

HISTORICAL

By REV. E. H. DAVIS

On the Halifax road two miles N. E. of Louisburg there stands an old house one of the best preserved specimens of the architecture much in vogue in this section a hundred years ago. It is the Massenburg place now the residence of Mr. Nick Perry, grandson of Nicholas Bryor Massenburg and his wife Lucy Davis Massenburg. The Massenburgs acquired the property by purchase prior to 1840 and added to the house at first a single story structure as their growing family required. Through the years with its 14x12 sills and 12x4 sleepers it has resisted decay and standing on a rocky knoll well above the hard surface highway with its ceaseless tide of travel at its base it is a building to attract the attention if not the admiration of even a careless passerby. A porch stretches across the entire front from which two doors side by side open, one into the living-room 18 by 20, the other into the dining-room of same size. Inside may be found furniture and pictures in keeping with the building and like it in fine condition. This old house seems as sound today as it was 100 years ago and stands as a rebuke to other sites in this and adjoining counties worthy as it of longer life but which through carelessness and indifference have crumbled into forgetfulness and decay. Visiting there this week there was placed in my hands by the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Massenburg Perry—Mr. Perry is a grandson of the couple already mentioned—a diary kept by his grandfather running from 1840 to 1846. To me it has been a volume of deepest interest and I am privileged to quote from it for the TIMES. Mr. Massenburg, whose funeral I attended in 1872, was an extensive farmer owning and operating not only this home place of several hundred acres on Fox Swamp but another equally as large on Sandy Creek and called by him in this diary, Egypt. On the first pages of the diary are recorded the names of his slaves or many of them, with the names of their parents, date of birth and death. Consumption is recorded as taking off many of them. The names of many of them are interesting, viz: Menerva, Venus, Hortense, Savanna, Claressy, Violet, as well as more familiar, Oseur, Jacob, Moses, Emal, nei Sucky, Dicey and Lucinda. At the beginning of each year he names the overseer for each place—with the wages—usually \$100 in money and 400 lbs. of pork and 4 barrels of corn, and also allots the slaves for each farm specifying hoe hands and ploughers—the latter usually women. I record in full an entry Jan. 2, 1840 on 1st page. Thursday, Jan. 2. Kill hogs at Planta-

tion, 40 which average 121 28-40 lbs. and make 4868 lbs. which added to the 40 killed here on the 20th Dec. (see Farm Book A) made 9028 lbs. Sold 746 lbs. overseers have 1000 lbs. which leaves for family supply 7282 lbs. for 39 negroes and whites in family. Snow 8 inches deep. Thermometer 2 deg. at 10 o'clock tonight. And then at close of the year—1840—he summarizes the year's work in detail for each place but briefly here as follows: At home 24 barrels of cotton, 133 barrels of corn, 19 stacks oats, 2 stacks hay, 13 stacks fodder, 600 bushels potatoes. At Egypt the crop for same year showed 345 barrels of corn, 36 stacks fodder, 11 stacks hay, 6 stacks oats, 6 hogheads tobacco weighing 6570 lbs. which netted \$308.62—less than 5 cents a pound. At both places 95 hogs were killed—weighing—11,757 pounds of which 4062 pounds were sold. Net proceeds of both places for the year totaled \$1,250.18. That is to say this much was sold. No corn was sold or forage and just how much of tobacco and cotton were kept at home for home consumption is not stated, though it is frequently stated just how many hands were kept at home spinning. Those 50 or more slaves had to be clothed as well as fed and neither they nor their owners had any store clothes. Just here I will give as recorded here on opening page Mrs. Shines (Grandma Shines. I wrote about her before) recipe for a family medicine good it would seem for all ills our flesh is heir to and would commend the same to the scrutiny of our doctors and druggists. Take 1 lb. of nails, 1 small handful of Virginia Snake-root, 1 pint good vinegar, 1 lb. brown sugar, 1 pint of rum or brandy. Put the Snake-root in an iron vessel, then place the nails on it, pour over it the pint of vinegar and let it steep 24 hours. Then take out the Snake-root and nails and to the vinegar remaining add the sugar and brandy, boil it slowly to nearly a pint and pour it off into a large mouth bottle, tie a rag over it. Dose—a teaspoonful twice a day for an adult and 1-4 of teaspoonful for a child of 5 years. We may smile at this strange brew but is it not possible that mixtures just as strange have gone down the throat of many of us? We can only say where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise. I was especially interested in the entries for the Sabbath day not one of which seems to have been forgotten through the whole diary. Evidently this was a church going couple. They went somewhere for service every Sunday or gave the reason for non-attendance. This entry in particular was of interest to me. Sunday, Sept. 10, 1843. A most powerful revival of religion in this county. We go to Prospect, 3 miles South of Louisburg, where more than 100 have been converted and between 60 and 70 have joined the

M. E. Church and the meeting still continues. Again, Sunday, Sept. 17 Great Revival of Religion. Protracted meeting at Trinity. I go. Three converts today. And so the record continues. These church-going people do not restrict their attendance to Methodist Churches or even to Franklin County. Sandy Creek and Red Bud Baptist Churches, the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches in Louisburg, Marshalls and Pitrees in Halifax, Shady Grove and Shocco in Warren are mentioned each many times in this diary of six years. In one place we read. Today we heard Dr. Walt, President of Wake Forest College. Then this very interesting entry, "Sunday, June 16, 1845. Dr. Johnson and two daughters with Mrs. Shaw and daughters, Miss Kate were confirmed by Bishop Ives," the last mentioned being the mother of our esteemed townsman, Mr. R. H. Davis. This interests in more ways than one. Bishop Ives full name, Levi Silliman Ives—while Bishop of this diocese went over to the Roman Catholic Church and died in its communion. He was a strong man, vigorous and popular, whose advanced view on the subject of prelatical succession and the authority of the church led

him inevitably to Rome, (where being a married man he was necessarily cut off from officiating as a clergyman or priest but as a professor, lecturer and author he came to eminence and was popular as such until his death in 1867. His wife was the daughter of Bishop Hobart of the diocese of New York—also a distinguished preacher and author.) At some time during his incumbency here the late Mrs. Mary Penn told me that she had stood on the bridge over the river and had seen Bishop Ives baptize therein candidates for

membership into the Episcopal Church. With the permission of the Editor and the owners of this diary I hope to make some further quotations therefrom of interest to TIMES readers. Cabarrus County farmers are showing interest in seeding rye grass and crimson clover over the top of temporary lespedeza pastures, reports R. D. Goodman, farm agent of the State College Extension Service.

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