sister's children. They are now past the meridian, but enjoy life, surrounded by a happy family of children and a host of friends.

## CHAPTER VI.

## BARRY FAMILY.

Richard Barry was born in Pennsylvania, in 1726. His father came from the north of Ireland, where patriotism and Presbyterianism were synonymous terms. Richard married Ann Price, of Maryland, and moved to Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, many years prior to the war of the Revolution. He settled near McDowell Creek, where it crosses the Beattie's Ford road, thirteen miles from Charlotte. Mr. Barry was a man of mark in this section of the country. He was one of that brave number who signed the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775, pledging their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to defend the country against British tyranny. He fought bravely in the battle of Cowan's Ford, February 1st, 1781. When night came on he and David Wilson took the body of General Davidson, who had been killed in the battle, off the field and prepared it for burial, which was done the same night in the Hopewell graveyard. At this period Mr. Barry was fifty-five years old. He was an elder in Hopewell Church, and was a member of the County Court. The first Presbyterian sermon ever preached in all this section was beneath a shade tree by the side of his house. It cannot be positively stated who this preacher was, but it is more than probable that it was Rev. John Thompson. We have no means of knowing whence he came, or what his special purpose was in locating in this place, but we are fully persuaded that he lived about five miles towards Beattie's Ford from Barry's house; that his daughter married John Baker, for whom Baker's graveyard was called. More will be said on this subject under the heading of "Baker's Graveyard." Richard Barry reared seven children, viz: Richard, Jr., Andrew, Hugh, Violet, Jane, Nellie and Ann.



Richard Barry, Jr., married Margaret McDowell. Andrew Barry married, his first wife, Larissa Sample. His second wife was Ruth Byers. Their children were Andrew Jr., Polly and Nancy. These three never married. Ann married William Grier. They left one child, viz: Mary Ann Grier. She married W. A. Gillespie. Dovey married John Sloan. They left several children. Hugh, John and Ann never married. Nellie married Barney Torrance. Violet married William Monteith. They lived four miles east of Hopewell, where they raised a family of three children—all members of Hopewell Church. Lee Monteith was an elder, and noted for his piety and church work. He died in 1854. Richard Monteith, like his brother Lee, never married. He was an excellent farmer, a clever gentleman, and popular with his neighbors. He died in 1861. Sophina Monteith married Andrew Alexander, and lived at the old Monteith homestead. They had three sons and two daughters; both girls died while young. The sons, Abner, Richard and Charles, are living, married and have families of children.

The Barrys and Monteiths were worthy descendants of a noble ancestry. But not superior to the union of the Harrys and Samples with the same house of Barrys. Ann, daughter of Richard Barry, Jr., married Col. David Harry, an elder in Hopewell. They lived one mile south of the church. They raised several children, viz: John F. Harry married Rebecca Price, an estimable lady. They raised an excellent family—full of energy and good habits. Batt Harry another son, lost a leg in the cause of the South; he also raised a nice family who are active members of the church. Margaret Harry married James Henderson, an elder, and most excellent man.

Ellenor Barry married Batt Irwin, of Sugar Creek, quite a prominent and useful man.

Jane Barry married W. A. Sample; they lived two miles south-west of the church. They raised an interesting and

worthy family of four sons and two daughters. The sons John, McCamie, Hugh and David, were all members of Hopewell, were soldiers in the Confederate army, and proved worthy descendants of their Revolutionary ancestors who were noted for bravery and constancy in the long struggle for freedom from British tyranny. Martha Sample, the oldest daughter, was a beautiful young lady, highly educated and accomplished, fell a victim to consumption just as she had entered womanhood. A younger sister married Samuel McElroy. They lived in sight of the church, blessed with an interesting family of children now grown up into men and women, members of Hopewell church.

Mr. W. A. Sample was a ruling elder and active member of Hopewell for many years. He and his good wife passed away many years ago, and their place is filled by their children and grand children.

William Sample came from the north of Ireland, probably in company with the Alexanders who settled in Maryland. He located in Sugar Creek neighborhood in 1760. He married Elizabeth Alexander, a half-sister of John McKnitt Alexander. Late in life he moved near to Hopewell church. They had a son and daughter, who resided and raised families in the boundary of which we write.

The son, James Sample, like his father, was an elder in the church, a pious man held in much esteem by the congregation. He married Martha Robinson, of Sugar Creek. Their children were W. A. Sample, an elder of the church who married Jane Barry, daughter of Richard Barry, Jr.

Milas Sample, a godly man and earnest worker in the church, married Adaline Henderson. They lived three miles east of Hopewell, where they raised an excellent family of children. The oldest daughter, Elizabeth, married John Houston, a ruling elder; Harriet married A. J. Hunter, an elder in the A. R. P. church,

Huntersville. Mary married C. N. Blythe, a member of Hopewell. Martha married C. W. McCoy. They built a home two miles east of Hopewell, where they raised an interesting family. Agnes married Marion Ranson, an excellent citizen and elder in A. R. P., Huntersville. They have an interesting family growing up. The three sons were J. Wilson Sample, the oldest, killed May 3, 1863, in the battle of Chancellorsville.

Leroy, the second son, killed in the battle of Ox Hill, August 30th, 1862.

Augustus E. Sample went through the war, practiced dentistry a few years, and entered the ministry, and is accomplishing much good in the Master's service. These three sons were brave soldiers, and their memories should be kept green that others in the future may emulate their patriotic course.

John, the youngest son of James Sample, was one of the first graduates of Davidson College. He moved west and taught school for many years. Late in life he married Sophia Alexander, daughter of John R. Alexander. They located in Memphis, Tenn. They lived but a short time.

Elam Sample married Margaret McKee.

Mary Terissa Sample married Franklin Barnett, of Sugar Creek, in which church he was an elder.

Caroline Sample married Robert Henderson. They lived southwest of Long Creek mill, and were good people, raised a family worthy of their parentage. All members of Hopewell. Mr. Henderson was a ruling elder for many years. This family appear to have been natural mechanics. Without having served an apprenticeship, they were experts with tools in wood, iron or brass. Dr. John Henderson, after practicing medicine a few years, studied dentistry, and made all of his dental instruments, and they were as finely polished as if they had been manufactured by machinery in New England.

## CHAPTER VII.

## BAKER'S GRAVEYARD.

Objects and places, as well as men and women, deserve historical mention as facts connected with the march of civilization. To a certain extent objects and places serve as mile posts in the life of a nation; and of all objects or places none are more interesting or instructive to a searcher after the truth of history than burial grounds.

Baker's graveyard's first occupant was in 1753, twelve years prior to the building of Hopewell church. This burial ground is seven miles northwest of Hopewell, on the west side of Beattie's Ford road, and two miles east of Catawba river. The Rev. John Thompson, a Presbyterian minister, and probably the first missionary in this section of the State, ceased from his labors in September, 1753, and was buried near his cabin in which he had lived. John Baker, who lived near by, married a daughter of Rev. Thompson, and in a few years died, and was buried by the side of his father-in-law; hence the name of Baker was given the place. Hugh Lawson, grandfather of Hon. Hugh Lawson White, was given sepulchre in this quiet place. Many worthy characters, soldiers and godly church members found a last resting place here. Among many others, we mention Mrs. Isabella Henry, mother of Major John Davidson, Mr. James Price and his wife, Mary Davidson Price. Quite a number of crude rock shafts, all grown over with moss, stand as sentinels in this lonely place, overshadowed by giant oaks that have stood the storms of a century and a half. The celebrated Dr. Charles Harris, father of Charles I. and Wm. Shakespeare Harris, married a daughter of Rev. John Thompson. Dr. Harris

did a large practice in Mecklenburg, especially in surgery. He lived in Cabarrus county, but having married in Hopewell territory, we deem it right and just to couple his name with those who achieved fame for themselves and left a legacy of imperishable beneficence to the people of our common country.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### ANDREW MOORE'S FAMILY.

Jane—or as she was always called, Jencie—was the only daughter of William and Elizabeth Sample. She married Andrew Moore. They lived five and a half miles east of Hopewell, on the Salisbury road from Tucasege Ford. Mr. Moore, while a member of the Presbyterian church, held Armenian doctrine, and made himself obnoxious by talking it; until he was refused a token that would admit him to the Lord's table. This act on the part of the session provoked him to carry his ideas still further, and he set about at once to organize a Methodist church. It is quite probable this church—Bethesda—if not the first, was amongst the first Methodist churches planted between the Yadkin and Catawba rivers. When the building was first put up (about 1820-25), they did not call it a church, but a meeting house, where they held class meeting, or society meeting. Their exhorters and class leaders, with many of their preachers, at that time, were extremely ignorant, some not able to read; yet they would deliver exhortations portraying the awful doom of the impenitent with such warmth, and pray so loud and



in such earnest tones that a wild scene of shouts and cries—exercising, as it was called—that they would become so enthused as to forget all else for days at a time. Mr. Moore was class leader for many years, and ruled the church with autocratic authority. The wearing of jewelry, fine clothes or a veil, was sufficient offense to justify suspension. But for these trivial offenses the circuit rider generally restored them to full membership. As long as Mr. Moore lived he was regarded as the leader of Bethesda church. He died in 1843, and was buried by the church he loved so well. Mr. Moore was better known as a chair-maker than as a builder or propagator of Methodism. There is scarcely a family of the old stock of people but what have chairs made by Andy Moore fifty or sixty years ago.

Mr. and Mrs. Moore raised six children, two sons and four daughters—Amzi, the oldest son, taught school for a short time and moved to Alabama where he married and reared a family, and his children are among the educated people of that State. Two of them are professors in colleges. Fletcher Moore, the youngest, has always been physically weak, but has attained a ripe old age, and is in easy circumstances. He married a neighbor girl, Minta Christianbury; have no children. Malissa Moore married James Clark, a steam doctor, and moved to Alabama. Emaline Moore married Harvy Montgomery, a local Methodist preacher, and a most excellent man. They moved to Alabama. Margaret Moore married Daniel Christianbury and moved to Georgia. Eliza and her mother with the married members of the family, moved west, when that country was settling up, hoping to improve their financial condition. This was an excellent family of people, without pretention to anything more than they could attain.

As “tokens” were spoken of in the early part of this chapter, it is probably well to explain what was meant by “tokens.” Until within the last forty or



fifty years Presbyterians had long tables, covered with a white linen cloth, on or at which the Lord's supper was dispensed. Preaching began two or three days before Communion Sabbath, and on Friday or Saturday every communicant was expected to ask one of the elders for a token—a small piece of lead or other metal about the size of a silver half dime—and when the communicants were seated at the table the elders would pass along and collect the "tokens." The object of this ceremony was to protect the Holy Sacrament from the approach of unworthy persons. This has long since passed away, and the tables are also forgotten, and the whole membership partake at one time, simulating a family at home.

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## CHAPTER IX.

James Latta came from Ireland 1790. He located between Hopewell and the river. He built the house now occupied by David Sample (a shingle roof on this house lasted eighty-two years). In 1795 he married his second wife, Jane Knox. They had three daughters, viz: Betsy, Polly and Nancy. They were very popular, and must have been very pretty, if we are to judge from the number of young men who paid them such devoted attention. Speight McLean and his cousin, Joe McK. Alexander, were boon companions, and frequently went "courting" together. Late one rainy evening they drove up to Mr. Latta's to spend the night. Mr. Latta conjured up the idea that the two gay Lotharios were preparing to run away with his girls, and not fancying either one of them for a son-in-law, took

time by the fore-top and locked their carriage wheels to a tree, and to be doubly sure, securely locked his guests in their bed room. To put it mildly, Mr. Latta was "cranky" on the subject of watching the boys when they came to see his girls. He disliked Speight McLean above all others who visited his house, and Speight particularly enjoyed worrying the old man. On one occasion Mr. Latta came in from his fields and as he entered the house he was astonished to see Polly dressed up entertaining Mr. McLean. He became very angry, and with the command of a tyrant ordered Polly to take off her shoes and stockings, get a hoe and go and dig potatoes for dinner. She was very much confused, but had to obey. Speight, with his accustomed gallantry, suggested in the best of humor and style, "I will go with you and do the digging and you can gather them into the basket." The old man was exceedingly mad, but the young couple enjoyed his discomforture. Elizabeth—or Betsy—married Benjamin Wilson Davidson, a full account of whose family has already been given on a former page. Mary married James Torrance. She was his second wife. They had two children, viz: Dr. William Torrance, never married, died while a young man; Jane Torrance married Dr. W. S. M. Davidson. They lived on the Billy Wilson place. They had but one son, who survived his father but a short time, his mother having died while he was an infant. Nancy married Major Rufus Reid, of Mount Mourn, Iredell county. Mr. Latta died in 1837. His wife survived him several years. The entire family of that generation has been gathered beyond the river. The "tact" of gathering riches seems to have been inherited in the Latta family, but not to hoard, that a fortune may be amassed, but for the benefit of others.

## CHAPTER X.

John Montgomery, born in Sugar Creek congregation, and moved into the boundary of Hopewell when quite a young man. He built a home seven miles east of Hopewell church. He married a Miss Clark. Their children were Clark, Harry, Hannah, Anna Woods, Dorcas, Rebecca and Narcissa. Clark Montgomery married Lelilah Hill, a daughter of John Hill, an excellent Christian gentleman. Only one of his children is now living, viz: Columbus Montgomery, who resides in Charlotte.

Harvy Montgomery was a local Methodist preacher; he married Emaline Moore, an account of his family already given. Hannah married John Ross. Anna Woods married James Ross, father of Joe Ross, the carpenter and contractor and house mover. Dorcas married Robert Walkup. Rebecca died single. Narcissa married Hiliary Hill. The children of John Montgomery were an honor to their parents and shining lights in the church. After the death of his first wife, he married Mary Porter, who did not sympathize with her pious husband, as his loving heart deserved. Mr. Montgomery died in 1854. His widow survived him several years. She was somewhat of a hypocondriach. At one time she became alarmed with the idea that a striped-tail lizzard had found a lodgment in her lower intestine. She became very sick and sent for the old family doctor, and told him of her frightful condition. In the goodness of his heart he tried to explain to her the impossibility of such a thing to happen. But it was labor lost. She had made up her mind that a lizzard had taken quarters where she did not want it, and "if Dr. Wilson couldn't run it out she would try another doctor." The old lady placed great confidence in Eliza, a stalwart negro woman whom she owned, and after con-

suiting with her about the propriety of supplanting the old faithful family doctor with an untried one, Eliza told her she felt sure from certain signs, the varment would come away within the next twenty-four hours. So Eliza made her arrangements to relieve her mistress by a slight-of-hand process. She soon secured a lizzard that was supposed to correspond in appearance with the one imprisoned where the keeper didn't want it; and on the next day when she started to remove the old woman's chamber she dropped the lizzard in, and immediately shouted, "Oh, Miss! Miss! Bless de Lord, you'se done passed de critter; I told you old Mars-Doctor was givin' you sump-tin dat would fetch it; de good Lord will bless de doctor." It goes without saying she was cured at once.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### McCOY FAMILY.

James McCoy came from Pennsylvania in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and founded a home one and a half miles east of Hopewell church. We know nothing of his wife, but it is probable she died prior to his coming to Mecklenburg, but he had a son, John McCoy, who married Ester Frazier in 1798. After his son's marriage Mr. James McCoy gave him his farm and everything in the way of stock and farm fixtures, and took leave for the unsettled West, and never returned or was heard of by his son. John and wife were members of Hopewell church, and lived to a great age. They raised one son and three daughters. One daughter, Nicey, married

Mathew Houston, and lived between the old McCoy homestead and Long Creek mill. They were good people, beloved by their neighbors. They had two sons and two daughters. The sons, John and Lafayette, were brave soldiers and worthy citizens. The former is now an elder in Hopewell, the latter having died in the service of his country. Tilley married George Houston and moved to Tennessee. Elvira married Col. B. W. Alexander, an account of whose family was given in a former chapter. The only son, Marshall McCoy, married Rebecca, daughter of Wm. Bain Alexander, and lived one mile east of Hopewell, and in sight of his father's home. They raised nine children, some of whom have been mentioned in previous chapters. Violet married Frank Blythe. John, missing after the battle of Gettysburg. Columbus married Martha Sample. Esther married R. D. Whitley. Martha married R. D. Whitley, after her sister's death. Dovey married John Blythe. Ellie married David Sample. Harriet married Hugh Sample. His youngest son, Albert, inherited the homestead, having married Mary, daughter of Thomas Gluyas, a most excellent man of English birth. Albert and wife have an old-fashioned family of thirteen children, all living, and promise to be of like usefulness to our common country.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### McKNIGHT FAMILY.

Thomas McKnight married Peggy Falls, a daughter of Colonel Falls, who was killed in the battle of Ramsaur's Mill, during the Revolutionary War. They lived two

miles north of Hopewell church, where they worshipped and held their membership. They raised seven children, viz: Hugh McKnight, married Patsy Wilson, a daughter of Samuel Wilson. They lived near by the old homestead where James A. Wilson now lives. They raised quite a large family, several of whom are deceased, and some moved to Alabama. Gilbreth McKnight married a daughter of William Kerns.

Isabella McKnight married David Allen. They lived at the old homestead, but the place is now known as the David Allen place. They had no children. Jane married Thomas Kerns. They lived three miles northeast of the church, where he operated a farm successfully and raised a large family. Mr. Kerns was a strong man mentally. He was a fair scholar, taught school, and was well informed on the topics of his time.

William Kerns was in active life at the beginning of the present century. He lived two miles northeast of Hopewell church. He was twice married; his first wife was a Widow Houston, and was the mother of Thomas and Harper. Jennie McClure, daughter of Mathew McClure, the signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence first married — Houston, by whom she had one son and one daughter. She afterwards married William Kerns, to whom she bore two sons, Thomas and Harper. His second wife was Sibby, daughter of Colonel Falls, of Revolutionary fame. She had no children. Harper, son of William Kerns, lived near his father's homestead. He married (first wife) Clarissa, daughter of Blind Billy Alexander. They had three sons and two daughters, viz: Robert, William, Dixon, Jennie and Sarah. Robert married Miss McConnel from Iredell county; raised a large family. William married Martha McKnight, daughter of Hugh McKnight. They moved west, where William died, and his widow returned and is now living in Charlotte. Dixon Kerns, the youngest of first wife's sons, married the widow of James McKnitt Alexander. They



now live in South Iredell. Jennie married William Wallace, a fine looking cavalier as ever drew blade in defence of his country. He was killed in the thickest of the fight near the Potomac, where only cavalry were engaged. His childless widow resides three miles west of Hopewell church. Sarah married Edward Sloan, of Cabarrus county. He enlisted in a cavalry regiment with his brother-in-law, William Wallace, and like him, gave his life for his country. Harper Kerns' second wife was Margaret McKnight. They reared quite a large family, who are all located within easy reach of the church of their fathers. The Kerns family were all law-abiding citizens, held in good repute in the neighborhood.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### PEOPLES FAMILY.

John Peoples was born in the Shanandoah Valley, Va., in 1765. He was of Irish parentage. He came to North Carolina while quite young. He married Hannah Stinson in 1788. They lived near Long Creek mill, owned and worked a farm, where they reared a family of children, viz: Richard, Silas, John, James, William and Elizabeth. Richard married Jane Harris in 1816, and lived in the Providence section. They raised a large family, viz: Hugh Harris, John Brown, Isabella Hannah, Leroy Ezekiel, Ellenor, Mathew Henry, Elizabeth Jane, Rev. James H., Isaac Newton, Richard Ramsay. Silas Peoples married a Miss Hunter in 1834. They lived south of Hopewell, where they raised a family.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## GEORGE DAVIS.

George Davis was an important character in conducting the music (in that day it was called the singing) in Hopewell church sixty years ago, and even of a more recent date. Mr. Davis was chief musician, that is, he was leader of the singing, and was called clerk, or clark. Young men who wanted to learn to lead the singing had to stand by Mr. Davis and follow his lead. The pulpit was an elegantly painted structure, about the shape and size of a large sugar hogshead, set on a beautifully marble-painted post, 8 feet high. A nice little pair of stairs led up to the pulpit, which had a shutter to the door which, when closed, prevented the people from seeing the minister. On the floor near the pulpit was the clark's stand. It was a half round, resembling one-half of a barrel cut in two, longitudinally, big enough to accommodate three singers at one time, and about four and a half feet high. Mr. Davis always looked in a good humor with himself when entering his stand to raise the tunes; and the congregation always felt sure there would be no failure in the singing part of the worship. On communion occasions it was always expected the singing would be of a high order. Pisgah and Ortonville were favorite tunes, the lines being parceled out by the minister, or an assistant clark; this was deemed necessary when the house was packed, and not enough hymn books to go around. In addition to this there was a large congregation of negroes who attended on Sacramental occasions, as if a general holiday. The galleries would be packed, and but few of them able to read, it was a necessity to parcel out the lines that they could take part in the worship. And such singing! With their melodious voices, and their religious

emotions stirred to the utmost tension, they poured forth song in such strains of real music that it would have done credit to any religious assembly. This was music, indeed, that enthused every worshipper with a feeling of awe, that high art can never do.

Mr. George Davis married a daughter of David Vance. They had four sons and one daughter. This family has drifted away to parts unknown. Notwithstanding Mr. Davis was so highly honored as to lead the music in Hopewell church for so many years, you will scarcely find a member under fifty years old who ever heard of George Davis. How soon our names are forgotten! But thank God, it is in our province, if we are true to ourselves, to be in everlasting remembrance on the other shore.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### ELLIOT FAMILY.

Andrew Elliot lived two miles south of the church. He and his family were constant attendants at Hopewell. He had three sons and four daughters, viz: George, Andrew and William, Catherine, Mary, Ann and Betsy. These were good, law-abiding citizens, respected by all their neighbors and associates; and how they lived to middle life and some to old age, and none of the seven ever married, has always been a wonder in the boundary of Hopewell. The only solution of the anamoly is, they were not a marrying family.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## BLYTHE FAMILY.

Samuel Blythe was of Scotch-Irish stock. He came from the north of Ireland in 1740, and located fifteen miles north of Charlotte, on the Beattie's Ford road. But little of his family history has been preserved. It is not known by his descendants who his wife was, or where he found her. It is known, however, that a family of children was raised, and that only one of the number, a son named Richard, remained at the homestead. He married a Miss Patton, reared a family of children, and like their predecessors, all moved away to the southwest except one son, Samuel Blythe, who occupied the homestead, he alone of all the kindred remaining to preserve a place and perpetuate a name. He married Isabella Nantz in 1820. He was born in 1790 and died 1866. His wife survived him several years. They were buried in Hopewell graveyard, at which church they had worshipped for more than half a century. Their seven children consisted of four sons and three daughters, viz: Franklin, Clement, John, James, Nancy, Rebecca and Ellen. Franklin married Violet McCoy, and built a home in the northern part of the homestead. They raised a large family of children; all but two of whom are married and have families. Clement married Mary, daughter of Milas Sample. They live four miles east of the church. They have four boys, nearly grown. John Blythe married Dovy McCoy, built a home near Long Creek mill, where they raised one daughter and seven sons. James Blythe never married, but makes himself useful amongst his near kinsfolk. If he had cultivated his voice he would have been looked upon as a musical prodigy. But not having aspiration for notoriety he was,

and is, regarded only as a pretty good leader of church music. Rebecca married Robert Fulwood, a courteous Christian gentleman, who died while a young man, leaving his widow and five children. They have married off and are in comfortable circumstances. Nancy married John Abernethy in Paw Creek. They reared a nice family. Ellen married Ben V. Beal. They live in Lincoln county. The Blythe family were good people, without aspiration for honors or wealth. They were much esteemed for their integrity and great kindness of heart.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE TORRANCE FAMILY.

Hugh Torrance came from Ireland in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, probably about the close of the Revolutionary War. He first located in Iredell county, and afterwards built an elegant home in Mecklenburg, four miles north of Hopewell church. He married Isabella, the widow of Colonel Falls, who was killed in the battle of Ramsaur's mills. They raised but one child, James Torrance.

Hugh Torrance and wife, Isabella, both died in February, 1816, aged respectively 73 and 76 years. Their ashes lie buried in Hopewell churchyard, where they worshiped through a long life. Mr. James Torrance inherited his father's elegant home, and under his management the estate increased in value. Mr. Torrance first married Nancy Davidson, of Iredell county. They raised four children, viz: Hugh, Frank, Cammilla and Isabella. These all left the Hopewell boundary on attaining their major-

ity. Mrs. Torrance died November 19, 1818, aged 26 years. Mr. Torrance married second wife, Mary (Polly) Latta, born 1799. Had two children, viz: Dr. William Torrance. He never married, and died in 1852, aged 30 years. Jane married Dr. W. S. M. Davidson. She had but one child, and died at the age of 21 years. Her child, James Torrance Davidson, died soon after reaching his majority. Thus leaving Polly Latta without living issue. She died in 1821, leaving her husband a widower for the second time. Mr. Torrance married Margaret Allison, of Iredell county, his third wife. They raised a family of six children, viz: Letitia, who married Dr. Bratton, of South Carolina. Mary married Dr. Witherspoon, of Alabama. Delia married John Johnston, of Lincoln county. Saily married Dr. Gaston, of Montgomery, Ala. Richard R. Torrance, after graduating at Chapel Hill, married a daughter of Rufus Reid, and moved to Texas. His wife lived but a short time, and he returned with two little daughters. He entered the Confederate Army in the 8th Texas cavalry, was desperately wounded at Strawberry Plains, losing a leg near the hip joint. He after the war married Miss Eliza Gaston, of South Carolina. He now disposed of his property in Texas and returned to his farm in Hopewell, where he continued for many years and raised a large family. He now resides in Charlotte

John A. Torrance, the youngest son, has spent his life at the old homestead., except four years of service in the Confederate cause. He was a lieutenant in the 7th North Carolina Regiment. He has never taken a wife, but lives quietly in the elegant mansion erected by his grandfather. Hugh Torrance.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## WINSLOW FAMILY.

It is surprisingly strange how quickly the knowledge of a family, and that of an important one, too, may be lost or so befogged with doubt and uncertainty as to be but little known, and that little only through tradition.

Moses Winslow was probably born in Iredell county. He married Jean, a daughter of Alexander Osborne, and sister of Adlai Osborne. Alexander Osborne was buried in Centre graveyard, dates on headstone cannot now be read. \*Adlai Osborne, died 1814, aged 71 years; Margaret Osborne, died 1830, aged 75 years; John Brevard, born 1730, died 1790; Jane Brevard, born 1730, died 1800.

They had four daughters, viz: Mary, married Samuel Wilson, Sr.; Dovy, married Dr. Joseph McKnitt Alexander; Rocinda, married William Wilson; — married Samuel King, of Cabarrus county. Moses Winslow died 1815, aged 83 years. Jean Osborne Winslow died 1795, aged 53 years. Moses Winslow had no son to perpetuate his name. His daughters married into the most refined and educated families, and were blessed with a numerous posterity, but the name of Winslow has disappeared from the rolls.

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\* This information was taken from Centre graveyard by Col. W. L. Davidson, April 6, 1896.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## SAMUEL WILSON FAMILY.

Samuel Wilson, Sr., was married three times, raising three sets of children. His first wife was Mary Winslow, a daughter of Moses and Jean Osborne Winslow. They lived four miles northwest of Hopewell church, near the Catawba river. They had six children, viz: David, Benjamin, Samuel, Mary, Violet and Sally.

It is not known who David married, but they had two sons, Lawson and Winslow.

Benjamin never married. Samuel married — They had one son and two daughters, viz: Jeff, Polly and Patsy. Late in life Jeff married a Prim, and left no children. Polly married a Rosell, of whom nothing is known. Patsy married Hugh McKnight. Violet married Major John Davidson, of Revolutionary fame, whose family has been given place in a former chapter. Mary married Ezekiel Polk, who lived south of Charlotte. Sally married — — McConnel, of whom nothing is now known.

The second wife of Samuel Wilson, Sr., was the widow Howard, whoever she may have been. By this marriage there was one daughter, Margaret, who married George Davidson, and they had three children, viz: Wilson Davidson, J. H. Davidson (called Jacky), who married Patsy Davidson, a sketch of whom was given in a former chapter, and a daughter who married a Crawford and moved to Alabama.

Samuel Wilson, Sr.'s, third wife was Margaret Jack, a sister of Patrick Jack, who carried the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May 20, 1775, to Philadelphia. They reared three children, viz: William, Robert and Lillie. William Wilson married Rocinda Winslow.

Their children were Dovy, James, Robert and Lafayette. Dovy married James Dougherty. Robert married Margaret Alexander, daughter of Major Thomas Alexander. They lived three miles north of Hopewell church, and raised a large family of girls and one son, all of whom have long since passed away, and not one is left to perpetuate the name of Wilson, which held such prominence in this settlement for more than 100 years. James and Lafayette moved to Alabama in the early settlement of that State, and are lost to the local historian. The home of Robert Wilson was probably better known to fashionable people fifty years ago than any other place in Mecklenburg county. The family was educated, refined, wealthy, and their hospitality was held as a princely virtue. Their daughters were fond of music and dancing, inheriting this propensity from both ancestors. Major Tommie Alexander was a skillful player on the violin. Even after having passed his four-score mile post it afforded him pleasure to play for the entertainment of the young. They reared five daughters and one son, viz: Dovy, married John W. Logan. Margaret and Angelina never married. Arabella married Judge George Logan. Cynthia married Wade Hampton. Thomas A. Wilson, the youngest of the family, married Sally Jones. He was a most excellent man. He died in the service of his country in February 1862. A daughter of Mrs. Hampton, who married Abner Alexander, lives between Hopewell and the old homestead, and is a fit representative of the high-grade people who held such high position in this section more than one hundred years ago. The old homestead, around which clusters so many fond memories of a civilization that has passed, much of it into oblivion, but enough has been recorded in history to preserve the truth that the grand race of men who governed for the first seventy-five years of our political history, were indeed and in truth, leaders of men. The old homestead is now in the possession of Robert Hampton, a lineal descendant

of Samuel Wilson, Sr., who was of noble birth, and whose wife was a sister of Patrick Jack, a noted patriot of 1775.

It is not only strange, but sad, to know that of such an influential family as the Wilsons should cease to have a representative to perpetuate the name. Scarcely a century has passed till the name of an honored family is dropped from the roll.

Lillie Wilson, daughter of Sam Wilson, Sr., and Margaret Jack, married James Connor. They lived a short distance above Beattie's Ford, on the east side of the Catawba river, in what was known as the "red house." Their children were Henry Workman, James and Margaret. Workman located in Charleston, S. C., where he became very wealthy. He had one son in the Confederate States Army. Gen. James Connor, who won considerable fame for skill and bravery. He is now a practicing attorney in Charleston. Margaret, or Peggy, as she was called, married Franklin Brevard. They lived in South Iredell. They operated a large farm, and became very wealthy. They had one daughter, Rebecca, who married Robert I. McDowell. They had three daughters and two sons. Several years after the war the family moved to Charlotte. William, the oldest son, was killed in battle while a youth. The same patriotic spirit that prompted a heroic ancestry to deeds of daring proved the ruling element in a worthy posterity. The daughters married men worthy of their family, and F. B. McDowell, the second son, is one of our most prominent and useful citizens. Served two terms as mayor of Charlotte, and inaugurated needed reforms for which our people are grateful. Mr. R. I. McDowell passed away several years ago, and was buried in Elmwood cemetery. Mrs. McDowell, never having been strong, still survives and enjoys life, surrounded with hosts of friends.

This is one of the most literary families of our county. Mrs. F. B. McDowell, who belonged to one of the most literary families of New Orleans, inheriting both taste

and intellectuality, is regarded as a fine critic and a brilliant conversationalist, two rare accomplishments.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### CATHY FAMILY.

During the Revolutionary War John Cathy lived a short distance south of Beattie's Ford. His farm was visited by Tarlton's troopers the evening after the battle at Cowan's Ford, and everything eatable was carried off, as the army passed on towards Salisbury. He left his farm to his son, Col. Archibald Cathy, who spent all of his life on the homestead. He married a Miss Caldwell, from Iredell county. They raised five sons and one daughter, viz: Pink, William, Andrew, John, Henry and Nancy. Colonel Cathy died before his children were grown, and his widow married Tom DeArmond. He was not considered the equal of the family into which he married. They had but one son, Joe. The older Cathy children soon married off and took the young ones to live with them, home relations not being pleasant. This marriage was not a success, according to the neighborhood's idea of happiness. Pink Cathy married a Torrance, daughter of Barny Torrance, and moved to Arkansas. Andrew married Betsy Miller, and in company with Joe McKnitt Alexander, who married Nancy Cathy, moved to Alabama in 1835. Andrew Cathy had but one child, Rebecca, when he died. Rebecca was educated in Salem, N. C., and married her cousin, John D. Alexander, son of Joe McK. Alexander. The Alexander's became very

wealthy. After many years Nancy Alexander died, and her husband married Betsy Cathy. All have passed away except John D. Alexander, who recently took a second wife. Henry Cathy married Rebecca Johnston, of Iredell county, by whom three children were raised, viz: Caroline, Rebecca and John Archie. After the decease of Mrs. Cathy, Henry married Viney Cornelius, of Iredell county. She was a woman of great industry, really loved to work. She is now a widow, her children all married, but still occupies the old homestead.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES.

To write only of battles and sieges, and of great leaders of men, and of great events that happen only once in a century, may be a pleasant past time to the writer and furnish enjoyable reading to those who are not particular as to the great facts that underlie our civilization, but it is unworthy of the purpose intended to be accomplished by writing history. History, to be true and express facts as they exist, must reach down among the great common people, who produce the wealth, pay the taxes, and fight the battles of their country, as well as to eulogize the fortunate few who ride upon the flood tide that led them on to fortune. Notwithstanding the inhabitants of the Hopewell section were noted for their piety and morals, their love of freedom and fair play, they sometimes found it necessary to protect their honor and self-respect by personal combat. These personal encounters generally occurred on public occasions, such as elections, musters



or sales; sometimes at public places, as the court house, or blacksmith shop. The blacksmith shop was a noted adjunct to the civilization of seventy-five years ago. These shops were patronized by all classes. The rich and the educated would frequently spend a few hours chatting with their neighbors, hearing and telling the news. Newspapers were not so plentiful then as now, and the price was considerably more. So at these public resorts people would kill two birds with one stone, i. e., get their smithing done and hear the news.

About seventy years ago there was a family living on the eastern boundary of Hopewell, where the town of Huntersville now stands, by the name of Maxwell, several of whom were deaf mutes, but all were young and strong. One of the boys, Joe Maxwell, was an athlete, and unfortunately of an overbearing disposition and extremely quarrelsome, making him a terror to the neighborhood. He had been engaged in many fights, and had always whipped his man, until he became intolerably insolent. At an election held at Maxwell precinct, Joe tried to pick a quarrel with Joe Alexander, a very peaceable, quiet man, who refused to fight him; Maxwell cursed him for a coward. At this juncture Mr. D. A. Caldwell, a high-toned gentleman, and one who did not know what fear was, interfered by telling Maxwell that Joe Alexander was his cousin and his friend, and that if he was spoiling for a fight he would accommodate him. Maxwell was almost beside himself with rage, but thought discretion the better part of valor, and said: "Alex., I have no quarrel with you, but will fight Joe Alexander." Mr. Caldwell replied: "If you offer another insult to my friend I will whip you in an inch of your life." Maxwell was cowed for the first time in his life; he had met his master and recognized him. But his vindictive character could not rest until he would whip some one, so he pounced upon John Monteith, a very clever man and a most excellent blacksmith. Although

Monteith was a vigorous man, and as strong and muscular as blacksmiths usually are, he was no match for Maxwell. This was seen from the onset, and Monteith soon called to his friends for help. As they were parted Maxwell said to him, "as soon as you get well from this beating I will give you another worse than this." The poor man was not only badly punished, but badly frightened, but did not have the courage to shoot him down as if he were a mad dog. He watched for his enemy with much fear and anxiety, knowing he would have to fight a man of twice his strength, and one who boasted of his prowess, and was as unscrupulous as he was strong.

Three weeks after his first encounter 'Squire Robert D. Alexander came to the shop to have his horse shod, to whom Monteith detailed his grievances. 'Squire Alexander (father of the author) was an important character in the neighborhood as a magistrate, and in this capacity was often called on to settle difficulties between neighbors, and kept many suits from being carried to court. And there is no doubt Monteith hoped he would cool Maxwell's ardor by magisterial authority, and save him from the threatened beating he knew was near at hand. While they were talking Monteith looked in the direction of Maxwell's house. The shop was not more than 300 yards distant, when he saw his enemy coming. Instantly he dropped the horse shoe and put his ax tongs in the furnace and said to the 'Squire, "I see that devil coming; I reckon he will kill me this time." He was working his bellows vigorously, as if making a welding heat, and was very nervous and excited as Maxwell entered the shop, rolling up his sleeves as he gloated over his intended victim, said, "John, I promised you another beating, and am now going to give it to you." Just as Joe was ready to strike, John drew his red-hot ax tongs from the furnace and grabbed this human monster by the throat, with the determination born of fear, to defend himself in the unequal struggle. Joe

grasped the red-hot tongs near the jaws, and as he jerked them from his throat his hands were badly blistered and his throat perfectly raw and bleeding, his whole being in an agony of pain. This was the most desperate fight ever witnessed in the Hopewell territory. 'Squire Alexander was the only witness. He decided in favor of Monteith, "That the use of ax tongs heated in a furnace, were justifiable under the circumstances; and Maxwell warned not to attack Monteith in the future. All costs remitted."

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### HOPEWELL GRAVEYARD.

Some one has said "Those who live upon earth are but a handful to those who sleep in her bosom." When this sacred spot was first used as a resting place for the dead is not accurately known; certainly not before the first church building was erected in 1765. There is no gravestone bearing an earlier mark than 1775. Many secrets connected with the memorable epoch of the American Revolution, held both by Whigs and Tories, holding deadly enmity towards each other, of prime importance were unfortunately retained, locked in silence by those who sleep in this quiet place, that if known today would settle many questions now in doubt.

The most numerous family met with is the Alexanders. Here is seen the commemorative slab that covers the dust of John McKnitt Alexander and wife, their two sons, William Bain and Joseph McKnitt, and one of their sisters, Mrs. Rev. C. S. Caldwell, with a multitude of their

children and their children's children, reaching well into the fourth generation. The most conspicuous name in the fourth generation of this conspicuous family is that of Capt. Francis Ramsay Alexander, son of John R. Alexander. Like many others, he doffed the student's gown for the warrior's sword; abandoning the pleasant literary walks of college life to obey the calls of patriotism. Just as he reached mature manhood, while fighting his country's battle in behalf of the State's rights, he was mortally wounded on the 17th of June 1864, in the terrific battle of that date near Petersburg, and died on the 19th. His body was brought home for burial. The funeral was attended by the largest concourse of women and children that ever assembled here to do honor to the memory of any one ever laid to rest in this historic spot. It was not that he was such a devoted child of the church, a special favorite of the neighborhood, or the great popularity of his family; the funeral honors accorded him were due to his heroism in battle, and mutual love existing between him and his men; yet he was a Christain, a general favorite with his neighbors, and born of a most influential family. Privates never make a mistake as to the worth of their captain. Hence at each annual reunion of Company "K" of the 56th North Carolina Regiment, Captain Alexander's name is called with profound respect, and his leadership, which made him a hero, is spoken of with admiration.

John McKnitt Alexander and his great-grandson, Capt. Frank. R. Alexander, prompted by the same patriotic impulse, the former to achieve independence and the latter to maintain it, have their ashes quietly resting together in this densely crowded city of the dead, awaiting the glad summons of the resurrection morn, when all strife shall have ceased, and where tyranny and oppression are unknown.

Near by is the grave of General William Lee Davidson, with a bench of brick over it, just

as it was built more than 100 years ago. No shaft of granite or marble slab has ever been erected to mark the spot, and tell to future generations, "here lies the dust of a patriot who gave his life for his country's freedom." The wife of William Lee Davidson, son of the General, is buried by the "bench of brick," and has a handsome marble slab which says whose wife she was, and that she died in 1842, but does not tell she was a daughter of Major John Davidson, of Revolutionary fame, and was known as "Aunt Betsy Lee," a most excellent woman.

Near the entrance is the tomb of Rev. John Williamson and wife, probably the only preacher ever buried in this enclosure. The wife of Rev. Samuel C. Caldwell, the first pastor, is buried here by the side of her patriot father, John McKnitt Alexander. So also is the wife of Rev. Walter Smily Pharr, mother of Rev. C. S. Pharr, D. D., and daughter of Mrs. Rev. Samuel C. Caldwell, buried in the midst of her own kindred.

One of the most noted of those who were buried here in the last quarter of the 18th century was Francis Bradly, a patriot of the Revolution. He had taken a most active part in the skirmish at McIntire's branch, and for this love of liberty he was brutally murdered by Tories, November 14, 1780. His wife, Abigail Bradly, died September 23, 1817, aged 69 years, and rests by the side of her husband.

What a peaceful and pleasant change it must be to be carried from fields of strife to the green pastures ever found by the River of Life in that world where the weary are at rest and Love reigns supreme. It is with a feeling of awe and reverence that we pass among those who have nobly performed their duty while living, and have been called to take up their abode in this silent enclosure, and read their names and learn what is possible of their characters, feeling sure that we will soon be summoned to dwell in the silent tomb where history ceases, and we pass into the new life where, yesterday, today and tomorrow ever remain present.



Here we read the names of the Torrance family, of the Latta's, Monteith's, Kerns, Todd's, McCoy's and many others who were well known; and also see names that are entirely forgotten, viz: William Graham, aged 72 years, died 1818. Reuben Ross, aged 23 years, died July 4, 1824. Capt. John Long, aged 51 years, died 1799, and Peggy Long, his wife, aged 30 years, died July 19, 1799. Who were these people, and what part did they act in life's great drama? or were they visitors passing through the country and were drafted by the pale recruiting officer before they reached their destination? No one can now tell their story. But stranger still, some people appear to invite oblivion by not marking the spot or sepulchre, or chiseling their names upon stone. The Wilsons, a wealthy, educated and influential family, closely connected with the Davidsons, Alexanders, Grahams, Osbornes, and Brevards, have left no sign or mark to prove they found a resting place by the side of their honored compeers.

So it is with the Kerns family, and hundreds of others who took an active part in life, and were good and useful citizens, give no sign to those who would gather up fragments to preserve our country's history, or even to say they found a grave on their native heath. And yet there are some names cut in bold letters, unknown to the denizens of today, whose history would be interesting if known, on account of the time in which they lived. For example of what is meant: John Beatty, aged 83 years, died January 25, 1804, and wife, Arven Beatty, aged 74 years, died 1797. Richard Rankin and wife, Polly, died in 1804 and 1803, respectively. John Dougherty, died 1790, aged 46 years. Thomas Blackwood, died 1793, aged 50 years. These names are now wholly unknown in the community, however important may have been the services rendered by those whose names are preserved on marble slabs. It is more difficult to preserve ordinary or local fame than it is to win it. What a historical treas-



ure we would have if only short sketches of the many heads of families that lie mouldered into dust had been prepared when the material was fresh and abundant.

While we have reason to regret the loss of so much by the carelessness or want of forethought on the part of our ancestors, we have also greater reason to rejoice that so much of inestimable value has been kept safely for posterity's use. The history of every generation should be written, and not allow such wide gaps of time to intervene, which prove broken links in the historic chain connecting widely separated epochs of our civilization. Only in this way can history be preserved in its entirety. In this age of schools, while progress is the watchword, would it not be wise for the State to establish a department of history—for the writing of history—for the benefit of those who will live in the future, as well as to satisfy the reading people of today.

We are now living so fast, literally traveling by electricity, that we accomplish in ten years in this present era what it took one hundred years to accomplish a century ago. It is now a necessity to record new discoveries, new developments and rapid changes in a better way than in newspapers and periodicals if we would carry into the future a correct account of the maddening rush that is driving us forward. If the ashes of the wisest ones who have been asleep for fifty years could awake, see and hear what changes had been made since their departure, they would scarcely give credence to the true stories, although told by their own kith and kin. All discoveries and inventions have been by gradation, as it were, preparing the mind to receive and comprehend the wonderful phenomena thrust with such apparent haste upon the astonished vision of an expectant world; somewhat after the similitude of Darwinian evolution. We now scarcely feel safe to doubt, muchless deny any dream we hear, even the most unlooked-for.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## REV. JOHN WILLIAMSON.

He entered on the pastorate of Hopewell church September 14, 1818. He was a successful and popular minister; greatly beloved by his people. He built an elegant brick dwelling near Wilson Davidson's and owned a large farm, which he cultivated with profit. This farm is now owned by John N. Patterson, but the elegant residence has been burned. Mrs. Williamson was a most excellent woman, and as wife of the pastor, she was an efficient Christian worker; greatly beloved by all the people. They raised five children, two sons and three daughters. Mr. Williamson died September 4, 1842, and was buried in Hopewell graveyard, amidst a large number to whom he ministered for twenty-four years. Three years later his wife was laid to rest by his side. The oldest daughter, Sarah Ann, married Rev. R. H. Caldwell, and moved to Mississippi, where they now reside in their old age, happy in the work of the Master.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

## BETHEL CHURCH.

This section of country being intensely Presbyterian, we are not surprised that the church of Bethel was built so early as the first quarter of the present century. Up to this period Methodism had not taken root in Meck-

lenburg county to any extent. This church was located on the Beattie's Ford and Concord road, five miles east of the river, five miles south of Centre church in Iredell county, and eight miles north of Hopewell. It was in the midst of a great deal of wealth, but had a small membership. It was not regularly supplied with a pastor or a minister, as the older churches were, but had service in the earliest days for short times by Revs. McRee, Espie and others. After 1837 some one of the ministers from the faculty of Davidson College served the congregation until 1856. Rev. E. D. Junkin was called to the pastorate who served only a short time. Dr. Wood, Dr. Phillips and several others served short terms since the war. The church seems to be in a more prosperous condition now than in any former period of its existence. A new brick house has been recently built, and the congregation is very much attached to their present pastor, Rev. John Grier.

Amongst the main supporters in the early days of its existence were A. B. Jetton, Robert Potts, William Patterson, David A. Caldwell and Andrew Springs. These were all elders, men of honor and unswerving integrity. Patrick Johnston and his two sons, James and Houston Johnston, and William G. Potts, with their families, were amongst the early attendants. Robert Henderson and his family, John Knox and his three sons, Robert, John and Andrew, S. M. Withers, J. R. Gillespie, were all prominent members, and some of whom were elders. In late years the church was served by Rev. L. K. Glasgow for ten years, with a bench of elders composed of Martin Alexander, W. H. Goodman, L. A. Potts, J. M. Wilson, Robert Knox and J. B. Alexander.

A most excellent high school was taught near the church by Rev. L. K. Glasgow, extending from 1875 to 1885. It was patronized by the entire community, and accomplished a great deal in an educational point of view. He was a successful teacher. The change in this immedi-

ate neighborhood in the last ten years has been almost revolutionary, by the death of several of the most prominent persons, such as William Patterson, Lawson Potts, Banks Withers, and the moving away of several other families, leaving their lands to tenants who do not take much interest in schools, educational plants requiring constant nursing to keep them vigorous.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### GILEAD CHURCH.

A temple erected to the worship of God a hundred years ago deserves more than a passing notice. Like everything else connected with the latter years of the 18th century, but little is now known, and that little fast falling into oblivion. What a historical loss is sustained by the present generation by not having kept a record of the pioneers of that age in church matters, as well as State craft. It would be of great interest to know who were the prime movers in organizing the A. R. P. Church that has been the source of so much spiritual good in all that section of the county. The church record is said to have been lost, and with it all the early history except what we have by tradition, and a few facts preserved incidentally in connection with Prosperity and Codle Creek churches. Gilead church occupies a site on the Beattie's Ford road fifteen miles northwest of Charlotte, and five miles from Hopewell. During this period of a little over one hundred years the people of Hopewell and Gilead were to all intents and purposes one people, the two churches one in

doctrine, creed and church government; and the only difference the Associate Reformed held to was close communion, and only the Psalmody for church music. Time has wrought recently some changes in the form of worship, even in this particular branch of the church. They no longer use "tokens," as was an invariable custom twenty-five years ago. They no longer forbid Christians of other evangelical churches to commune with them at the Lord's table. They no longer require communicants to be seated around the table, but are served in their pews as other branches of the Presbyterian church. Neither are they so bitterly opposed to instrumental music in their worship. But to this day Gilead has not adopted the use of an organ. It was my fortune to practice medicine in almost every family in Gilead congregation for thirty years, and I cheerfully bear testimony they were the best people I ever knew, and I knew them intimately.

Gilead graveyard is not so rich in historic lore as several others in Mecklenburg county. The grave stone of Mrs. McKnight bears the earliest date of any tablet in this enclosure, viz: 1811. It is more than probable many were buried here before Mrs. McKnight. In looking over this quiet cemetery we see the names of a number who were natives of Ireland i. e. David Smith, James Smith, Esther Smith and Eliza Smith. John Alcorn and his two sisters, Mrs. Sarah Nantz and Mrs. Margaret Alexander. Patrick Johnston and his numerous descendants. A cenotaph to the memory of his grandson, Barnabas Alexander Johnston, who was killed in the battle of Spottsylvania, May 12, 1864. Also the names of John Blakly, John Bell, Thomas Alcorn, Daniel McAulay, Hugh McAulay and others who gave their lives for their country. Probably no Revolutionary soldier rests here, except Daniel McAulay, but many who contended for the Confederate cause, which our Southern people will always hold dear. Probably John Boyce was the first pastor, as we learn he was in charge of Codle Creek, Prosperity, Gilead and



Hopewell in South Carolina. He could not have given more than one-fourth of his time to either one of his several charges. He appears to have continued here for about five years. He died March 18, 1793, and was buried at Hopewell, in South Carolina. The second pastor was Rev. James McKnight. He was installed pastor of Gilead, Codle Creek and Prosperity in 1797. He continued to serve these churches for many years, and ceased from his labors September 17, 1831. He was a most remarkable preacher. Two sermons a day was his ordinary rule. Beginning by 10 o'clock and giving a short interval for refreshments, he would preach sometimes until it was so dark he would call for candles to read and sing the last Psalm. The stars would be shining brightly before the people would reach home, if they had but two or three miles to go. It was common for them to provide themselves with pine torches to light them home.

The pioneers in the movement to organize Gilead church first thought of building the house of worship by the side of Baker's graveyard, where quite a number of A. R. Presbyterians had been buried, but believing the site selected more central it was agreed to build where the present new and elegant brick church now stands. The present site was first occupied by a block house, or wooden fort, in which the whites would congregate to better defend themselves against hostile indians. The neighbors also had an enclosure at the spring (near by) for penning cattle, to protect them from roving bands of Indians. Experts with the rifle could easily pick off cattle thieves from the fort without exposing themselves. Mrs. Nellie Torrance, who died many years ago, related the story of the fort (which she had often seen, as she lived in the neighborhood), to Mr. E. A. McAulay, now a venerable elder in Gilead, who kindly gave the above account to the writer. There are now living but few who can contribute anything of a past generation.

The deed to the church land was made to Alexander



Baldrige (Rev.), William Henderson, David Smith, Hugh Lucas and others. Lucas lived near Cowan's Ford at the time the battle was fought there February 1, 1781.

The first elders were William Henderson, David Smith and Hugh Lucas. Some years later Patrick Johnston, William Beard and Gilbreth McKnight. Still later we have the names of James Blakely, White Morrow, Ewart Bell, John Bell, Sr., John Price Bell, Jr. About this time some of the most prominent members were Daniel McAulay, James Smith and his sisters, Esther and Eliza, Polly Bell, Jane Bell, Sally Bell, James Goodrum and wife, Martha, Harrison Goodrum, Eli Alexander and his sons, Ezekiel, Moses, Martin and Eli. More recently the elders were Green Barnett, Benjamin Brown, Jessie N. Whitlow, Dixon Ewart, D. H. Fidler, Alexander Gibson and Samuel Black. All these have passed away. John Alcorn and wife, "Aunt Polly," were active members, but are numbered with those who have died.

The bench of elders now in charge, and who have passed the meridian, are Eli B. Alexander, W. A. Alexander, M. B. Alexander, J. F. M. Beard, E. A. McAulay. And amongst the most prominent members are J. M. Alexander, John Bell Alexander, Richard Blythe, H. C. Hubbard, J. T. Cashion, W. T. Cashion, etc.

Rev. John Boyce was the first pastor, installed 1791. Rev. James McKnight installed 1797, and died 1831. Rev. John Hunter, a man of great ability, immensely popular, and had a peculiar intonation of voice that always held the attention of his audience, was installed 1844. He remained about eight or ten years, and was followed by Rev. Robert Thomas Taylor, who was succeeded by that great and good man, Rev. Alexander Ranson, D.D., who held the pastorate for about twenty years, when he was called to his reward. In regular succession, Revs. D. G. Caldwell, W. Y. Love, William M. Hunter; the last three are still living, and Mr. Hunter in charge.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## MANNERS, HABITS AND CUSTOMS.

In all this section of country the people were strongly impressed, not only with the principle of self-reliance, but with integrity of purpose in character building. They were devoted to the principles of the Presbyterian faith. The basis of this was in family government. The features of the early settlers were prominent, well defined, and bespoke the true character of the men and women of that day. That stern look, to some betokened hardship, but was only a covering that concealed from the world a loving nature that was all sunshine in the privacy of the family. Family government was strict in deed, obedience, absolute obedience, was required in every family, and every requirement had to be complied with. The children were early taught the shorter catechism, and it had to be so thoroughly memorized that each member of the family could ask and answer every question from beginning to end without a book. In this period of our country's civilization the "rod," or "switch," was an important factor. The pendulum probably swung too far in forcing obedience by such harsh means at that time, but it is equally certain it now swings too far on the other side, as we frequently see children governing their parents. This is a sad mistake now being made, and we can expect only to reap bitter fruit. A people brought up under the influence of Calvin and Knox would have disappointed the world if they had not produced just such a posterity as those who migrated to this Hopewell section of Mecklenburg county.

The good old plan of building a high school under the shadow of all Presbyterian churches in those early days

was not carried into effect in this territory, as was done at Centre, Rocky River, Sugar Creek, Providence, etc. It is impossible at this late day to give a correct reason why this was not done. The young people must have been sent off to neighboring schools, for we have reason to believe the great majority were pretty well educated. There were several primary schools, whose only fame left behind was the autocratic power of the teacher. In the period of which we write the ordinary agreement between the teacher and employer was, they were to furnish the pupils and the books, and he was to do the whipping. The punishment was not only severe, but sometimes brutal. Teacher and hickory were inseparable, putting in knowledge through the flesh as well as through the mind. A teacher who could not and did not whip every one of his pupils was considered a poor make-shift for a teacher. Just before the closing of a school term it was a customary rule to bar the teacher out until he would promise to treat to apples, candy, or give a holiday.

This was an undertaking in which the pupils considered well worthy of counting the cost before engaging in the contest. They knew if the teacher succeeded in forcing an entrance they would be severely whipped; and the teacher also knew if he failed to get in the boys would force him to treat, even if they had to tie him and duck him in the branch. Ordinarily the teacher would agree to treat rather than be handled so roughly. There was no shoddy education in those days. Latin and Greek was the basis, or foundation of education in the olden time. A Presbyterian minister who could not read Latin and Greek fluently would hardly have been granted license to preach, and if licensed, would have been considered a freak of nature. I remember to have seen two old men, twin brothers, in 1852, who were gentlemen of leisure, who read Latin and Greek as fluently as any one now reads a newspaper. Then an education meant thoroughness, not sham or veneering.

It has always been a pride of the Presbyterian church to have an educated ministry. And we doubt if the ministers of the present are quite so well learned in the languages of the ancients, from which the English has been derived, as were the ministers of 100 years ago. The medical men of that period studied medicine in books written in Latin. Galen's works held the highest rank as text books. And many old portraits of medical men have been painted holding a volume of Galen in their hands.

Dr. Joseph McKnitt Alexander was the first physician we know of who lived in this territory; although Drs. Harris and McLean did some practice and much surgery in this part of the county. The former lived in Cabarrus country, and the latter in what is now Cabarrus county. Physicians were few and far apart, consequently could not visit their patients very often. A story is told of Dr. Harris having been sent for frequently to see a dropsical patient, and becoming tired of tapping him so often, he roughened a goose quill by scraping it both ways, and inserted it like a trocar into the old man's abdomen and left it there as a modern drainage tube, knowing it could not slip in or out. Of course, it quickly lighted up an inflammation that soon carried the old man off. This was long before the great discoveries that we are acquainted with now had been brought to light; before the Germ theory was thought of, or antiseptics had a place in the materia medica. Before a clinical thermometer, or hypodermic syringe had been dreamed of. But notwithstanding the want of these new remedies and appliances of recent date, and ignorance of the myriads of spores, germs, microbes that are now held responsible for all the ills flesh is heir to; these same old doctors were as successful in fighting off the last enemy and restoring their patients to health as the most learned M. D.'s of this advanced age of medical science. But probably a hundred years ago the people had greater stamina or resisting power when assailed by disease than now.

Dr. Isaac Wilson did an extensive practice throughout all this section of the county from 1825 to 1860. He was a self-educated physician, had the confidence of everyone, was always pleasant and agreeable; he was immensely popular. He kept a pack of fox hounds, was fond of the chase, and frequently joined in with his neighbors on certain occasions when his or their friends wished to engage in a spirited hunt, when they would have fifteen to twenty dogs in the chase. Only those who have taken part in a fox hunt can appreciate the excitement when the pack is in full cry and Reynard has lowered his brush, the sportsmen know the end is near and each one is anxious to be present at the catch. The horses become so excited they will keep up with the hounds without whip or spur. This old-time sport has disappeared, probably because the fox family moved away, as no longer appreciated by our advancing civilization.

These were the days of African slavery, when the negroes were happy creatures, owned by Christian masters, their every need was supplied, whether crops were plentiful and prices good, or drought stared them in the face. When sick the best medical skill was employed to attend them, and the "white folks" gave every dose of medicine, in fact watched after them with the same solicitude they gave their children. These slaves were well housed, well fed and well clothed; and a fact of physiological interest, not one in a thousand ever had consumption. These negroes were guardians of their master's interests, were proud of their master's family, and most cordially hated "poor white trash." But times have changed, the negro is free, is no longer cared for, either in health or sickness; he has fallen an easy prey to consumption, has but little attention when sick, and his mind has been poisoned by political demagogues until he believes the whites are his enemies, yet they are the only ones he can appeal to with any hope of relief. Their best and happiest days passed away when their freedom was thrust upon them.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

October 6, 1896.

Dr. J. B. Alexander,

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 1st inst. at hand; contents noted. With pleasure I comply with your request. When I left home to learn a trade I had no thought of genealogy. While rambling from place to place I was told by some that I was Irish, others that I was Scotch. After seventeen years I went home on a visit, in 1850. Uncle John (No. 4), was the only one of the old folks left. He told me that between 1730 and 1740, four brothers, Carr, sailed from the north of Ireland and settled in Delaware. They came down south; two of them settled in Mecklenburg, one went west, and one went to Jamaica, W. I. In 1847 I was in Jamaica, and the largest dry goods store in Kingston was owned by R. C. Carr. I didn't then know that he and I belonged to the same stock.

One of the four brothers, Robert, was my great-grandfather, and is the only one that I can tell anything about. It was at his place, McIntyre's Branch, that the British sergeant was shot while tumbling forage out of the barn.

o. Robert Carr was born in 1710; died 1789.

Margaret, his wife, was born in 1717, June 20th, died 1769.

Jeanet Carr, daughter of Robert and Margaret Carr, was born in 1747; not married.

William Carr, son of Robert and Margaret Carr, was born 1749; died 1778.

i. Robert Carr, son of Robert and Margaret Carr, was born 1750; died 1843.

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o. My great-grandfather.

i. My grandfather.



John Carr, son of Robert and Margaret Carr, was born 1756.

2. Margaret Kerr, daughter of Robert and Hannah Kerr, was born December 29, 1770.

Richard Kerr, son of Robert and Hannah Kerr, was born 1772; bachelor.

3. Hannah Kerr, daughter of Robert and Hannah Kerr, was born 1776.

Samuel Kerr, son of Robert and Hannah Kerr, was born 1778.

4. John Kerr, son of Robert and Hannah Kerr, was born 1782.

#### MY GRANDFATHER'S FAMILY.

5. Robert Carr and Barbara Brown were married December 5, 1775.

6. Hugh Carr, son of Robert and Barbara Carr, was born September 27, 1776.

7. William Carr was born December 29, 1778.

8. Margaret Carr was born February 2, 1781.

2. Married a Mr. Martin, by whom she had three sons. Her oldest son, William, was licensed a Methodist preacher in 1827, and after preaching 61 years, died in Columbia, S. C., in 1889, leaving two children, Dr. Henry Martin, and Miss Isabel Martin, who was instructor in English language and literature in Dr. Atkinson's school there.

3. Married a Mr. Martin, whose son, James, gave Martindale its name. The descendants are in that section.

4. Uncle John lived about a mile from where he was born. Had six sons and one daughter. Thomas Milton Kerr and other grandchildren are there.

5. My grandparents.

6. Uncle Hugh had four sons and five or six daughters. He went west in 1826 and settled in the northwest corner of Mississippi. His children married and scattered. Just before the war he and one of his sons went to Arkansas and settled forty miles west of Camden.

7. My father.

8. Married Abram Martin, who died in Mecklenburg. In 1834 Aunt Margaret, with three sons and three daughters, went to Tennessee, and later to Mississippi.

9. John Carr was born September 1, 1783.  
10. Mary Carr was born August 4, 1786.  
Jean Carr was born January 17, 1787; never married.  
Barbara Carr was born April 14, 1791; never married.  
Rachel Carr was born November 3, 1793; never married.  
11. Esther Carr was born June 23, 1797.

### MY FATHER.

William Carr's family was three sons and two daughters.

Robert Crockett Kerr, the writer.

Margaret Kerr, died 1855.

James H. Kerr, died 1855.

John A. Kerr, died 1833.

Mary Isabella, died in New Orleans June 6, 1884.

My great-grandfather was buried in the old graveyard at Sugar Creek, and I think he was a member of that church. Of his children Nos. 2, 3 and 4 were Methodists.

My grandfather and all his children, so far as I can recollect, were members of the Presbyterian church, Hopewell.

My parents were members of Hopewell church, and during my boyhood I went there with my parents. Dr. John Williamson was pastor.

I was glad to learn that you were preparing a history of Hopewell. I hope some persons may be found who will write the history of each of the seven Presbyterian churches of Mecklenburg that were organized during the old colonial days. I believe that Centre, Rocky River,

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9. Uncle John, with two sons and three daughters, went to Tennessee in 1834, and settled near Jackson.

10. Aunt Mary and her husband, Allison Clark, went to Tennessee in 1824.

11. Aunt Asther married Elihu McCracken. Their children and grandchildren are in Mecklenburg and adjoining counties.

Poplar Tent, Hopewell, Sugar Creek and Steel Creek were all organized as churches before the Revolution. Information may be gathered from session records and traditions handed down from fathers to sons, and names and dates on the tombstones in the old cemeteries; also from the family records in the Bible. Those old Presbyterians always had the Bible at home, and any record made in it could not be disputed.

Every year you good Mecklenburgers have a "Fourth-of-July" celebration on the 20th of May, being the first Declaration of Independence.

I believe that during this century, now closing, Mecklenburg has given to the Presbyterian church—fathers, sons and grandsons—more ministers than any other county in the United States. Although little of my manhood has been passed there, I can recollect Dr. Caldwell at Sugar Creek seventy to seventy-five years ago. I knew two of his sons who were preachers. Now seven of his grandsons are preachers. Although not born in Mecklenburg, they are all of good Mecklenburg stock. Dr. William Flinn, graduate of Davidson, and his son, is a preacher. His brother, Andrew, who married Harvey Wilson's sister, had two sons who are preachers. ("Robt. Morrison, a member of Rocky River church, had eight grandsons who were Presbyterian preachers. Their names were S. H. Morrison, L. R. Morrison, R. M. Morrison, A. W. Morrison, R. H. Morrison, G. N. Morrison, Amzi Bradshaw and R. C. Garrison. The last three were living in 1881.")—From my scrap book.

I have been trying to brighten up my memory of boyhood days. I recollect an Uncle Joe Carr, a cousin (so I was told), of my grandfather, who lived near what is now the Capp's mines. He had two sons older than my father. They all went west in the early 20's. It is probable they were descendants of one of the four brothers.

There was also a cousin of my grandfather in York county, S. C., who had several sons. I became acquainted

with two of them in Wetumpka, Ala., in 1836, say sixty years ago. They probably were descendants of the brother that went west. York was a long distance from Mecklenburg 170 or 180 years ago.

I am just now recuperating after a six-week's tussle with bronchitis, and with 83 of time's mile posts behind me, you can appreciate that I have hard work to keep a steady hand.

Remember me to all my friends there. Hoping this will be of service to you,

Very respectfully,

R. C. KERR.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### A MARK OF PECULIAR INTEREST.

Toadyism always tends to disgust the American citizen, as it carries with it a strong semblance of royal sham still seen in all the capitals of Continental Europe and the British Empire. Yet what is ours we do not intend shall be appropriated by others, although it may only be a name. In Hopewell graveyard there is a stone that attracts more than ordinary interest among the great multitude who sleep in this quiet place. It is one that marks the grave of Capt. James Knox, who "died in 1794, aged 42 years." We know absolutely nothing of his history, and can only say he was the grandfather of President James Knox Polk. So far as the writer is aware, all histories that have spoken of the birth place of President Polk declare that he was born in the southern part of Mecklenburg county, near where the town of Pineville

now stands. Both history and tradition says Samuel Polk married Jane Knox, a daughter of Capt. James Knox, who lived four miles northeast of Hopewell church. The Knox house has disappeared, but the foundation stones are still visable, and the spring that supplied the Knox family with water still runs. A most excellent gentleman, J. L. Ramsay, now occupies the site that was made historic more than a century ago by being the birth place of President James K. Polk. The location is between John W. Moore's and J. N. Patterson's, one and a half miles southwest of Huntersville. At this home of James Knox, the father of Jane, who married Samuel Polk, was the child born who was afterwards President of the United States. How long Sam Polk lived here, or whether Mrs. Polk only returned to have her mother's care during her first trying ordeal, we are not informed. But we are informed there was a muster ground here known as "Polk's old field." This has very much the appearance that Sam Polk lived here for a while at least.

We are further informed, and know from evidence that cannot be gain-sayed, that Peggy Alcorn, an Irish girl who came from Ireland with her mother when six years old, people of good character, but very poor, was, when 13 years old, hired by Sam Polk to wait on his wife and nurse the baby, their first child, James K. Polk, Jr. This girl afterwards married Eli Alexander, who lived four miles southwest of Davidson College, where they raised a family, of which each member proved to be a good citizen. Ezekiel, Martin, Moses and Eli were all staunch Presbyterians, and the two daughters, Malissa married John Bell, and Mary married E. A. McAulay. No people in North Carolina have a better reputation for honesty, integrity and truthfulness, and they say it, and have told their children that their mother often spoke of the time she waited on Mrs. Polk and nursed the baby who afterwards became president. This little change

in local historical events is only intended to preserve the truth of history. It is sufficient to be born in Mecklenburg to entitle one to all that is good and patriotic, but to be born in the Hopewell boundary adds eclat to the fact.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### ASSASSINATION OF BEN WILSON.

Probably there has never been a more tragic foundation for thrilling romance than the one laid by the episode mentioned. This tragedy occurred in the early part of the present century, and there is now no person living who was personally cognizant of the facts. Tradition has had much to say with regard to the matter, and it is still talked of by the people in the section of country where it occurred. Allen Curry, a brother, and Mrs. Johnston, a sister of Nixon Curry, lived to old age in this neighborhood, and were people of respectability, and their descendants are numerous in the county. They are esteemed good, law-abiding citizens. The Curry family lived sixteen miles north of Charlotte, and about half a mile west of what is now Caldwell's station, on the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Railroad. The property was bought by Mr. Andrew Springs, many years ago, and every trace of the family residence is gone, but the Springs branch is still known as "Curry branch."

Ben Wilson was born of an illustrious ancestry, being closely connected by a collateral branch, with Gen. Sir Robert Wilson, of English nobility. One hundred years ago this was the most aristocratic family in the county;



an account of which is given in another chapter. Ben Wilson was a son of David Wilson, and was born and raised four miles northwest of Hopewell church. The family was lavish in spending money, and was not religiously scrupulous as to how the money was obtained. They were fond of horse-racing and card-playing, and had they lived in the present day, they would have been called "sports." About the year 1820, Nixon Curry, Latta McConnel and Ben Wilson became very intimate, and occasionally were missed from the neighborhood for six weeks at a time, no one knowing where they had gone, or the business that engaged their attention. After awhile certain farmers noticed that the disappearance of one or more negro slaves was coincident with the mysterious visits of the trio, to unknown parts, whence the negroes never returned.

There was no positive proof that Wilson and Curry stole the slaves, but everyone believed it. The story handed down is that they would "toll" the negro off with the promise that when sold, they would divide profits with the negro; have him run away from his new master and rejoin the traders, and sell again. This operation would be repeated several times in different places while the Southwestern States were settling up; then when pushed too close they would kill the negro and deposit his body in some swamp or river. This trade was carried on for a considerable time before much suspicion was excited. Curry was a man of fine physique, pleasant manners, above the average in acumen, and brave as the bravest. In his general traits of character, he closely resembled the Wilsons. But this game could not be continued always: and after considerable time, it came to Curry's ears that Ben Wilson would turn State's evidence against Curry, and that he would be free while Curry would be hanged. Being forewarned with this information, he watched for an opportunity to get his witness out of the way. Knowing all the places Wilson visited, and every

path he traveled, he had no trouble to meet him in a quiet, unfrequented place.

On an afternoon in the month of March, 1821, Ben Wilson was returning home from a visit to a friend, near where Davidson College now stands, and as he passed by John Knox's residence, near where the Curry family lived, he called to Mr. Knox and said: "You had better keep watch over 'High Flyer,' or you may lose your fast horse." Wilson passed on in a southwest course about half a mile, when the sound of a rifle was heard, and soon after Wilson's body was found dead, from a rifle shot. No one was seen to whom suspicion would point, but from circumstantial evidence, everybody believed Nixon Curry the guilty party. Almost every man in the entire community was summoned to arrest Nixon Curry. He kept in hiding several days before arrested. It has always been a mystery why he remained in the neighborhood, when he could so easily have made his escape by going west at that time.

Probably the true reason why he did not escape was the difficulty of taking his wife with him, whom he was not willing to leave behind. He had already had serious trouble in an encounter with the friends of his wife's father, and the country being aroused and greatly excited, it would have been impossible to have escaped with her.

Latta McConnel, having had an interview with Curry, after his arrest, a time was fixed when Lucy should join him in the western part of the State. Arrangements were made by which McConnel was to be informed twenty-four hours before Curry was to make his escape from jail, so that Lucy could be well on her way to the headwaters of the Catawba before the country would be excited the second time by the startling reports of Curry having broken jail. Notwithstanding the close blood relation between Ben Wilson and Latta McConnel, the latter always proved a true friend to Nixon Curry.

He employed "Baldy" Henderson, of Salisbury, to de-

send him. He was fortunate in employing Mr. Henderson, as his influence over a jury was not equalled by any lawyer in the State. His trial was moved to Morganton, and he was promptly acquitted for want of evidence. But he was immediately arrested again, charged with stealing negroes, and put in Statesville jail. He remained there but a short time, until he was able to break jail, and finding a splendid horse tied in the rear of the jail, he bid farewell to North Carolina. The crime of stealing a slave was a felony, punishable with death; and the Governor was so fully persuaded of his guilt he offered a reward of \$5,000 for his apprehension.

We now come to a part of his history, after leaving the territory of which we write, where truth is stranger than fiction. It is said Curry was a child of impulse from infancy, not quarrelsome, but quick to resent an insult; that he was in love with a class-mate—Lucy Gordon, when they were but children. Their dream flowed smoothly, until Lucy was eighteen, when her parents desired her to marry another, but true to her life-long lover, she refused to obey her parents, and ran away with Nixon Curry. When being pursued, he killed his rival and escaped. It is said that during his entire life of strife and crime, he never spoke an unkind word to his wife. After tarrying a short time in the mountains about the headwaters of the Catawba, he started for a country more congenial to his mode of life. The Territory of Arkansas was just beginning to be settled, and to this point of the fertile delta bordering on the St. Francis, now in the State of Arkansas, an emigrant made his appearance, calling himself John Hill. He rapidly became the most popular man in the settlement. Although of moderate means, he was sober, industrious, generous and of extended hospitality, and such continued to be his character in the country which he had adopted for a period extending over a dozen years.

During all of this time not a quarrelsome word

occurred between him and any of his neighbors, and yet all new it was not for lack of courage on the part of Hill, for of all the hunters that pierced the jungles of cane in the "Great Swamp" or descended by torch light into the bowels of the Ozark mountains, he had the reputation of being the most fearless. He was overwhelmingly elected again and again to the Territorial Legislature, and distinguished himself by his powerful and impassioned eloquence, speedily becoming a leader in the ranks of his party.

He was a member of the convention which formed the State constitution, and was re-elected the ensuing year to represent his (Pope) county in the Senate of Arkansas.

And now began his second series of misfortunes. Hill's most intimate neighbors were the Strongs, four brothers of considerable wealth, a great deal of ambition, and in the phrase of the country, "famous fighters." A close and cordial intimacy grew up between them and Hill, and the latter, most unfortunately and unguardedly, made George, the elder, a confidant to his previous history.

It so happened that George Strong had a most ambitious desire for political distinction, and made a request of Hill that he should resign his seat in the Senate in his favor. This he refused to do, and the brothers conspired for revenge.

Sending to North Carolina they procured a copy of the reward offered for Nixon Curry, the notorious robber. The four brothers, powerful and determined as they were, dared not attempt his capture alone, but secured the assistance of a dozen men and made the attempt to capture Hill in his own house. The latter never forgot his daily peril. He always carried an enormous double-barrelled shot gun, two long rifle pistols, and a formidable knife. Arkansas has never been noted as a peacefully inclined State, and in those days its population numbered a greater per cent. of desperadoes and lawless men than it did a few years later. The attack of the Strongs proved a

dreadful one for themselves. Two of the brothers were shot dead, while six of the others were badly wounded, some of them mortally, when the rest of them were glad to withdraw for the time. The affair caused the most unbounded excitement throughout Arkansas. The thought that the chivalrous and highly popular John Hill could be identical with the notorious robber, Nixon Curry, was staggering to hundreds. Many for a time refused to believe it.

Perhaps the state of public feeling can best be shown by the two following extracts from the Little Rock Gazette: "Among the truest friends of the people of all in the present convention, may be named John Hill, of St. Francis. His energy, eloquence and courage fully entitled him to the proud place he holds, and, as we trust, will long retain, that of the leader of the Arkansas Democracy."

The second extract is taken from the same paper of 1840:

"Bloody Affray.—A desperate rencontre occurred last week in St. Francis. Two distinguished citizens were killed and three deaths resulted from an attempt to arrest John Hill, a member of the last Legislature, and formerly of the State convention, who, it is alleged, is the notorious robber, Nixon Curry, who committed such atrocities fifteen years ago in the mountains of North Carolina."

A requisition was sent by the Governor of North Carolina demanding the surrender of Nixon Curry. The Governor of Arkansas published an additional reward for the arrest of John Hill; and thus between the two it seemed as if it was about up with the victim.

Hill packed up hastily and set out with his wife and children for Upper Arkansas, where he knew of the existence of a band of desperadoes, that he had reason to believe would protect him. He was pursued by over a hundred of the citizens, many of them unarmed, and only



attending for the purpose of witnessing the sport and securing a part of the munificent reward that was offered for the man's apprehension. Hill was overtaken at Conway Court House by these men. He halted his wagon and admonishing his wife and children to keep their places, marched boldly forth with his death-dealing gun to meet them.

The gallantry of the action, and Hill's incredible bravery, operated in his favor. Many were unwilling to hunt so intrepid a character, others were afraid, a panic was created, and Hill pursued his way unmolested.

Subsequent attempts were made to arrest him, but all resulted tragically, or ludicrously, to those attempting it. It was known that Hill could never be taken alive, and many began to believe that he could not when dead.

The constant pursuit and chasing of him changed his nature. He became morose and sour and unable to follow any regular business. He resorted to the gambling table for the support of his family. He became a drinker, too, and was speedily transformed into a bitter and quarrelsome opponent.

If Hill had been famous among the mountains and piedmont section of North Carolina, he now became doubly so.

Excepting, perhaps, that prince of duelists, James Bowie, there was never a man who inspired more terror. Men who had acquired a wide reputation for their deeds of daring, turned pale when they encountered John Hill. Bullies who sought quarrels on the slightest pretext, accepted all manner of insults from him without a word of remonstrance. (It is said and believed, that during all the wonderful vicissitudes of Curry's most wonderful and tragic life, he never spoke a harsh and unkind word to his wife. Like Byron's Corsair, he had "one virtue linked with a thousand crimes.")

One day in September, 1845, while seated at the breakfast table, Hill burst into tears.



"What's the matter, dear?" inquired his wife.

"I have had a dreadful dream; it is a warning. I saw George Strong in my sleep, and he kissed me with his pale lips, that burned like fire, and smelled of sulphur. I am sure I shall die before sunset. Together we have encountered perils and hardships. You abandoned wealth and position for my sake, and you have never spoken an unkind word to me. We have loved from childhood, and that love has never known abatement. It is this that troubles me—not regard for myself. It is indelibly impressed upon my mind that I shall die a horrible death before sundown, and the thought that it will distress you, also distresses me."

These were the exact words of Hill as testified by his wife and children.

His wife told him. "Then, my dear husband, do not go to court today." (The Circuit Court of Pope county, in which Hill resided, it should be remarked, was then in session.")

"Yes, my wife, I must go," he replied. "When a man's time has come, he should not seek to avoid death, but meet it bravely."

Then, turning to his son, William, a bright boy of thirteen, he told him to go and get the Bible, and upon it he made him swear to kill the man who should kill his father.

"Here comes Moses Howard, he will protect you, pa," remarked Mary Hill, the oldest daughter, a lovely girl of fifteen, who was to be married the next day to the youth then approaching. Moses Howard, who was a fine-looking powerful man, chatted a few minutes with the family, and then went out in company with Hill, who shaved and dressed himself with particular neatness, embraced his wife with the warmest affection, and with tears in his eyes, before leaving.

As soon as the two reached town, Hill began drinking deeply, and showed a more quarrelsome disposition than ever. He insulted everybody that crossed his path, and

all the entreaties of the young man failed to pacify him. Finally he declared that he would clear the court house, and dashed into the court room with fury depicted in his countenance. Judge, lawyers, jury, spectators, all made a rush for the door. One man who lagged behind was siezed by Hill and beaten unmercifully.

Young Howard caught hold of the infuriated man and attempted to restrain him, when, glaring like a tiger, he turned upon the youth and struck him to the floor. Before he could rise Hill sprang upon him and commenced pounding him.

"For God's sake, stop, Hill. Don't you know me—your friend—Howard?"

Hill seemed to grow more furious each moment, and clutched a pistol, determined to take his friend's life. Howard grasped the barrel of the pistol as Hill cocked it, and the weapon was discharged in their hands without doing any injury. Once more they clinched, and the most dreadful struggle ensued ever witnessed in the West. The advantage shifted from one side to the other for the space of five minutes, till both were bathed in streams of their own blood. Even the bystanders looking on through the windows of the long court house, were struck with wonder and awe. At length, while writhing and twisting like two raging serpents, the handle of Hill's huge bowie knife, unthought of previously, protruded from beneath his hunting shirt. Both saw it at the same time, and both attempted to grasp it. Howard succeeded. Quick as lightning he drew the knife-blade from the scabbard, and sheathed it up to the hilt in the bosom of his friend and his sweetheart's father.

"The dream is fulfilled," exclaimed Hill, with a smile of strange sweetness that remained on his features even after he was a corpse. He then sank down and expired without a groan. Howard gazed on him there as he lay, with that singular smile on his face, and his glazed eyes

open. And then awakening with a start, as if from some horrible vision of the night, the poor, unhappy youth fell headlong on the body of his friend, crying in tones that melted many hardened spectators to tears, "Great God! What have I done?" He kissed the clammy lips of the dead, tried to staunch the bloody wound with his handkerchief, and then, apparently satisfied that all was over, sprang upon his feet with a scream, "Farewell, Mary. Your father is gone, and I am going with him," and turning the point of the gory knife towards his own breast, would have plunged it into his own heart, had he not been prevented by the by-standers, who had now crowded into the room.

The same evening Moses Howard disappeared, and was heard of no more for nearly two years, when a trader brought back word that he had seen him in San Antonio, Texas.

When the shocking news reached Hill's family, the beautiful Mary burst into a wild laugh. Hopelessly insane, she was taken to New Orleans and placed in an asylum, where she spent the remainder of her most wretched life.

It will be remembered that Hill enjoined upon his son to avenge his death. Faithfully did that son obey the command. When he had reached his sixteenth year, he left for Texas. He was gone for several months. When he returned he said to his mother, in reply to her inquiring look: "It's done, mother! Poor Howard, I pitied him, but I had to do it!"

"Poor Mose," said the mother, weeping, "but it could not be helped. The son of such a brave man as Nixon Curry must never be called a coward, and besides, it was your father's order."

[For the facts on which the history of this most remarkable man has been written, I am under obligations to Mrs. Johnston, a sister of Nixon Curry, and to her son,

Isaac Johnston, a venerable citizen of Davidson College also for the use of Arkansas newspapers printed at the time of the wildest excitement connected with the killing of Curry. As for the killing of Ben Wilson, every person in the upper part of Mecklenburg was familiar with all the details forty years ago.]