

# Historical Sketches of Wilkes County

Published by John Crouch in 1902

(Continued from page four)  
 Wilmington, while Fanning and other Tory leaders were yet scouring the country, and needed such a force as the mountaineers to successfully cope with them. Cleveland's men routed several of these scattered Tory detachments before returning home.  
 Moves to South Carolina  
 At the close of the war Colonel Cleveland lost his fine Round About plantation on the Yadkin by

a better title, when he turned his attention to the region of the Tugalo, on the western border of South Carolina. In 1784 he selected a plantation in the Tugalo valley and moved there the following year. Quite a number of his kinsmen followed him and became his neighbors in the newly settled valley of the Tugalo.  
 In 1785 the Cherokee Indians were yet troublesome. They stole some of Cleveland's stock and

carried it to the Indian village. Cleveland buckled on his hunting knife and went in person to the Indian town and told them that unless his stock was promptly returned they would pay the penalty—the last one of them—with their lives. The Indians were greatly surprised at his enormous size, and judged that it would take a hundred warriors to cope with him single-handed. The stock was promptly restored.

**Hangs Another Horse Thief**  
 Colonel Cleveland did not lose his hatred for the Tories in his new home. Henry Dinkins, a Tory of the Revolution, who had taken refuge among the Cherokees, became a notorious horse-thief. Cleveland learned of their approach in the Tugalo valley and he snatched up his rifle and waylaid their trail and captured Dinkins and two negroes associated with him. Dinkins was promptly hung on the spot. So notorious was Dinkins' reputation for evil that the whole country was overjoyed at his sudden execution without waiting to consider whether or not the mode of his exit was in accordance with the niceties of the law.

**His Last Days and Death**  
 Colonel Cleveland held positions of trust and honor in his new home, but he loved quiet home life best and spent most of his time about his plantation. He continued to increase in weight until he weighed the enormous sum of four hundred and fifty pounds.

For several summers preceding his death he suffered with dropsy in his lower limbs, and during the last year of his life his excessive fat considerably decreased, and he, at last died while sitting at breakfast, in October, 1806, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. His wife died about six years previous. He left two sons and a daughter, whose descendants are numerous and respectable. Our county man, Esq. R. M. Staley, is a great-grand-son of Colonel Cleveland. Wilkes county has no better citizen and no man a better neighbor than Esq. Staley.

With hardly any education, and little improvements in later life, Colonel Cleveland, with a vigorous intellect, exerted a commanding influence among the frontier people; and though despotic in his nature and severe on the Tories, his patriotic activity did much to preserve the Western portion of North Carolina from British and Tory ascendancy. North Carolina deservedly commemorated his services by naming Cleveland county after him.

The remains of this noble hero sleep in the family burial ground in the valley of the Tugalo. No monument—no tombstone—no inscription marks his silent resting place. The spot is marked by several pines that have grown up since his interment—one of them, it is said, shoots its tall spire from his grave. There he lies in a sister State with not even a gravestone to mark his resting place, where scattered bands of Cherokees may look upon the pine that rises out of his grave and wonder among themselves, "Is this the goal of ambition—this the climax of glory?"

How strange are the ways of men!

**THE FIRST WILL PROBATED**  
 The first will probated in Wilkes county was probated and recorded in the year 1778, at the December term of the county court. In the early history of the county wills were only probated during the sessions of the County Court and not before the Clerk at any time convenient as is now the case.

This will, first on record in the county, starts off like this: "The Last Will and Testament of John Witherspoon, Dec'd. Dec. Term, 1778."

"November the first in the year of our Lord Christ, 1778. In the name of God, amen, I, John Witherspoon, and of Wilkes county, being weak in body but of sound memory, blessed be God, do this day and in the year of our Lord make and publish this my last will and testament in the manner following, that is to say, first I appoint —" etc., etc.

The subscribing witnesses are Thomas Harbin, Alexander Holton and Jno. Robinson.

**GENERAL WILLIAM LENOIR**  
 The subject of this sketch was one of the early pioneers of this section. He did much in building the county of Wilkes and the establishment of law and government in this section of the State. The name of William Lenoir appears oftener in early records of our country than the name of any other person. His life, character and services are recorded in such an able and familiar manner in an extract from the "Raleigh Register," of June 22, 1939, that we give the article here:

This venerable patriot and soldier died at his residence at Fort Defiance, in Wilkes county, on Monday, the 6th of May, 1839, aged eighty-eight years. Perhaps no individual now remains in the State of North Carolina who bore a more distinguished part during our Revolutionary struggle, or who was more closely identified

with the early history of our government than the venerable man whose history and public services it is our purpose to sketch.

General Lenoir was born in Brunswick county, Va., on the 20th of May, 1751, and was descended from poor-but respectable French ancestry. He was the youngest of ten children. When about eight years old his father removed to Tar River, near Tarboro, N. C., where he resided until his death which happened shortly after. The opportunities of obtaining even an ordinary English education that day were extremely limited, and General Lenoir received no other than such as his own personal exertions permitted him, to acquire after his father's death. When about 20 years of age he was married to Ann Ballard, of Halifax, N. C.—a lady possessing in an eminent degree those domestic and heroic virtues which qualified her for sustaining the privations and hardships of a frontier life which it was her destiny afterwards to encounter.

In March, 1775, General Lenoir removed with his family to the county of Wilkes (then a portion of Surry), and settled near the place where the village of Wilkesboro now stands. Previous to his leaving Halifax, however, he signed what was then familiarly called "The Association Paper," which contained a declaration of the sentiments of the people of the colonies in regard to the relations existing between them and the crown of Great Britain, and which their scattered condition rendered it necessary to circulate for signatures, in order to ascertain the wishes and determination of the people. Soon after his removal to Surry he was appointed a member of the Committee of Safety for that county and continued to discharge his duties as such, and as clerk to the Committee until their authority was superseded by the adoption of the Constitution of the State. On the commencement of hostilities with Great Britain, General Lenoir very early took a decided and active part. It is well known to all those acquainted with the history of the times that about the beginning of the war of the Revolution the Cherokee Indians were exceedingly annoying and troublesome to the white settlements in the Western part of North Carolina. The Whigs therefore in that section of the country were obliged at the very outset to be constantly on the alert—they were frequently called on to march at a moment's warning, in small detachments, in pursuit of marauding bands of Indians, in the hope of chastising them for depredations committed on the settlements—they were also compelled to keep up scouting and ranging parties, and to station guards at the most accessible passes in the mountains. In this service General Lenoir bore a conspicuous part, which was continued until the celebrated expedition of Gen. Rutherford and Gen. Williamson in 1776, put an end to the difficulties with the Cherokees. In this expedition General Lenoir served as a lieutenant under the distinguished Colonel Cleveland, who as then a captain, and frequently has been heard to recount the many hardships and suffering which they had to undergo. They were often entirely destitute of provisions—there was not a tent of any kind in the whole army—very few blankets and those only such as could be spared from their houses for the occasion, and their clothing consisted principally of rude cloth made from hemp, tow, and wild nettle bark—and as a sample of the uniform worn by the General officers, it may be mentioned that General Rutherford's consisted of a tow hunting shirt, dyed black and trimmed with white fringe. From the termination of this campaign until the one projected against the British and Tories under Major Ferguson, Gen. Lenoir was almost constantly engaged in capturing and suppressing the Tories, who, at that time, were assuming great confidence and exhibiting much boldness. Indeed, such was the character of the times that the Whigs considered themselves, their families and property in continual and imminent danger. No man ventured from his house without his rifle, and no one unless his character was well known, was permitted to travel without undergoing the strictest examination. Gen. Lenoir has frequently been heard to say that owing to this perilous situation he has often been compelled on retiring at night, to place his rifle on one side of him in bed while his wife occupied the other.

In the expedition to King's Mountain he held the position of captain in Col. Cleveland's regiment, but on ascertaining that it would be impossible for the footmen to reach the desired point in time, it was determined by a council of officers that all who had horses or could procure them should advance forthwith.

Accordingly Gen. Lenoir and his company officers volunteered their services as privates, and proceeded with the horsemen by

a serra forced march to the scene of action. In the brilliant (Continued on page six)

**Bronchitis Claims Heavy Chick Toll**  
 Infectious bronchitis, sweeping through North Carolina this year in one of the greatest outbreaks in recent history, has cost poultrymen thousands of dollars, according to H. C. Gauger, poultry disease specialist of N. C. State College.

Bronchitis, a respiratory disease, is caused by a virus, a disease-producing agent much smaller than an ordinary germ. While the disease is prevalent in chicks, adult birds are also susceptible. Once started, the trouble will spread quickly through the entire flock.

Often, Gauger said, it is difficult to determine how the disease enters a poultry flock. However, it frequently makes its appearance in chicks that have been overheated or chilled. Crowding, irregular temperature, and poor nutrition may also be considered factors.  
 This year, the State College men said, the widespread occurrence of the disease apparently has come from infected hatcheries. Frequently during the peak of the hatching season, surplus chicks are placed in batteries in the same room with incubators. Infection in these chick batteries constitutes a great hazard in that all chicks are exposed to the disease. Even the newly-hatched chicks in the incubators may become infected because of the circulation of air from the hatchery room through the incubators.  
 The seriousness of the disease has been complicated because there are no known satisfactory methods of control. However, certain measures may be taken which will help the birds to throw off the infection. Among these being plenty of fresh air, cool water and the feeding of a wet mash.

With electricity available to rural Anson county homes, labor-saving devices for the farm and home are being installed daily, reports Assistant Farm Agent Clarence Barley.

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