

# The State's Voice

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## Through Columbus And Lower Robeson

The last issue I told of a trip through upper Robeson and Hoke county, Scotch territory. Last week my tour covered a large section of Columbus and lower Robeson, lying below and to the eastward of the area in which the Scotch used to predominate.

There used to be an immense difference in the cultural advancement of the two sections. The Scotch, after the battle of Culloden, in 1745, came to the Cape Fear section by communities. Pastor, teacher, and the old and young migrated together. When they reached America they settled, in many cases, in a community almost identical with that they had broken up in old Scotland. The school house was erected, the kirk was built; the congregations assembled as in the old country; the children continued their education.

### The Contrast

It happened that the settlement of lower Robeson was very much in contrast with that of upper Robeson, Cumberland, Moore, Scotland, Hoke and Richmond. Into lower Robeson came French Huguenots, Welsh colonists, and others, besides the English. In contrast to the migrating community of the Scotch, each man here was probably a perfect stranger to his neighbor. Moreover, they frequently did not speak the same language. It took a century or more for them to coalesce and to become inspired with a determination to educate their children. In the meantime, the Scotch had even established what was termed a college, and were giving their sons and daughters the best opportunities the times and the section could afford. Accordingly, the contrast was very striking, especially to the Scotch, who mistook the superiority due to the circumstances of settlement for a superiority in racial stock.

### The Jersey vs the Scrub.

Probably that feeling of superiority had never been more pronounced than in the beginning of this century. The big Scotchman is still living who expressed emphatically and tersely to the writer that feeling of superiority. "There is as much difference between us Scotchmen," said he, "and the leather-breeches folk as there is between a Jersey cow and a scrub."

Such sentiments on the part of the Scotch did not make them the most popular folk in the world with the "leather-breeches", as the Scotch formerly characterized their less fortunate neighbors on the southeast. But the difference had actually existed. As the Jersey cow had been evolved from just ordinary cows through selection, the Scotch themselves had become, in the original highland home, a physically strong people through the principle of the survival of the fittest operating in their harsh climate and in their constant clan clashes and English forays. Then had come John Knox, apostle of both kirk and school, though Knox was lowlander, and no Gael, as are the Highland Scotch. Consequently, the Scotch did come with more culture, a finer physique, than was possessed by their non-descript neighbors, just as the Jerseys imported into America were actually superior to the average run of native cows. But the evolution of the non-descripts was in progress when the writer sojourne'd on the borderland of the factions of Robeson, and the last thirty years has seen it make great progress.

### A Pioneer Educator

The man who did probably more than any one else to start a wave of culture among the people of lower Robeson was Rev. Stinceon Ivey, father, by the way, of Mr. T. Ivey who recently died at Cary and who for many years was somewhat prominent in the Farmers' Alliance and politics associated with the Alliance movement. Rev. Stinceon Ivey conducted a school at Ashpole, now the fair little city of Fairmont, one of the big tobacco markets of the state. Among Mr. Ivey's students was Marshall Shepherd who continued his education at Wake Forest. After graduation, he went to his home community at Orrum and erected a commodious wooden school building, that is, commodious for the early years of this century. There for a score of years he drew numerous students from Robeson and Columbus. The Shepherd school, which he

called Stinceon Institute, in honor of Rev. Stinceon Ivey, has been replaced with a fine brick building under state and county auspices. Asked why he did not call it the Ivey institute, he gave the writer to understand that the general run of Iveys had not got far enough "out of the woods" to give the school that distinction. The woods were full of ordinary citizens of that name from whom no doubt the minister-teacher had been evolved out of season.

### Rev. I. P. Hedgepeth.

But of probably more abounding and continuous influence in Britts township has been Rev. I. P. Hedgepeth, who returning from Wake Forest College nearly fifty years ago, became pastor of his old home church and is still going strong.

Hedgepeth is an institution in lower Robeson and Bladen. For many years he served the Bladenboro church. He is no more pretentious than an old brogan shoe, a home-made one at that, but he is solid through and through. I knew him at college and lived as a neighbor to him in Lumberton for five years. I know what I am talking about, as you may bet I do in most cases.

A country preacher all his life, he and his good wife have maintained a comfortable home, given three children fine college educations and seen them take important rank among the younger generation. One of the daughters is director of the music department right over there at Campbell College. The Hedgepeth themselves were some of the boastful Scotchmen's "scrubs". But, as intimated in a former article, I paid the Scotch back in their own coin in that famous "Fly in the Ointment" article. I actually believe they are about cured of that superiority complex.

### The Emergence of the Britt Family

Let us illustrate what has taken place among our Scotch friend's "scrubs" by a brief notice of the emergence of the Britt family. There is a whole township called Britts, and it was full of the family for whom it was named. One branch, however, became settled above Lumberton and that was the first to begin to rise above the level of the general run of the folk of Britts' township. First a son, the bright young minister, Rev. D. C. Britt, who died before he reached his prime, graduated at Wake Forest. Two sons followed and became lawyers, another a dentist. But out of Britts' township came E. J. Britt, among Lumberton's leading attorneys, a former legislator, and prominent in church work. Others followed. But it was our recent visit that gave me the most striking illustration of what a quarter of a century can do for a family.

I had a good friend living out from Lumberton a few miles Victor Britt. He was an energetic little fellow but no saint. I spend a night in the home of his widow at McDonald's last week, having been sent there by her son, D. H., a prominent citizen, merchant and farmer of McDonalds, as the place where I might find a room for the night. I found Mrs. Britt still active and a woman of fine sense and personality. It was pleasant to learn from her and from D. H. how the family is developing. Two granddaughters have recently graduated from Meredith College. D. H. has a son who has just graduated from the Lumberton high school, with sufficient rank to secure a scholarship at Wake Forest, and is a most promising youth. Younger children in the homes of the sons are to follow in the same way.

Now contrast that state of affairs with a visit, of which D. H. reminded me, by himself and father to my newspaper office in Lumberton nearly thirty years ago, when I looked at the bright-faced boy and told his father to send him to school. I had forgotten the incident. D. H. got little schooling, despite my plea. But what he did get he put to good use. In fact, I doubt if a college course would have allowed him to develop into the big farm owner and merchant that he has become. But he is educating his children, and the results in both his case and the case of the children indicate that it was not Scotch blood but opportunity that was needed.

The opportunity came to the Britts and to the

other "leather breeches," and it is found that it is a very short route from the stage of "scrub" to that of the Jersey. The Britts according to my old friend Hamilton McMillan, is a Welsh name. If so the Britts are Gaels as are the Scotch, and both groups have a common racial origin, being original Britons and seeing the coming and going of the Romans and the coming of the Angles and Saxons.

### The Home of the Townsends

At McDonald's I was close to the ancestral home of the prominent Townsend family. The Townsends were one of the older and well established families in England and have ranked above the average since the immigration to America. The family has furnished several ministers to the Methodists, a lawyer and banker combined in the late C. B. Townsend of Lumberton, besides the two names N. A. and Ben, so closely and prominently associated with Dunn. Rev. F. L. Townsend, formerly a presiding elder, was a half-brother of Nat's. But the family was to get another strain in it besides those of the half-brothers mentioned. Nat's mother, after the death of her aged Townsend husband married an Oliver and bore Nat a half-brother or two of the Oliver name. I recall spending a night with Mr. and Mrs. Oliver right after Christmas about thirty years ago. We were sitting chatting when the older Oliver lad, if there was more than one, spoke up and said he believed there was a watermelon upstairs under the bed, which had lain there since the summer. He ran up and, sure enough, found it and brought it down and we had a watermelon feast that late December evening.

And right there at McDonald's I found Mr. Frank Townsend, sprightly at eighty. He is a brother of the banker mentioned, and Mrs. Townsend, another gracious hostess of thirty years ago, is still buxom and apparently very little touched by the thirty years flown by since that night in their home, at that time at Raynham, named, I believe, from the old English residence of the Townsends. She was one lady who planned to subscribe for the Voice at her first opportunity, and there was Mr. Spurgeon McLean, still active and running the same store, I believe, he was conducting when I had last visited McDonalds. And Mr. T. S. Greyard, who was a Lumberton neighbor, who, to show how a stranger in a town appreciates the attention of his neighbors, recalled how when he had moved to Lumberton my mother, who then lived with us, was the first caller upon the family. Verily, it is the little things that count.

### At Whiteville.

I got the cart before the horse. It was a trip through "Columbus and lower Robeson", and the first destination point was Whiteville. But, maybe, you wonder why these trip notes at all. Well, some folks enjoy them. The diary of Pepys has lived several hundreds of years, though he wrote only what would appear trifling events with a few observations. Oscar McIntyre publishes in hundreds of papers trifling notes about folk the readers care nothing for or know no more about than they do about Adam's off ox. Yet it has its interest. And certainly if McIntyre can syndicate his references to Beta Garbage and others as remote any reader of the Voice should find some interest in meeting our own North, Carlinians. Besides, there is room enough further on in the paper for all the more solid matter you need for one sitting. If you do not like this kind of matter turn to Chas. U. Harris's article and chew a while on that good old ham meat. But if you continue reading I almost guarantee you will find something in this article you would hate to have missed.

Well, Whiteville is one of the unfortunate towns. Somebody failed to die soon enough and thereby the railroad could not get a right of way near the courthouse settlement, but had to pass nearly a mile and a half from the courthouse. Long there were two villages—Whiteville and Vineland, the latter at the depot. It is all included in Whiteville now but it is just as far from the courthouse settlement and business section to the real business end of the town as it was from Whiteville to Vine-