

# Significant dates on our state flag



ED SMITH

May 20, 1775, is one of the two dates included on our State Flag. It is the date of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. This was once a highly-honored event in our state's history. Now it represents a situation many North Carolina historians find embarrassing.

Most experts now believe that the Declaration of May 20, 1775, never occurred. Others still stand by it, however, and the controversy surrounding the Mecklenburg event makes for one of the deepest mysteries in our state's history.

According to tradition, the citizens of Mecklenburg County met in Charlotte and declared their independence from Great Britain over a year earlier than the date of our national Declaration, July 4, 1776. Unfortunately, no original copy of their Declaration was preserved, and when the matter first became a controversy (around 1820) all of the survivors could not agree on the exact date. Most of them said May 20, which agreed with what had been — until that time — a totally-accepted local tradition.

A few years later, however, authentic and unquestioned newspaper accounts of a meeting held in Mecklenburg on May 31 were discovered, and historians leaped upon this later meeting as an explanation of what had "really happened" in Charlotte. This later document, called the Mecklenburg Resolves is less bold in concept than the

existing copies of the Declaration, and the word "independence" does not appear in it. (I will discuss the Resolves further two weeks from now.)

Thomas Jefferson had been offended by claims for an earlier declaration, and his supporters were eager to debunk the Mecklenburg document. Today historians are also skeptical of the May 20th claim, largely because of the absence of an authentic copy. My own personal feeling is that entirely too much strong evidence in favor of it does exist to discount it totally. I doubt if a final verdict can ever be safely reached. It would take the discovery of evidence which probably no longer exists (if it ever did) to establish the claim for a Mecklenburg Declaration, but I am unwilling to state flatly that it did not occur.

Ironically, John Penn, one of this state's three signers of the national Declaration of Independence is also associated with this week in history. Penn was born in Virginia, on May 17, 1741.

An early and staunch supporter of separation from Great Britain, Penn served in the Continental Congress from 1775-80. After the Revolution he forsook government service entirely for the practice of law.

Both Penn and his fellow signer, William Hooper, are buried in the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park near Greensboro.

The Battle of Alamance, the first real armed revolt against British authority, took place near the present city of Burlington on May 16, 1771.

Royal Governor William Tryon, commanding a 1100-man force of militia, smashed a force of some 2,000 insurgents in a two-hour battle, bringing about the collapse of the Regulator Movement. Ironically, many prominent Carolinians who would support the Revolution against British authority only four years later sided with Governor Tryon that day.

The Regulator movement had spread throughout the Carolina back country settlements, caused by resentment against taxes and corrupt local officials. Tryon

hanged six leaders of the Regulators, and set out upon a march from Hillsborough, to Salisbury to Salem, burning the property of those prominently involved in the rebellion.

## Was the poet putting us on?

Perhaps you have noticed the corner column on the editorial page devoted to verse from local poets.

We have been fortunate in that several contributors show a definite talent for stringing descriptive words together to create moving and beautiful imagery.

We have also been unfortunate in that some contributors couldn't verse their way out of a soggy paper bag.

The other morning's mail fetched us such a work. The name won't be revealed here, but maybe a verse or two will. The reason I'm printing this is because I have never seen our general manager go into such hysterical laughter over anything the way he has over this verse.

The piece is entitled "Little Maid."

"Little maid upon my fan,  
Did you come from far Japan?  
What a tiny oval face,  
Did you like the other place?"

The above is the first verse and obviously, the subject is a slant-eyed beauty gracing one of those gaudy sideshow souvenir fans. The author doesn't think the young girl has much of a life "in far away Japan," judging by another verse . . .

"If you were over here, you  
beautiful dear,  
You would have much more hope.  
You could make a big hit  
Just selling the Grit,  
Or advertising the good 'ole Ivory soap."

Are you beginning to see why Darrell Austin gets torn out of frame each time he reads the poem?  
But the clincher is as follows . . .  
'If I could see you in person,



TOM MCINTYRE

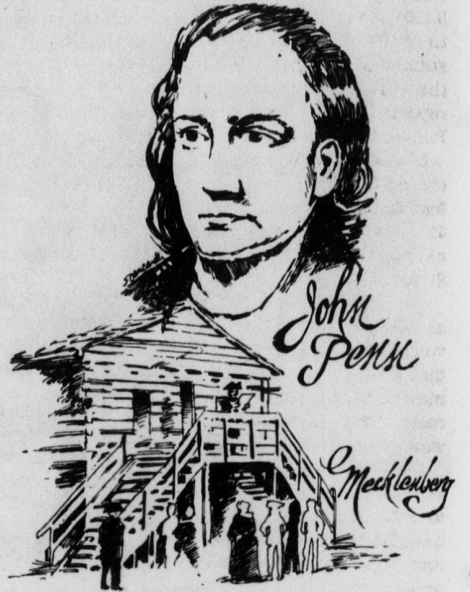
I'd ask you one question and  
Hope you wouldn't tell me a  
Yarber. I'd say, please tell  
me dear, if you don't care,  
Was you the one that bombed  
Pearl Harbor?"

The poem ends with the statement . . .  
'It could have been one of your kin,  
An acquaintance or a friend,  
Surely you wouldn't have  
Done nothing that bad."

Now, before you get all upset with me, thinking I am putting down someone really trying to express him or herself, let me fill you in on the way the piece was signed.

The author put the word "Saint" in front of the name and tagged it with "Or The Reincarnated Pharaoh."

Was the author putting us on with this so-called poem? Or was it done in all sincerity? I'd prefer to believe it was a put on, because if it was sincere, then our budding author doesn't quite have both ears in the water.



## The Poet's Corner

### THE FATE OF THE SEA-FARING FISHERMAN

There was a fisherman who dwelled near the sea  
He wore a funny cap and shorts below the knee,  
He wove a tale from his big yarn  
Longer than the path that curved 'round his barn.

The largest fishes just swam his way  
On the wall of the cabin was a shark display,  
From his yarn you would gather never a small fish  
The side of a whale was his common dish.

He was a loner and broiled by himself  
Fed his cat on minnows, there were minnows left,  
Scrubbed the pots and pans and hung them high  
To catch the breeze when it breezed by.

His friends afar came out to see  
If the tale were true or a fantasy,  
No one ever saw the large fish when he caught  
And swallered the tale with a grain of salt.

A photographer came out just to make sure  
A little prying into the yarn could endure,  
He was caught in the process of reeling one in  
A small anchovy horribly thin.

The unannounced photographer took a snap at him  
He slipped into the ocean and away to swim  
Caught in a predicament similar to a fish,  
A whale swam along with a whale of a wish!

His cat purrs alone on a lonely pier  
Waiting for his good friend to appear,  
Sighs under his fur with the whiskers down  
The whispering wind blows the tale around.

VIVIAN STEWART BILTOLIEFFE

## EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

Page 4A Thursday, May 19, 1977

### KMers have big hearts

Last week two things happened; the Mirror-Herald published the plight of the Brian Bickley family and Mrs. Marilyn Neisler started a special account at First Union National Bank for public tax deductible donations for the Bickleys.

Today, that account has about \$3,500 contributed by friends of the Bickleys and their fellow Kings Mountians.

Brian Bickley suffered a heart attack last November and in the hospital it was discovered that he had a coronary disease. Since November 1976 Bickley has been confined to both Kings Mountain and Charlotte Memorial Hospitals, with the exception of five weeks.

The medical bills are frightening. Even if the Bickleys were to liquidate all of their assets, the money would barely knock the top off that mountainous debt. Recognizing this fact, Mrs. Neisler organized the Bickley fund.

The results to date clearly show that Kings Mountians have big hearts and will waste no time in reaching out to help a fellow human being when the need is made known.

### Art of getting along

To the editor,

Sooner or later a man who is wise discovers life is a mixture of good and bad days, victory and defeat, give and take.

He learns that being overly sensitive doesn't pay and that he should let abuse roll off his head like water off a duck.

He learns that he who loses his temper usually loses out. He also learns that carrying a chip on his shoulder is the easiest way of getting into trouble. He learns the quickest way to become unpopular is to

carry tales of gossip.

A man learns, if he is wise, that others are as ambitious as he and that hard work is the secret to success. He learns that no one ever gets to first base alone, that it takes a cooperative effort.

He realizes that the art of getting along depends almost entirely on his own behavior towards others.

EVERETTE PEARSON  
Kings Mountain

### Hypertension is a killer

Hypertension, high blood pressure, and high blood are all one and the same thing, and it is a killer. It is a silent disease that can be present in the body for years without any symptoms. A person can feel perfectly healthy with no headaches, no dizziness, no spots before the eyes while the blood pressure is damaging the arteries, the heart, the kidneys, and setting the body up for heart attack, stroke or kidney failure.

There is no present cure for the disease, but there are effective methods for treatment to keep it under control. These methods can bring the blood pressure down to a level a person can live with and live a happier, healthier life.

Many people still do not know whether or not they have high blood pressure or how dangerous it is or what to do about it. There

is a pamphlet, "High Blood Pressure," available from the North Carolina Heart Association free of charge to anyone who writes to request it. The pamphlet outlines what high blood pressure is, what it can do to your body, how to find out if you have high blood pressure and what can be done about it.

It is estimated that in this country there are some 23 million people with high blood pressure and some 700,000 in North Carolina. But about one out of every three of these people do not know they have it. Don't be one of those, or let anyone in your family or among your friends walk around with a potential killer inside.

Get a free copy of "High Blood Pressure." Write to: North Carolina Heart Association, 1 Heart Circle, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.

## Concern much greater for tick-borne infection

There would seem to be a greater need for concern about Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever as the years roll by because the reported incidence of this tick-borne infection continues to climb. An all-time high of 192 cases of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever were reported in North Carolina in 1976. There were only three reported cases in Cleveland County in 1976. During the past five years no increase has been seen locally in cases reported.

The best guard against the disease is to inspect the entire body, especially the head, twice a day when in tick infested areas. Some precautions can minimize the chance of getting the ticks when entering heavily vegetated places. Wear high-top shoes or pull socks over pants legs. Apply insect repellent to skin and clothing. Closely examine children and dogs. A child can get a tick from a dog long after the family has returned from the woods. Persons interested in using chemical control to protect their dogs from ticks should contact one of the county's local veterinarians for in-

formation.

Rocky Mountain Spotted fever symptoms are characterized by fever, headache, muscle pains, and a measles-like rash that usually starts on the hands and feet.

Removing ticks should be done immediately and apply an antiseptic to any tick bites. While a loose tick is easy to remove and destroy, one that has embedded its mouthparts in the skin and is firmly attached is much more difficult to remove. It must be removed gently to keep from tearing the mouthparts and leaving them in the skin to cause infection. Clasp the tick, preferably with tweezers, near the person's skin and gently tug, making certain the tick remains intact. If the hands touched the tick during removal, wash them thoroughly.

One caution: The widespread belief that heat will cause a tick to let go is erroneous in most cases. A lighted match or cigarette usually burns the skin, kills the tick and makes removal more painful and difficult. Persons having questions may call the County Health Department at 487-1181.

# North Carolina is truly The Variety Vacationland

Ask an old-timer what they called North Carolina?

"Variety Vacationland!"  
Ask a newcomer who travels the Tar Heel State, and you'll get the same answer.

The month of May is proof of the variety of events, fun, happenings that range from the Atlantic to the Great Smokies.

A headliner is the World 600 Weekend at Charlotte Motor Speedway May 27-29. Billed as a "racing explosion" these three days will bring together man and machine.

The Executive 200 on Friday, May 27, will put the Baby Grands in 120 miles of fast action by 60 compacts. The modifieds will battle on Saturday, May 28, with the Patriot 300.

Racing! The World 500! Young lions like Waltrip, Bonnett, Sommers, Manning, Bivins and Brooks in a 170-mph fender rubbing with giants like Petty, Pearson, Baker, Parsons, Yarborough, Marcis and the Allison. The date: Sunday, May 29. The fastest 40 will be battling for \$302,550 in prize money with the winner standing a chance to pocket a record \$80,000.

Entertainment stars gather at Duke University in Durham May 29-30, to play golf, have fun, with the real winners children. It's the annual Duke Children's Classic, and the action takes place on the Duke Golf Course. Last year Perry Como,

Chet Atkins, Whitey Ford and Buddy Hackett gave their time and talent for the children. This year, they will return, joined by celebs Hank Aaron, Dick Martin and Joe Garagiola. The Liggett Group is a co-sponsor of the classic, and proceeds go to Duke Pediatrics for research involving childhood diseases.

May is also ramp eating time in the western part of the State. Ramps have been described as like an onion, only better, and like an onion, only worse. One writer, in describing the vegetable with the power punch, said, "It makes the odor of onion and garlic smell as sweet as zephyrs blowing off beds of heather."

The long-time annual Ramp Convention is May 22 at Waynesville, and the Big Ivy Community Club's fourth annual Ramp Festival is May 7 at Barnardsville.

The Ramp Convention draws politicians of different faith who meet without conflict for the enjoyment of chomping on a ramp. And, if you would like to attend the ramp festivals, all that stuff about a person who has partaken of ramps being socially unacceptable for a week is pure bunk. The fragrance only lasts six days.

If kicking up your heels is what you have in mind, Fontana is the place. Three big festivals will be held here in May: the 26th semi-annual Rebel Roundup, a square dance

festival, May 8-15; 21st semi-annual Accent on Rounds with Squares, a dance festival, May 22-29; and the 32th semi-annual Fun Fest, square dance festival, May 29-June 5.

Sunday-in-the-Park will be held in Wilson May 1, and Sunday-on-the-Square in Fayetteville also on May 1. Both events are sponsored by the local Arts Council and feature arts, crafts, and music. A Sidewalk Art Show will be held in Warrington May 1-2. The North Carolina C-2 (Canoeing) Championships will be held on the Tuckasee River near Cullowhee May 7. Festival in the Park with arts, crafts, folk dancing and music is scheduled at the Macon County Fairgrounds near Franklin May 13-14. The May Festival in Wilmington on May 13-15, features arts, crafts, house tours, and boat tours.

The annual Cape Fear Marlin Tournament will be held May 22-28 at Wrightsville Beach with anglers competing for \$5,000 in prize money and trophies in six classifications.

A Hang Gliding Spectacular is scheduled May 21-22 at Jockey's Ridge State Park at Nags Head on the Outer Banks.

The month of May ends with a bang and a prediction of June with the 10th annual Kemper Open Golf Tournament May 30-June 5 in Charlotte. This \$250,000 tournament is one of the outstanding stops on the PGA tour.

May is a month of variety, but then North Carolina is Variety Vacationland.

**KINGS MOUNTAIN MIRROR-HERALD**

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