

FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORY

By REV. E. H. DAVIS

On the 22nd July 1776 the Council of Safety assembled in Halifax received first tidings of the Declaration of Independence adopted by the Continental Congress in Philadelphia on the 4th of June of same month. Whereupon they unanimously resolved, "that the committee of the respective towns and counties of the State on receiving the Declaration of Independence do cause the same to be proclaimed in the most public manner" in order that the good people of the colony may be fully informed thereof. It may be worth while to note here just how that event was celebrated in the old town when the above resolution was adopted. From the Colonial records (10-716) we read that on July 25th the Council proceeded to change the last oath and the preamble test the resolution states that the Colonies were now free and independent States and all allegiance to the British crown was forever at an end. On the 27th of the same month they set apart Thursday the 1st day of August as a day for proclaiming the Declaration at the Court House. On that day an immense crowd of people assembled. The Provincial troops and militia companies were all drawn up in full array. At mid-day Cornelius Harnett ascended the rostrum and even as he opened the scroll upon which were written the immortal words the enthusiasm of the immense crowd broke forth in one long swell of rejoicing and prayer. He proceeded with his task and read the Declaration to the mute and impassioned multitude with the solemnity of an appeal to heaven. When he finished all the people shouted with joy and the cannon sounding from fort to fort proclaimed the glorious tidings that all the 13 colonies were now free and independent States. The soldiers then seized Mr. Harnett and bore him on their shoulders through the streets of the town swearing allegiance to the instrument he had read. Even today more than 150 years afterwards our own hearts thrill with patriotic pride as we read of that celebration in that historic town of that other far off divine event.

Even in this history of quite another section of the State than his it may be not entirely out of order to make more extended reference to Cornelius Harnett whose presence and words contributed so much to the enthusiasm of that day. He was an intense patriot and as such became obnoxious to the strong Tory party in his the Cape Fear section. After the battle of Moore's Creek which prevented a union of the Tories with the British under Clinton at Wilmington that General issued an order "requiring all congresses and committees to be dissolved and offering pardon to all who should obey and lay down their arms except CORNELIUS HARNETT and Robert Howe." Harnett was a member of the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, 1777, taking the place of William Hooper, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, who had resigned and to which Congress Joseph Hewes, another signer, had failed of re-election, (11-470). While in attendance in that historic body he wrote what must have been a characteristic letter to a friend in Wilmington from which we quote: "Dear Sir—I was incalculated at Port Tobacco and had the disorder very favorably. My arm continues to trouble x x x. Inclosed is a letter for Mrs. Harnett which I must beg the favor of you to have well smoked with brimstone. I put all my letters in the sun for an hour before I seal them and am very certain that the infection can not be conveyed in a letter so far but it is best to be cautious." Harnett was also a scholar and an effective speaker. Josiah Quincy, himself a scholarly man, representative of a distinguished Boston family in which there have been a number to bear the same name was a guest of Harnett on a trip through the Colonies in 1773. His diary of that date has this entry—"Spent the night at Mr. Harnett's, the SAMUEL ADAMS of North Carolina, except in point of fortune." In which case as Harnett was a wealthy man the balance must have been in his favor.

When we consider the fact that the Adams, Quincy, Lowell and Abbott families of the Bay State afterwards and possibly even then constitutes a coterie of intellectual high-brows whose word was the last in certain matter this was high praise. It was said that none of the last three would speak to anybody but an Adams and an Adams would not speak to anybody but God. Samuel Adams was an outstanding patriot, doing more possibly in helping to lay the foundation of the new government than either his cousin, the 2nd President or that President's son. After all Quincy's entry may have had reference only to the fact that Harnett in being proscribed by Clinton had had the same experience that Adams had had at the hands of Gage in Boston. Harnett's name is being deservedly perpetuated in that of one of our most thriving counties.

Among the last Extra assemblies of the people in which Bute County as such had representation was the very important extra one in Halifax, Nov. 12, 1776 in which a Constitution and Bill of

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Since our last report the following subscriptions have been received in appreciation of this history:

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Rights were adopted and Richard Caswell was elected Governor the first under the Constitution. Bute's delegation therein was as follows: James Denton, Thomas Eaton, Philemon Hawkins, Benjamin Seawell and Benjamin Ward.

At the first session of the Assembly under that Constitution in New Bern, 1777, in which Bute was represented by Benjamin Seawell in the Senate and Green Hill and Benjamin Ward in the House a bill was introduced in the Senate by Mr. Seawell for the extinction of that county and its division into two.

For some reason that does not appear the bill to that effect did not reach its final reading and adoption until the next session of the assembly in Halifax in 1779—at which time to be exact, Friday, Jan. 29, (13-668), the new County of Franklin and her sister Warren came into being. Franklin had her own representatives in the Legislature that met in Smithfield May 3rd in same year.

From the Act of Legislature authorizing the new counties of Warren and Franklin we quote— "Whereas, the large extent of the County of Bute render the attendance of its inhabitants in the extreme parts of said county to do public duties extremely difficult and expensive.

1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly that from and after the passing of this act the County of Bute shall be divided into two distinct counties by a direct line from the Granville County line to the Halifax or Nash County line as the case may be leaving in each part or division an equal quantity of acres as near as can be ascertained and in order that the same may be ascertained with as much precision as possible.

2. Be it further enacted that Julius Nichols, William Duke, John Falian, John Norwood and Matthew Thomas a majority of them are hereby appointed Commissioners to measure the lines of said counties on every side and to run the dividing line so as to make each respective division as convenient to the respective persons residing therein as possible, which said lines when so run by the Commissioners shall be entered in the Record of each county and all that part that lies North of said line and adjacent to Virginia shall be a distinct county by the name of Warren and all that part South of said line shall be a distinct county by the name of Franklin x x x and the Courts in the County of Franklin shall constantly be held on the 3rd Monday in March, June, September and December and the first Court in the County of Franklin shall be in the house of Benjamin Seawell lately owned by Bell, and

the justices in each of these counties are hereby authorized to adjourn to such places in their respective counties as they shall think most convenient to hold all subsequent courts until Court Houses shall be built in each County and in order that the centre of each county may be found the aforesaid Commissioners are hereby appointed to find the centre of each county but if the same shall not be convenient to good water then the Commissioners are authorized to fix the place for setting the Court House at the most convenient place where good water may be had nearest the said centre, x x x And that John Norwood, Matthew Thomas, Joseph Norris be appointed Commissioners or any two of them for the County of Franklin which said Commissioners are hereby authorized and empowered to purchase 100 acres of land where the place for building the Court House, etc. shall be fixed but if the proprietor or proprietors of said land shall refuse to sell the same for a reasonable price then the Commissioners are authorized hereby to purchase 100 acres of any other person or persons as near the centre as the aforesaid convenience of water will permit."

Regarding the all important fact of water, important then as well as now, in the memory of some now living there were at least two bold springs of constantly running water in regular use within the corporate limits of our town as it now stands. Were they the determining factor in its present location? As a source of supply contrast them with the power plant, reservoir and 100 foot tower of today—whereby if necessary the whole of Tar River is available for such purpose—to which might be added to complete the contrast the never failing monthly reminder of the town clerk, a matter which bothered our forbears not at all.

Instead of giving here the whole text of that interesting Act of Assembly (1778 and 79) by which our County came into being we give the above quotation adding only this—"Be it further enacted that a tax of 2 shillings and 6 pence on every 100 pounds of taxable property be assessed for the purpose of paying the Commissioners for their services as well as for the aforesaid land, Court House, Prison, Stocks, etc."—which being just one-eighth of one per cent or 12½ cents on a \$100 does not sound excessive to us in these days of Anno Domini 1942.

(To be continued)

A Lump of Coal

Pictures have recently been published showing a new plane built almost entirely of plastic materials. It is a beautiful looking job.

Unbelievable as it may seem, coal supplies essential ingredients for many of the plastics used in modern airplane construction—for wings, fuselages, fairings, radio antenna masts, trim tabs, control pulleys, pilot switch panels, cabin ventilators and cameras.

The designers and builders of airplanes are finding that plastics from coal provide essential materials for building stronger and better planes.

Also plastics produced from coal furnish materials for hundreds of other articles such as pencils, clocks, raincoats, battery boxes, air-conditioning grilles, radio cabinets, table tops, etc. Chemicals from coal contribute to the American way of life, in road construction, medicines, weed killers, automobile tires, clay pigeons, telephones, wood preservatives, etc.

Few persons realize that our chemical industry, in conjunction with the natural resources industries such as mining, oil, timber and power, have been quietly revolutionizing and improving our American standard of living. This is but another triumph to chalk up for individual opportunity and enterprise in our country.

B. T. U. CONVENTION

Interesting Program For Two-Day Session Features Three of Denominations Leading Pulpit Orators—Charles B. Howard, of Bules Creek, Dr. J. Levering Evans, of Richmond, and Rev. Albert E. Simms, of Littleton

Starting Friday, March 20, and continuing through Saturday, the Annual Convention of Region Four, Baptist Training Union will be held in Wendell. With 369 churches, 9 Associations and fifteen counties represented, this convention is expected to bring together more than five hundred delegates. It will be by far the largest meeting ever held in Wendell, and one of the important meetings in the state this year.

Featuring a program, which has been mailed to the churches already, are three of the denominations ablest speakers; Rev. Albert E. Simms, of Littleton, Dr. J. Levering Evans, of Richmond, and Rev. Charles B. Howard, of Bules Creek. All three are men intensely interested in the training of the youth of the state and each will have a vital message for young folks of this troubled day.

Certainly no less a headliner than the three mentioned will be Rev. E. Norfleet Gardner, of Henderson. Always interested in young peoples work, Mr. Gardner has been very closely connected with Region Four since its formation. He was pastor-Advisor for the Region last year, and has given invaluable aid in the plans for the convention this year. He is a worthy fourth to make a quartette of the three preachers already mentioned.

Space alone prevents the mention of many others who will appear on this program. With a wide choice and an almost unlimited wealth of talent from which to choose the program committee has prepared a program every number of which is a feature. In spite of the unsettled conditions it is confidently predicted that this will be one of the largest and most enthusiastic conventions ever held in this region.

A feature to which most of the boys and girls look forward will be the Bonfire Goodnight service held around a large bonfire-Friday night at the end of the formal services. This has been planned and arranged by the Wendell Intermediate Union with Miss Hilda O'Neal as chairman, and Rev. Mark Osborne, Band Director.

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SILVER STAR

The Silver Star is awarded to each person who, while an officer or enlisted man in the Army of the United States is cited for gallantry in action and the citation was published in orders issued from the headquarters of a force commanded by, or which is the appropriate command of a general officer or issued by the War Department, which citation does not warrant the award of the Medal of Honor or Distinguished Service Cross. A bronze star in the center thereof a raised silver star, the center lines of all rays of both stars coinciding. The reverse to have the inscription "For gallantry in action" and a space for the name of the recipient. It is suspended by a silk moire ribbon in stripes of blue, white and red.

Coming home one Sunday afternoon with a string of trout, Robbie was suddenly confronted by the local minister. There was no other way of escape, but the little boy rose to the occasion. Going up to the minister, he said: "Minister, d'ya see what the trouts got for nabbin' worms on Sunday"

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