

Historical Sketches of Wilkes County Published by John Crouch in 1902

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ment of Northern Virginia. of April 30th; and of instructions from Major General J. E. B. Stuart, commanding cavalry, you are directed to proceed without delay with your command to the vicinity of Shady Grove, where you will concentrate your brigade and report for further orders to Major General Stuart. I am directed by Major General Hampton, in communicating the above orders, to express to you, and through you to your whole brigade, the surprise with which he has received the orders and the pain it causes him to execute them. He indulges the hope that his wishes may be consulted, and that a new assignment may be made as soon as the present emergency shall have passed, which will return your brigade to his division and give him back the troops to whom he has become so attached and whom he has learned to trust in times of danger and trial.

"Indulging this hope, he refrains from saying farewell, but will watch the performance of affairs and men in the approaching contest, with the same anxious interest as if they were under his own command, confident that if your regiment should be eventually returned to him they will bring back unsullied banners and a record of glory increased and illustrated by new achievements in the coming campaign. I am, General, very respectfully

Your obedient servant, THEO. G. BARKER.

"Major and Assistant Adj. Gen." At the battle of the Wilderness Gordon's Brigade did valiant service. He was continually riding and walking along the lines of his dismounted regiments.

On the return of the Confederate forces from Mine Run to Spottsylvania C. H. Gordon's brigade made the whole distance of sixty-six miles in 23 hours, without rest or sleep, reaching Spottsylvania about sunset. Immediately he was ordered to attack the enemy's right. He responded and succeeded in driving the enemy back before he or his men slept.

In the famous retreat from Petersburg to Appomattox when the Confederates came to Sailor's creek they found the bridge burned. The enemy was close behind and the Confederates were in a perilous situation. The enemy was held in check by Gordon's regiments until the bridge was rebuilt and the retreat continued.

At Hagerstown Gordon repulsed an attack that General Stuart had said saved the trains of the Confederates.

On May 9, 1864, Sheridan began his raid on Richmond. He had with him his whole corps, three divisions of cavalry, at least 12,000 mounted men and one brigade, and six batteries of artillery. To contend with this great invading force Stuart could command but three brigades—Lomax and Wickham's, Fitz Lee's division, and

Gordon's brigade, and of artillery Johnson's battery and a section of Hart's. All told not over 4,000. By forced marches the two brigades of Fitz Lee succeeded in getting in Sheridan's front at Yellow Tavern on the Brook turnpike early in the morning of the 11th, and began the battle of Yellow Tavern. About the same time ferociously. The Federals burned Gordon's forces attacked his rear the Ground Squirrel bridge over the South Anna river but Gordon found an old ford, almost impossible to pass on, where he and his men crossed, rushed up the hill and drove the enemy back in confusion. While Sheridan claimed the victory at Yellow Tavern it was about such a victory as Cornwallis won at Guilford Court House. It was Sheridan's aim to march into Richmond on the 11th, and had it not been for Gordon and his gallant men the capital of the confederacy would have fallen into the hands of the Yankees that day.

On the 12th came the fight at Brook Church. Gordon was in Sheridan's rear. He had ordered some artillery from Richmond which came in due time and fired upon the enemy. Immediately one or more of Sheridan's guns were turned upon it. Gordon was furious. He raved and begged, and called it "band box artillery," but his men stayed in the trenches. He became disgusted and went in a gallop right into the fire down that military road, and there he received his death wound. He was taken to the hospital but six days later he died.

General Stuart also received his death wound at Brook Church, and when at last he was sorely pressed and his squadron broken, just before his death, his last words were: "Would to God, Gordon were here." But Gordon, too, had received his death wound. Gordon's remains were brought home and buried in the Episcopal cemetery in Wilkesboro. His last resting place is marked by a beautiful monument, and the evergreens and flowers that grow about his grave show the lasting admiration of his comrades, friends and relatives. Wilkes is glad that the whole country glories in the achievement of her noble son, but his fame, his glory, and his tomb are all her own.

In his history of the 5th N. C. Cavalry, Col. Paul B. Means has this to say: "Our great loss at Brook Church was the gallant and glorious James B. Gordon. The Fifth loved him as its commander during the Gettysburg campaign and as his entire brigade did for his splendid courage and merit in all respects. He was the Murat of the army of Northern Virginia, and had he lived he would have added increased lustre to our North Carolina Cavalry."

Of him Gen. Julian S. Carr said: "On the 28th of Sept., 1863, James B. Gordon, Col. of the 9th, was commissioned Brigadier Gen-

eral and took command of the Brigade. Under General Gordon it made famous its name of "The North Carolina Cavalry Brigade," and was thus to the end of the war widely known throughout the army of Northern Virginia and by a very great many in the army of the Potomac. Of course, it was often spoken and written of as Gordon's and afterwards Baringer's Brigade.

"Gordon was a genius of war, 'veritable god of battle.' He did more than any other one man to make his brigade what it was, and had he lived his brigade would have placed his name as high on North Carolina's roll of honor as that of any Confederate, if not higher. At Brook Church on the 12th of May, 1864, he received a wound which proved mortal within a week."

THE "BUZZARD ROOST"

In the early days of Wilkes county the bottoms along the Yaddin and Reddies River at the junction of the rivers was heavily timbered with tall cedars. The buzzards of all the adjacent country would gather there to roost in those cedars. The bottoms were cleared by the late John Finley and were so productive that the name "buzzard roost," was very appropriate, and as long as Mr. Finley lived the bottoms were known as "John's buzzard roost."

GENERAL JAMES WELLBORN

In his day General James Wellborn was probably the most prominent man in the county. He married Rebecca Montgomery, one of the two heirs to the large tracts of land known as the Moravian surveys.

James Wellborn was appointed General of the militia about the close of the Revolutionary war. From the year 1784 to 1835 General Wellborn served in the State Senate thirty years. He served in succession from 1796 to 1811, from 1817 to 1821, in 1823 and 1824, in 1828 to 1829, in 1832 and in 1834 and 1835. Prior to 1835 members of the General Assembly were elected each year, so Wellborn was elected thirty times in thirty-nine years. The fact that a man can stand so popular for thirty-nine years is honor enough for one man. I doubt if the world can furnish a like example.

During his terms in the Senate General Wellborn made strenuous efforts to have the State build a turnpike road from the mountains to the sea, but he failed. That was before any railroads were built in North Carolina and the turnpike would have been a great thing for the people of the west, but east had the majority and they knew that the people of the west had to come to them for their necessities turnpike or no turnpike, and they were not willing to be taxed to build the road for the accommodation of the people of the west.

It was largely through the efforts of General Wellborn that his brother-in-law, Montford Stokes, was twice elected to the United States Senate and once elected as Governor of the State.

He was buried on his plantation about 3 miles west of Wilkesboro.

HON. ANDERSON MITCHELL

Anderson Mitchell was at one time a distinguished citizen of Wilkes; he was born in Caswell county in the year 1800; was educated at the Bingham School and at the State University at Chapel Hill where he graduated in 1821. He read law under George Henderson and was admitted to the bar in 1823.

Mitchell located in Jefferson, Ashe county, to practice his profession. In 1827, and 28 and 29 he represented Ashe county in the lower branch of the Legislature and in 1838 he was elected to the State Senate. In 1840 he moved to Wilkesboro, and the same year was elected to the State Senate from Wilkes. In 1842 he was elected to Congress but resigned in 1843 to devote his entire time to the practice of law.

In 1859 he removed to Statesville. In 1866, he was appointed Judge of Superior Court, and in 1872 was elected, without opposition, to succeed himself as Judge and he served until his death in 1876 when Governor Brogden appointed D. M. Furches to succeed him.

On Dec. 24th, 1876, he died and was buried in the cemetery in Statesville.

Judge Mitchell's conduct during the Ku Klux era in North Carolina has won for him lasting fame. In his district there was no such thing as Ku Klux allowed; neither was there any necessity for such, for all the violators of the law were punished without

fear or favor. Our distinguished county man Anderson Mitchell Vannoy was named after him and was a close companion of the Judge until his death. Mitchell was an able lawyer, an excellent Judge, and a great and noble man.

COL. WM. M. BARBER

The subject of this sketch was born Jan. 24th, 1834. He enlisted in the 37th N. C. Regiment and on its organization at High Point, Nov. 20th, 1861, he was elected Lieutenant-Colonel of the regiment.

At Fussell's Mill Lane's Brigade, led by Col. Barber, recaptured the Confederate entrenchments, which had been lost by other Confederate troops, on the Darbytown road in the presence of General R. E. Lee. At Gravelly Hill he helped the regiment in a hot fight and was wounded in the engagement.

The officers of Lane's brigade presented their leader with a sword and a General's sash at Moss Neck and Col. Barber was chosen to present the presents which he did in a neat and graceful speech.

Col. Barber was engaged in the battle of Fredericksburg and performed his duty bravely. At Chancellorville he grappled with the enemy bravely and drove them back but he described the fight by his regiment as the bloodiest battle he ever saw.

He was wounded in the fight at Jones' farm near Petersburg on Sept. 30th, 1864, and died from the wounds on the 3rd of the following October. His remains were brought to Wilkesboro and buried in the Episcopal cemetery.

LEE CARMICHAEL

Lee Carmichael was a prominent man in Wilkes before the Civil war. He was a fine lawyer and was a candidate for Congress against General Thomas L. Clingman. He represented the county in the Legislature a number of times. He died about the close of the war.

COL. THOMAS C. LAND

Thomas C. Land is one of the landmarks of the county. He was born March 18, 1828, and was raised on a farm, attending the old field schools a few weeks for a part of the winters. He attended old Beaver Creek Academy for a short time while High Stokes was principal.

At the outbreak of the war he joined Col. Sidney Stokes' company as a private and served during the war. He was appointed commissary and later corporal. In the Seven Days Fight around Richmond he was wounded and was allowed to come home on furlough. During his absence from the army he was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of the 53rd Regiment, which position he assumed on his return to the army. He was wounded at the battle of Winchester and a number of other times but not seriously.

After the war Col. Land returned to Wilkes and engaged in teaching school and farming. In 1870 he went to Oregon and took up land and lived there until 1884 when he returned to Wilkes. In 1891 he again went to Oregon and lived there until 1893 when he returned to Wilkes and where he has lived since. While in the West he engaged in farming, teaching and mining.

Col. Land has considerable literary talent and is the author of the popular ballad, "The Death of Laura Foster," and a number of poems.

Col. Land has been fond of hunting and while in the West he had quite a little experience in hunting deer, bear and elk. He has the horns of a large elk that he killed which he prizes very highly.

Col. Land is at present a member of the county Board of Education, the only office he ever held.

REV. W. R. BRADSHAW

By F. B. Hendren Rev. W. R. Bradshaw, the pastor of the Baptist church in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro respectively, was born in Burke county, N. C., on the 14th of July, 1866. His father was a farmer and young Bradshaw worked on his father's farm until he was eighteen years old. He attended the district school a few months in the winter, and at eighteen years of age he entered Amherst Academy, situated near his father's farm, under the tuition of Rev. R. L. Patton, one of the ablest ministers and educators in the State. Here he was fitted for college and, having decided to enter the ministry, matriculated at Wake Forest College in the fall of 1888 and graduated in the class of '92. The following fall he assumed the principalship of Moravian Falls Academy and also

took charge of the Baptist church at Moravian Falls, and during the year had charge of other churches in this county. Soon after his removal to this county he took charge of the Baptist churches at Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. These pastures, he has most acceptably and successfully filled up to the present time. He has received several calls to good churches in other towns in this State but has uniformly declined them. Under his eloquent sermons and wise ministry the churches in the two Wilkesboros have enjoyed a most gratifying and steady growth. Nor does his influence cease at the borders of the two towns, but reaches out all over the county, throughout which he is well known. He is also a prominent personage on the floor of the Baptist State Convention and occasionally electrifies it with his bursts of eloquence.

He is often referred to as the "Boy Orator of the Mountains." Pure in life and chaste in demeanor, he is yet the stern and uncompromising enemy of evil in every form, especially of the liquor evil. He is prominently connected with the educational interests of the county.

NEWSPAPERS The Hustler, North Wilkesboro The Hustler was established in July, 1896, by T. J. Robertson, the present owner and editor. It was a three column, 8 page paper. On January 2, 1898, the entire outfit was destroyed by fire and not a cent of insurance on the plant. Mr. Robertson assumed the proportions of the name of his paper and in two weeks a new outfit was put in and the paper re-appeared in an enlarged form

—a 5 column, 8 page paper. The Hustler has made steady advancement and now has a firm hold on the people of North Wilkesboro and the county. The editor and owner, T. J. Robertson, was born in Pittsylvania county, Va., Feb. 27, 1865. In 1877 his parents moved to Kernestville, N. C., where he received an academical education. He came to North Wilkesboro in 1895 and was editor of the North Wilkesboro News until 1896 when he established The Hustler. The Chronicle, Wilkesboro The Chronicle was established at Lenoir by H. S. Blair in 1887, but a month or so later was moved to Wilkesboro, and has been published continuously ever since. Soon after the paper moved to Wilkesboro R. A. Deal bought it and has owned and conducted it ever since. In 1899 he bought the Mountain Breeze and the two offices were consolidated. Robert Avery Deal, editor and owner of The Chronicle, was born in Caldwell county Dec. 6, 1863, and was raised on the farm, attending the public schools a part of the sessions. He attended Rutherford College under Prof. R. L. Abernethy for about two years, going in debt for his tuition. After leaving Rutherford he taught school, and when The Chronicle was established he worked with it until he bought the paper, paying the last of his Rutherford College tuition after coming to Wilkesboro. On Feb. 7, 1900, he was married to Miss Mamie Wallace, by which union two children have been born. Mr. Deal is a man of deep thought, and by close application has made a reputation for thoroughness in whatever he un-

der takes. He is an ardent democrat and an earnest worker for his party, having served for a number of years as chairman of the county executive committee. He was postmaster at Wilkesboro during Cleveland's last administration.

The Yellow Jacket, Moravian Falls The Yellow Jacket was established by R. Don Laws in June, 1886, as a three column, four page, monthly paper. When the paper was started, out in the country, away from any public road and two miles from the post-office, many people predicted the thing a failure. As the name implies, the Yellow Jacket was from the beginning a "warm baby." It discusses politics almost exclusively from a republican standpoint. The paper has been enlarged from time to time until now it is a five column folio and is issued twice a month. The circulation has built up wonderfully. The paper now has about 20,000 subscribers in every State in the Union. In order to issue the paper in such quantities it was necessary to install new machinery from time to time. Now the Yellow Jacket outfit is the best printing plant in this section of the State. The paper is about to outgrow its present equipment and Mr. Laws is making arrangements to put in a perfecting press.

R. Don Laws, the editor and proprietor of the Yellow Jacket, was born in Wilkes county in 1868, and worked on the farm till he was 21 years old. Mr. Laws printed the following account of himself in his paper some time ago:

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50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION JUNE 30 JULY 4 50 Years of Progress Through good times and bad, our town and county has made progress in practically all lines of endeavor, and through united co-operation we will continue to advance in our efforts to accomplish even more in the future. Be Sure to Come Our city has planned a great program for this occasion and we urge you to come and share the pleasures. Not only will you be offered amusement in abundance but local business firms have planned a gigantic BARGAIN. CARNIVAL enabling you to save many dollars in shopping while attending the Celebration. Be sure to visit us and see what we offer. The Goodwill Store "The Place For Bargains" NORTH WILKESBORO, N. C.

Greater North Wilkesboro, N. C. 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION JUNE 30 JULY 4 We Welcome U • U'll Welcome Our Special Reductions On Beauty Work \$7.50 Oil Permanent Wave for \$5.00 \$5.00 Oil Permanent Wave for \$3.50 Above Prices Good A Short Time Only Modern Equipment — Expert Operators Get Ready To Celebrate! Phone Early For Appointment Mayflower Beauty Parlor Phone 189 Mrs. Jake Church, Prop.