

# THE IREDELL FAMILY

## THE EARLY LIFE AND CAREER OF THE DISTINGUISHED JAMES IREDELL.

### A MOST ROMANTIC LOVE AFFAIR.

The Original Name of the Family Was Ireton and Tradition Says That They are the Colonial Descendants of Henry Ireton, the Son-in-Law of Oliver Cromwell--The Honorable Rivalry of James Ireddell and the Young Baronet of Dukinfield.

[CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.]  
Written for Sunday News and Observer.

The devoted Damon and Pythias constrained them to offer up their lives for each other, but not their loves. It either had been called on to sacrifice his affection for his lady love to the other, it is not so certain that he would have been equal to the occasion; and compliance, at the same time, would have been a great injustice to the lady. There would have been reason to doubt the depth of his own attachment, also. It was under the influence of such feelings and considerations that Ireddell replied to the pathetic letter of his friend. Under date of Edenton, 19th February 1772, he writes as follows:

"MY DEAR FRIEND:—My time has passed very unhappily ever since I saw you. It can only be equalled by the severity of your distress. I feel for you with all the warmth of friendship, and anxiety of fear; and how to act in the very critical scene before me is a very afflicting thought. I did not know, my dear Sir Nathaniel, how sincerely I loved the dear girl who has engrossed both our hearts, until the night before your declaration to her. Heaven knew how miserably I passed it, and with what uneasy doubt I awaited the event. The unhappiness of your situation took off all thoughts of my own, till I became a prey to my reflections—then I felt what you only can imagine. Your letters from Mrs. Brownrigg's and Norfolk affect me extremely. I am nearly as unhappy as you can be. I know not how I will act, for I cannot answer for myself. My conduct for you shall be guided by the most sacred sense of honor, and by as tender a regard for your happiness as is consistent with my own, and that of one much dearer to me. I have not seen her since you. They are still at Mrs. Dawson's, but are to be here, I am told, on Friday. I wish to God you were here too, that our fates might be decided. The most dreadful certainty is preferable to doubt. Whatever I do, and every circumstance relating to her, I will faithfully and regularly acquaint you with. And yet, Sir Nathaniel, if I cannot command myself so far as to withhold a declaration until your return, my conduct must suffer greatly in her opinion. I have for a long time past behaved to her with a particularity of attention that has engaged the eyes of the world, and which the delicacy of her sentiments must construe, as I intended it, into an indirect address. Such an application would have with me all the force of an express one, and now, when I have reason to believe she has loved me so far as to refuse you, to withdraw my attention, to become or appear more cool as her goodness advances upon me and suddenly to change my behaviour on the first appearance of competition, would be a disgrace and meanness my heart revolts at. Suffer me to add, it would bring on me an insupportable affliction, without materially serving you. I know, and you must believe the greatness of her mind to be such, that she will not marry any man to whom she does not give an exclusive preference over all others, much less give her hand to one man when her heart is possessed by another. You and I both conclude her affections are engaged, and a thousand agreeable circumstances which crowd upon my memory convince me I am the happy owner of them. Oh! exultation would be the thought could you be happy. \* \* \* But when I think as I now do, that she will not, cannot accept of your affection, because hers is engaged to me, love, honor, (everything but friendship, and that, in this instance, is not compatible with the other two,) urge me to a declaration, at least compel me to an attachment. \* \* \* But I cannot promise that I will make no declaration. I dare not do it, lest I should either be tempted to violate it, or make myself more miserable than I am already, and more I cannot well be."

In a letter dated March 5th, from Norfolk, Sir Nathaniel informs Mr. Ireddell that he had made a last appeal to Miss Johnston, by letter, which was to be delivered by his mother, with the greatest caution and privacy; and he awaited her answer, doubtless, before sailing for England. But the letter was declined, for the reason that as the lady's mind was fully made up, she thought it indecorous to receive further protestations of his love. In a letter dated Manchester, 2nd of June, 1772, he details the unsuccessful result of his mother's mission to his lady love. He accordingly surrendered the prize to his friend, and hoped to be of the company when his happiness was completed.

It is not probable that Mr. Ireddell postponed the declaration of his love a day beyond the return of the lady from her visit to Mrs. Dawson. The history is silent on this point; but a very familiar letter to "My Dear Hannah," dated April 19, of the same year, can leave no doubt that the *enquete cordiale* was established weeks before. Ireddell was still under age, and would not be twenty one until October. For this, and perhaps for more substantial pecuniary considerations, the marriage was postponed until the 18th of July, the following year.

In a very dutiful letter to his father, soon after his engagement, he announces the fact, and apologises for having failed to consult him in advance. He explained that the great distance between them, and the impossibility of his father understanding the circumstances, made it impracticable to take his advice. At the same time he dilated upon the exceptional merits of his lady-love, in language which he declared to be entirely free from extravagance or exaggeration. His apologies were well

received, and the lady was cordially welcomed into the family as a daughter and sister. The fact was incidentally alluded to that she was possessed of considerable property.

The following year, 1773, although in the civil service of the mother country, Ireddell sympathized deeply in the common cause of the colonies, and became distinguished for his able and elaborate essays in the newspapers and in pamphlets in vindication of colonial rights. In February, 1774, he succeeded his principal, Henry E. Mculloch, as collector of the Port of Edenton. But the time came too late to be of much value to him. The country was then in the throes of revolution, and the final catastrophe was near at hand. On the 9th November, 1775, Joseph Hewes, Esq., the delegate to the Continental Congress, wrote from Philadelphia to Ireddell, that "when I came here and had conversed with the Massachusetts delegates, I found it a difficult matter to get a letter sent to the Commissioners in Boston. I was informed no letter was suffered to go in till its contents had been examined by a committee, and that letters wrote by persons they thought disaffected, were sometimes stopped, though the contents were only business or compliments. Under the circumstances, I thought it prudent to open your letter, and put it under cover to General Washington, at the same time requesting the favor of him, after he had read its contents, to send it into Boston, and to permit an answer to return the same way. I have not yet received an answer from him, but am in hopes it will not be long before I have that honor. I could think of no better way to get you an answer from the Commissioners. If I have done wrong I must rely on your goodness to excuse it."

The Commissioners here referred to were the British Commissioners of the Revenue, to whom the Collectors in the Colonies were immediately responsible. It would be interesting to know the contents of this letter of Mr. Ireddell to the Commissioners. It was doubtless his official return, as Collector, as his office was not closed for some months later. On the 26th of March, 1776, Mr. Hewes writes again to Mr. Ireddell, that "the letter you gave me for the Commissioners, and which I enclosed to General Washington, (who was then Commander in Chief of the Armies of the colonies, with headquarters at Cambridge), was by him sent into Boston, but no answer was ever returned."

Whether the commissioners failed, or declined to return an answer, or whether it was intercepted by the Massachusetts committee of safety, does not appear. Ireddell was at that time an avowed patriot, and it is singular that his official connection with the British government should have continued to exist, normally, at least, for twelve months after hostilities commenced. Yet it was without forfeiting the confidence of the patriots, among whom he took a high rank, as numerous letters from them afford abundant evidence. This official relation was not severed until some time after the Provincial Congress, sitting at Halifax, had authorized the delegates in the Continental Congress to vote for Independence. Samuel Johnston, his brother-in-law, was President of this Provincial Congress, and under date of April 5, wrote to Ireddell that "all people here are up for independence"; and on the 13th he wrote that "the House in consequence of some very important intelligence received last night, have agreed to empower their delegates at Philadelphia to concur with the other colonies in entering into foreign alliances, and declaring an independence of Great Britain."

As may be seen in the American Archives this was the first declaration by any colonial general congress in favor of independence; and yet it was not according to his biographer, until April 27th, that "all transactions ceased in the Edenton Custom House; and Mr. Ireddell finally closed his books and terminated his career as Collector. His accounts were finally adjusted and settled with the Congress and the Commissioners of Consignation property." The letter of the North Carolina Provincial Congress to the delegates at Philadelphia, authorizing them to vote for a Declaration of Independence, is now in the Library of Congress.

In December, 1777, Mr. Ireddell was elected by the Legislature as one of the three Judges which the Constitution provided; but after holding courts for a few months, he resigned the office. His resignation was tendered in June, 1778, after the close of the term at Washington. The Governor, Richard Owsell, Esq., reluctantly accepted it, with the assurance that his place could not be supplied by a gentleman of equal abilities and inclinations to serve the State in the important duties of the office. The resignation was caused by unpleasant associations on the bench, and by the very arduous duties of the office, which he found to be too severe for his delicate health. His associates were Samuel Ashe, of Washington and Samuel Spencer, of Anson county. The incompatibility was probably with the latter, who is represented as a coarse, uncultivated and unscrupulous man, who, by his extortions when clerk of Anson county court, had excited a tumult. The fate of this man was singular.

In 1794, when enfeebled by disease, he was attacked, while sitting in his yard, by a gobbler with such fury that he died of the wounds received. But, probably, heart disease was the cause of death.

Mr. Ashe, the other associate on the bench, is said to have been a gentleman of integrity, but passionate, prejudiced and not deeply learned in the law. He was afterwards elected Governor by the Legislature, which body, prior to the year 1836, was vested with that authority.

The resignation of Judge Ireddell was regretted by all the able members of the bar in the State, such as Hooper, Nash and MacIaive. He had not yet attained his twenty seventh year.

Having resigned the Judgeship, Mr. Ireddell resumed the practice of law; and among his first business was an appeal to the Legislature, which sat at Halifax, against the passage of sweeping confiscation acts. He labored particularly to save the property of his kinsman, Henry E. Mculloch, and of his friend, Sir Nathaniel Dukinfield; who, though adhering to the Crown, had not engaged in

hostilities against America. I was mistaken in saying last week that he resigned from the army. In the following year, 1779, Mr. Ireddell again entered of office as Attorney General of the State, in which capacity he could not defend claimants upon or petitions to the government of the State.

It became his duty, first as Judge, and afterwards as Attorney General to ride over the State, from the Seaboard to the vicinity of the mountains, and his letters to his wife, in which he describes the county and its inhabitants, are full of interest, especially to a North Carolinian. The inns were as bad as possible, but it was his good fortune in the more settled and civilized parts of the county, to be invited to the private houses of gentlemen who were surrounded by comforts. His salary as Attorney General, was £1,000 per annum. In a letter dated May 23, 1780, he informs his wife that he had already received in civil suits, £1,240 in paper, besides nineteen silver dollars, and that the next day he expected to receive £500 more. But he appeared to prize the nineteen silver dollars more than the paper, which he was anxious to invest before it should depreciate further.

After three years of married life, he writes to Mrs. Ireddell in the following strain: "With respect to my heart, it is, my dear Hannah, entirely and wholly yours. I cherish the dear and agreeable persuasion, and will never part with it. My happiness, my thoughts, my everything is centred in you. God grant you may be able to preserve your health. I shall abide every moment's delay, and when I am permitted to go, shall fly to you with all possible expedition."

The following extract from a letter to his wife, dated Newbern, November 26, 1780, throws light upon the currency question: "I have already received at this court £4,540 of this currency, £1,350 of continental, and nine hard dollars. I expect to receive £1,500 for my salary at three courts; but my expenses are monstrous—£160 a day for my board and lodging only." If the board was worth \$2 per day, the depreciation was 400 for 1. But he probably had a servant which would increase the expense to \$3. The experience of our Revolutionary forefathers, as it regards paper currency, was entirely similar to that of the Southern people during the late civil war.

In 1787, Samuel Johnston, Esq., was elected Governor, and his brother-in-law, Mr. Ireddell, was made one of the council of State, a sort of Cabinet, without compensation, or other duties than those of advising the Governor, when called upon, in regard to measures of importance. Mr. Ireddell was also appointed, or elected as a sole commissioner to revise the statute laws of the State.

In the spring of 1788 he was unanimously chosen by the voters of Edenton as a delegate to the convention which had been called to deliberate upon the adoption of the constitution of the United States. He had from the first, taken an active part in urging its ratification, and wrote essays on the subject which exercised a wide influence upon public opinion. There were a number of able men in this State Convention; as the debates will show; and among them, Mr. Ireddell must be regarded as the ablest. At its first session at Hillsborough, the Convention failed to ratify the Constitution; but the following year, 1789, a session was held at Fayetteville, which acceded to it.

In February 1790, Mr. Ireddell was nominated by President Washington, to the office of Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and was unanimously confirmed by the Senate. He was not an applicant for the place, and it came all unexpectedly, when he was looking to be named as District Judge for the District of North Carolina. Washington had read the debates in the North Carolina Convention, and the distinguished ability there shown by Mr. Ireddell, in support of ratification, together with the able essays written by him in vindication of the rights of the colonies, pending the controversy with Great Britain, caused him to be selected as one of the Judges of the Supreme Court. In that high office he acquitted himself with marked ability, and commanded the confidence and respect of the nation. After his election to the Supreme Court, Judge Ireddell ceased to reside in North Carolina. He first made New York city, his home, and afterwards Philadelphia. The incidents in the life of a Judge, even when on the Supreme bench of the nation, must, in the nature of the case, be monotonous, and free from exciting public interest. It is sufficient to say, that he continued to discharge the duties of the high station in which he had been placed until his death, which took place in 1799.

The voluminous "Life and Correspondence" of Judge Ireddell, is little else than the correspondence and essays, with a few judicial decisions. It is deficient in respect to the narrative, of which there is little, or none, after he attained to the age of manhood, and I find in it no account of his children.

It would be interesting to trace the early career of his distinguished son and namesake, who became Judge, Governor of the State, and United States Senator. James Ireddell, Jr., was born in 1788, at Edenton. He graduated at Princeton, in 1806, and afterwards read law, in which profession he, like his father, rose to eminence. He raised a volunteer company, in 1812, and marched to the defense of Norfolk, during the war with Great Britain. He represented Edenton in the House of Commons during three years, commencing in 1816; and was made Speaker of that body. In 1819 he was chosen a Judge of the Supreme Court, but resigned after a few months. He was elected Governor by the Legislature of the State in 1827; and the next year was elected to the United States Senate to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Macon. At the close of the term, in 1831, he resumed the practice of law. He removed to Raleigh, and died there in 1853. It was my privilege to know Governor Ireddell, and to be numbered among his friends. I regret that I am not able to give a fuller account of his honorable career. While a member of the United States Senate he became the friend of Mr. Tyler, of Virginia, who was at the same time a member of that body; and the friendship survived Mr. Tyler's abandonment of the

Whig party. Gov. Ireddell, after that event, kindly offered to give me a letter of introduction to President Tyler, but my invincible Whig prejudice stood in the way of a very flattering opportunity. "His Accident," as the Whigs styled him, was greatly in want of friends and supporters; and a letter from his distinguished North Carolina friend would have secured me place far beyond my deserts. I have often regretted that the opportunity was not available, but never that I declined it. DANIEL R. GOODLOE. WASHINGTON, D. C., March 22.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CAROLINA MUTUAL Fire Insurance Company

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In the little town of Athens, Ga., domiciled in a modest building, is the SOUTHERN MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY. This company was organized in 1848, and has always been in charge of some of the leading business men in Athens. The success of this Company, which has been wonderful, is not an accident, but the result of industry, care and ability on the part of the officers and managers. During the year ending April 30th, 1894, this Company received for premiums in Georgia, where it only does business, the sum of \$260,000, and for interest from invested assets, over \$48,000; the entire expenses and losses of the Company were only 45 per cent. of its income, and it returned to its policy-holders in dividends 71 per cent. of their premiums. This Company has paid nearly four million dollars of losses, has saved its policy-holders three and a half million dollars in premiums, and yet has accumulated a surplus fund of about a million dollars that is so well invested that it yields an annual income of 5 per cent.

This is the Company that the CAROLINA MUTUAL is to be patterned after, and its object is, not only to save our property owners a great deal of money, but to keep in the South a share of the money that is being annually sent to the North and Europe for insurance. The management of this Company proposes at the beginning to take the people into its confidence, and tell them frankly its plans and hopes. There are to be no secrets now or at any other time, that will be kept from its policy-holders or from the public. In the first place we want the CAROLINA MUTUAL to be pre-eminently the PEOPLE'S fire insurance company of the Carolinas; our stockholders, who are and will be from all parts of the two States, are of all classes; among them are Bankers, Merchants, Manufacturers, Lawyers, Physicians, Clerks and Mechanics.

Under our Charter there can never be a larger dividend than ten per cent. annually, paid on our Capital Stock; so we cannot water our stock, and enrich the stockholder with the profits that rightly belong to the policy-holder. And then our Charter provides that the company SHALL PAY TO THE POLICY HOLDERS A PRO RATA DIVIDEND OF NOT MORE THAN 50 PER CENT OF THE BALANCE OF THE PROFITS, till the assets of the corporation shall have become one hundred thousand dollars after which the directors may at their discretion return the ENTIRE BALANCE OF THE PROFITS to the policy-holders. Our Charter further provides, that after the first year, one-third of our Directors MUST BE POLICY HOLDERS WHO ARE NOT STOCK-HOLDERS, elected by the policy-holders; so the policy-holders of the CAROLINA MUTUAL will always have their own representatives, elected by themselves on our board of Directors, who will see that the conditions of our Charter are faithfully carried out, and their interests carefully looked after.

The Company will commence slowly and carefully, will underwrite nothing but dwellings and brick stores; will not write more than \$3,000 on a brick dwelling, nor more than \$2,000 on a frame dwelling in any one solid block; and will do business only in towns where the business blocks are built largely of brick, and that have good fire protection. By writing only small lines on the best classes of property, and keeping our risks well scattered, we will prevent the possibility of disastrous losses and insure large dividends to our policy-holders, thus materially reducing the cost of their insurance. Our Capital Stock is FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS, which is ample for the business we expect to do, in fact MUCH MORE IN PROPORTION THAN ONE MILLION DOLLARS is to the large Companies, who write large lines on all classes of property and do busi-

ness all over the United States and Canada. A larger capital would be useless and unwieldy, and besides would make it necessary to give more of the profits to our stockholders and less to our policy-holders. Section 6 of our Charter reads "That no stockholder or policy-holder shall be individually liable for the debts of this corporation." We expect to have our agencies established and be ready for business by the first of April, due announcement of which will be made. LOOK UP YOUR POLICY NOW, AND WHEN IT EXPIRES HAVE IT RENEWED WITH THE CAROLINA MUTUAL.

DIRECTORS: M. P. PEGRAM, A. C. SUMMERVILLE, P. M. BROWN, HERIOT CLARKSON, E. B. SPRINGS, J. T. ANTHONY, B. D. HEATH, J. W. MILLER, SAMUEL E. WHITE. P. M. BROWN, E. B. SPRINGS, President, Vice President. C. FURBER JONES, Secretary.

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For sale by WHITING BROS. NORTH CAROLINA, In the Superior Court DUPLIN COUNTY, Kilby Armwood vs Luranels Armwood—Notice. The defendant above named will take notice that an action entitled as above, has been commenced in the Superior Court of Duplin county by said plaintiff against said defendant to obtain a divorce from the bonds of matrimony. The said defendant will further take notice that she is required to appear at the next term of the Superior Court of said county to be held on the 2nd Monday before the first Monday in March, 1895, at the court house of said county, in Kenansville, N. C. and answer or demur to the complaint in said action or the plaintiff will apply to the court for the relief demanded in said complaint. This 14th day of January, 1895. JNO. A. GAVIN, C. S. C.

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