

AN ABLE ADDRESS.

REMINISCENCES OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA.

An Address Delivered at the Lyceum Friday Night, Nov. 7, 1890, by Col. A. T. Davidson.

[CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.]

Robert Love, of Haywood county, the father of the large family now there, was a man of remarkable powers, stood high in the estimation of the public, and died at a very old age. He has a revolutionary history, which is very frequently mentioned in Ramsey's Annals of Tennessee, in his service with John Sevier in their frequent encounters with the Chickamauga Indians. He was a brother of General Thomas Love, of whom I have heretofore spoken. These two men were certainly much above the average of men, and did much to plant civilization in the county where they lived, and would have been men of mark in any community.

The leading families in Haywood were the Howells, two brothers, John and Henry, who came from Cabarrus county, this State, about 1818. The Osbornes and Plotts, Col. Thomas Lenoir, the Catheys, Deavers, McCrackens, Penlands, Bryers, etc., and so on.

There is a section of country in Haywood county known as Fine's creek, that has a history peculiar to itself. The leading citizens of that part of the county were David Russell, for forty years justice of the peace, Peter Nolan, Robert Penland, Henry Brown, James Green, who was born in 1790, and is still living, and many others too tedious to mention. Strange to say that the average life of these men was over eighty years. The name "Fine's Creek" happened thus: Soon after the Revolutionary war, at what date I can not say, but while the Indians were troublesome and making forays on the whites over the mountains, in what is now Tennessee, a portion of them had gone over there, stolen some horses and were crossing the mountains into North Carolina. The whites followed and overtook them on Pigeon river at a point known as the "war ford." They fired upon the Indians, killed all but two, recaptured their horses and started on their return to Tennessee. The weather was very cold and the country frozen, and being greatly fatigued they lay down to rest, perhaps were not cautious enough, and while they slept, the two Indians, crawled up, discharged their guns, instantly killing Jesse Fine and breaking the leg of another man. This was near the creek. They had no tools to dig a grave; could not carry the body home, and of necessity, they cut the ice in the creek, and dropped the dead body in, hence the name "Fine's Creek." It was theretofore known as "Crystal Creek."

There are two or three other noted characters in this Western land that I desire to notice. First, Thos. Tatham who served in the State Senate from Haywood, in 1817, removed to Macon and served in the legislature in that county from 1831 to 1834, inclusive. After this service he removed to the Indian Territory on Valley river where he died. He was a good man and left many friends.

There is another character, to wit, James Whitaker, born in Rowan county on the April 3, 1779, about one mile from the town of Lexington, Davidson county. He was a justice of the peace in that county, and removed to the county of Buncombe in 1817. In 1818, he was elected to the legislature and served three sessions, up to 1823. He removed to Macon county in 1825, and lived in one mile of Franklin, was elected to the legislature from Macon in 1825, and served continuously until 1833. He was appointed Superior Court clerk at its first term in the new county of Cherokee, and was elected to the legislature from that county in 1842 and 1843, died on Valley river, November 2, 1871, aged 92 years. He was a man of great intellect for his opportunities maintained a high character for purity of thought, through investigation of all subjects that came before him, an unsullied reputation and greatly admired by all who knew him. I knew him intimately and admired him very much. He was a stern man, a strong Baptist, and did much for his church, perhaps more than any other man in the

mountains of North Carolina, in fact, was a great leader in that church. He and the Reverend Humphrey Posey established the leading churches in this upland country, to wit, Cane Creek in this county, and Locust Old Field in Haywood county, where the friends of these two men have worshipped ever since, and around which cluster more sweet memories than any other given points of this their country. There they stand monuments to memory of these pioneers. Perhaps the most remarkable man in this upland country was the Rev. Humphrey Posey. He was born in Henry county, Virginia, January 12th, 1780, came to Burke county, in this State when he was only five years old, and remained there until he reached manhood, was ordained as a minister at Cane Creek church, this county in 1806. About the year 1820 he established a mission school at what is now known as the Mission Place on the Hiwassee river, above seven miles above the town of Murphy. He removed to Georgia in 1834, and died in the town of Newman, that State, on Dec. 28, 1846. He was a man greatly endowed by nature to be a leader, of great physical force, and singularly marked with a fine profile, very much like Hon. Tom Corwin, of Ohio, a fine voice and manner, singularly and simply eloquent, in so much that "he drew all men to him." In fact, by nature he was a great man, "and his works do follow him," and he was followed by hundreds who have passed to the other shore, and judging by the Book, their lives and conduct, "are watching for their friends." The effects of his mission school have been seen for many years past, and many citizens with Indian blood are left to tell the tale.

By the treaties with the Cherokee Indians in 1817 and 1819, we acquired the country to the south and west of Meigs and Fremar's lines, which extended the territory of Haywood county to the Tuckaseige river, and gave us the territory embraced from thence west to the top of Nantahala mountain. This embraced the beautiful valley of the Tennessee, and constitutes the county of Macon. It was organized into a county in 1828, and was singularly fortunate in the character of the people who first settled it. It was first represented in the legislature of the State in 1831, with Jas. W. in the Senate and Thos. Tatham and James Whitaker in the House, and was continuously thereafter represented in the Senate four times by Gen. Benj. S. Britton, with Jas. W. Guinn and Jacob Siler and Thos. Tatham in the House. Thereafter the county was thrown into a Senatorial district with Haywood and Buncombe. This was after the amendment to the constitution in 1835. Perhaps no country was more fortunate in its early citizenship. Such men as those mentioned represented the county with Luke Barnard, Wilmer Siler and his sons, William, Jesse R., Jacob and John, John Dobson, John Howard, Henry Addington, Thomas Love, Wm. H. Bryson, Jas. K. Gray, Mark Coleman, Samuel Smith, George Rush, Silas McDowell, Saul Smith, Nimrod S. Jarrett, George Dickey, George Patton, Wm. Angel, etc., were typical men of the early population. They were men of integrity, patriotic, and blest with an unusual degree of liberality and public spirit. William and Jacob Siler having married sisters of W. D. L. Swain, and Jesse R. Siler having married a daughter of John Patton, of this county, it is not difficult with such material to begin with, to account for the great moral worth of the county that now exists, and has from its first settlement. Many of the characters I have mentioned deserve at my hand a more particular notice, and this I would gladly do would the present opportunity allow me, but the subject is so large and diversified that I must content myself with this passing notice and leave it for the historian to bring out the various traits of character and valuable services of this heroic band of men. One state of facts, however, I must relate, and that is connected with Samuel Smith, father of Baccus Smith and Rev. C. D. Smith. He volunteered, as a Messenger, to bear a letter from Gen. McDowell, at the Old Fort, to the principal chief of the Cherokees, at the Coosawattee towns, about the close of the Revolution. The undertaking of such a service was full of

peril and danger, the whole country west of the Blue Ridge being then in the Cherokee nation, which was then in arms. This journey was made before any white man lived in this country. The Coosawattee towns being on a river of that name in State of Georgia, the distance being at least 250 miles. This was undertaken by this valliant man and was accomplished, and largely aided in bringing these people to peaceable and quiet terms with the whites. He moved to Texas, after having raised a family in North Carolina of distinguished sons, and died in that State only a few years ago, more than 90 years old.

But where am I straying? I have thus rapidly passed over settlement of the country west of the Pigeon, and have given no attention to the friends in the valley of the French Broad, which go very far to make up an entire record of the history of this our beautiful mountain land. I must, however, defer this to another occasion, when I promise not only to give my early recollection of the French Broad valley, but also of my professional brethren of the bar, in which chapter I shall be able, I think, to give many pleasant incidents, adventures, and life pictures of some of the sweetest memories that I possess. It is a singular fact that in the opening of these subjects they open and widen like a beautiful landscape, and the more of them you see the more of them are immediately joining, so that nothing less than the careful pen of a studious historian can bring them to light, and this is devoutly to be wished for, but can not be expected in an hour's address. I hope my friends will, therefore, pardon me for this seeming omission, and will trust me for the future to bring to the light many pleasant recollections.

It is said that the young live on hope, and the old on memory, and as I reverse the telescope and look backward I see many green spots in memory's waste, that make me wish I were a boy again; but when I reverse the telescope and look forward I think I see those dear friends on the other shore beckoning us to come over and be with them in peace in the here after.

There is now lying at the De Lamar office, says the Silver City (Idaho) Avalanche, a silver nugget which will be seen by a good many million people two years from now, for it is proposed to put it in the Idaho exhibit at the World's Fair. It is a chunk of silver glance with masses of silver running through it, and weighs 360 pounds.

Hicks—You must not pull the dog's tail, sonny. You know what becomes of bad boys, I suppose. Boy—Oh, yes. They gets to be Governors out West. —Munsey's Weekly.

"Pa, what is a lottery." Pa—Judging from the reports of Western real estate sales, I am beginning to think it is a place where lots are sold.—Buffalo Express.

DePink—Professor, in your experience, what is the most discouraging thing to matrimony? Professor—A woman's no.—Binghamton Republican.

Coburger—He's clever, but a man of misdirected effort. Brown—I should say so. He wound an eight day clock up every night for five years.

"Is that the water tower over there?" "Eh? Yes—that is practically, you know; it is the steeple of the Baptist church.—New York Herald.

"Least said soonest mended" is probably the reason why it takes the sewing society forever to darn a pair of stockings.—Elmira Gazette.

The planets have been weighed but the heft and capacity of a boy's pocket still remain unknown.

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