

A REMARKABLE SURVIVAL OF PIONEER DAYS

George Beasley, Jr., in Monroe Journal.

Distance is a disturbing factor in the stir of life. When you are in a hurry there are far too many hours and too long miles, and when you have leisure and would spend it sparingly, as a child budgets his all-day sucker—look awhile and lick awhile, the miles and hours pass on winged wheels and you are anywhere and back too soon.

Time and miles, however, were in an unusually bright and agreeable mood Sunday afternoon. How else could I have travelled a short 25 miles and parked in 1776?

A few miles across the line in Cabarrus county and to the left of Highway 151, a county road goes blind at the back door of the McCurdy twins, Will and Walt, and their sister, Miss Hattie, on the left, and on the right the cabin built by their Revolutionary grandfather, Capt. Archibald McCurdy. The old homestead of this remarkable family is the most ancient house yet standing in this section of the State.

Forgotten Hardships

Inside and out the two-room cabin the hardihood of pioneers and the gallantry of patriots are boldly engraved. Here was an album of history the like of which I had never seen before: a crude panorama of the ancestral attack badly armed but bravely and successfully executed, upon the hard, ripe wilderness which our forefathers called home; memoirs of great difficulties borne with courage, of iron-blooded children opening their eyes in the bleak loft upstairs, brushing the snow from their quilts and scampers down in the biting early cold of a winter morning to fan the coals in the large fireplace and warm themselves; here was preserved in graphic items the painful hardships which America bore in her youth but minimized when she was motorized, bobbed her hair, acquired vanity and a figure, and came to her legacy of mature anxieties, not the least of which was the choice of her face and costume at debutante balls in world courts.

Homemade Home

The Revolutionary homestead of the McCurdy's is a well-known landmark in Cabarrus, just as the family is known as a pioneer influence on the history of that county, as well as Mecklenburg. Therefore, I devoted my visit to an attempt at recapturing in whatever slight measure the spell of man fighting the elements with only his hands and his strong, determined will to survive and contrasting it with our up-bill struggle today for luxuries in next year's model, our restless search for rest which so hopelessly separates us from peace.

Nails and hinges and locks on the McCurdy cabin were made in a blacksmith shop, hewn rafters were fitted and fastened together with woden pegs, and the stairway leading to the loft thus fashioned, had just begun to live, a monument to resourcefulness which died a machine death.

The great pots and pans for cooking were on the fireplace, as were the giant bread tray and sifter. My mouth began to water for a Revolutionary dinner of corn pone, boiled chicken and potatoes. But I knew my saladized appetite couldn't do full justice to the robust opportunity.

Pioneer Household

On the walls and about on the floor were curiosities that had to be explained to me. A baby shoe of hard, unyielding leather, fastened with pegs and brandishing an ominous brass tap at the toe, was not a toy or a model, but was actually made for the untried foot of a child

after it had learned to walk. The weather corn on my left toe bulged perceptibly at the idea. Spinning wheels and flax combs were in one corner, probably the same instruments with which the lovely bedspreads in the other house were woven. A peculiar iron hook with place for a handle wasn't really an instrument for plucking a luscious apple from across a neighbor's fence, as I thought, but a wild pig catcher. When the vicious animal was cornered, the hook took custody of its hind leg and the rest was simple.

There were Revolutionary bayonets, uniforms, high hats of the period, homemade beds and Blue Backs of the days when spelling was a popular art and not a severe handicap, and many other unmodern conveniences made by hand.

Frame-ups

Suspended from the ceiling in the center of the room were two large bird cages, only they weren't bird cages but the frames of milady's hoop skirts. I had seen pictures of women dressed in this fashion of long ago, but never before had I come in contact with the naked wire. Fashion also had its pioneers. When our women-folk of long ago got tired of cooking over the open fire or working at the tedious spinning wheel, or tending the crops and chickens and cows and children, they probably would change burdens for a spell and dress up. I don't know that form-fitting was the rage then but if it was the ladies had to grow like inverted tops, only more so. A party dress must have meant a real investment in those days. On the eve of a party then the question surely must have been, not "what shall I wear tonight?" but "can I get in it?" In the other house there were hats of that period. Our great grandmothers' burdens were diversified, to say the least.

Open Air Bakery

Under the shade of an oak, "somewhere between 500 and 1000 years old," was a heap of crumbled brick. One of the boys reconstructed in my mind the history of those bricks. Here was Grandmother McCurdy's bakery. A brick oven in which a big fire was kept until baking time. Then pastries of all kinds were baked. On big days in Concord, Grandma would bake whole wagon loads of delicacies and find a ready market for them in town. Did you ever hear of an appetizing memory before?

Such revealing glimpses of infant America are pitifully rare, and soon will be confined to occasional museums. Slaves to fashion and modern conveniences, we have allowed a noble birthright to go back to dirt. We have destroyed inspiring records in the pursuit of imaginary comfort and fleet-footed style.

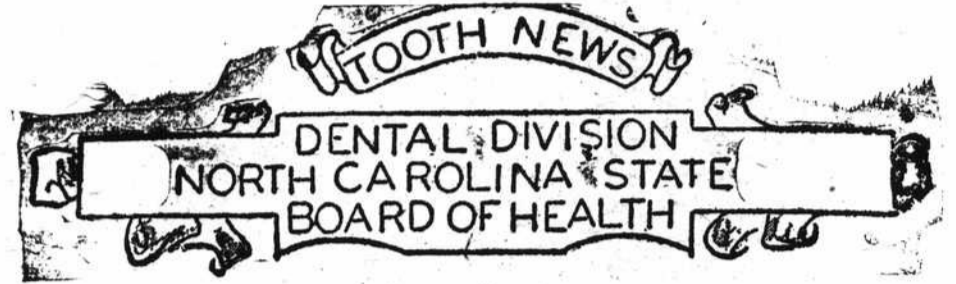
I think I will at least save my watch, the one with a second hand, to remind future generations of the quiet old today, when seconds are not too slow to be worth the recording.

Secretary of Commerce Roper, speaking over in California, states that he sees an end of the depression at hand and the beginning of a period of prosperity. The slaughter of the "blue eagle" seems not to have depressed Mr. Roper. That very NRA decision may, at this stage, serve to hasten a return to the kind of prosperity that used to prevail, but it was a mighty poor kind, looked at from the average man's viewpoint.

Discovering Interesting Relationships.

One is often surprised at relationships that are revealed. Some weeks ago, we discovered that Mrs. J. C. Jones of Dunn is a descendant of the brother of Nathaniel Macon. And now we note that Ambassador Josephus Daniels, in his address at Wake Forest based upon Macon's political philosophy, reveals the fact that President Kitchin has a strain of Macon blood. We are publishing an article in *The State's Voice* that shows that the junior senator from Louisiana is a descendant of a sister of Governor Gabriel Holmes

of Clinton and has oodles of kin in this section bearing Holmes and Moore strains. Senator Overton's given name is John Holmes. One of the sisters of the Senator's Overton ancestor was the mother of Governor Moore of Louisiana during the war between the states, and lived near the Newton Grove—Clinton highway. Thomas Overton came from Virginia and settled in Moore county. His second wife was the sister of Governor Holmes, and his daughter by his Virginia wife the mother of Governor Moore.



Our Present Mouth Health Program In North Carolina

By PAUL JONES, D.D.S.
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IT is most gratifying to know that North Carolina is greatly interested and awake to the necessity of a mouth health program, especially among the children of our State. A few years back only the most alarming evidence of disease invasion was ever called to the attention of our government. In fact, those in authority were more attentive to the problems of agriculture such as hog cholera, cattle tuberculosis, and tick fever. Even now our farmers are ordered to destroy the farrowed hogs and turn under crops, showing the changing viewpoints under different stresses.

But miracles never cease, and the dawning of a new thought takes hold; today the health of the human animal is predominant. His bodily predisposition to disease and deterioration is of so much concern to our State government that today North Carolina has on the statute books laws insuring the rehabilitation of diseased bodies and the proper observance of hygiene, and our commonwealth is recognized as a most enthusiastic exponent of health for its citizens.

The indifference to oral health is still more noticeable than its observance or correction. Teeth, in the days past, were considered a gift from the Creator, like the fingers and toes, and like these should give no more trouble. In fact the digital organs were more fortunate and, consequently, healthier because of being seen. (Pride is a driving monster.) Sometimes the fingers and toes came into contact with soap and water; not so the teeth. Hidden from public display, they chopped and ground the material to sustain the body. With their duty done, the cleaning of the teeth was deferred to that more convenient time which never appears, and the mouth's arch enemy, fermentation, commenced its destructive work.

This, basically, with the attending evidences, was the cause of the beginning of mouth hygiene and health as we know it today. Persistently and effectually the sponsors of this health movement have labored for recognition. Our statesmen had to be educated in the belief that childhood was the beginning of manhood and womanhood, and that their health had to be considered before that of cattle, swine, and horses. Cooperation with the ones seeking a mouth health program for our children was a de-

mand not to be denied—a utilitarian as well as an altruistic



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service. We are greatly indebted to those in our medical society and our dental society for the vision that seized and held them during the formative period of this movement which is now so well grounded and sponsored through our government. Often I have wondered if our intelligent citizens, as well as our State government, fully realize the debt owing the two professions of medicine and dentistry in their sustained efforts through all these years to make our people health conscious as well as healthy.

It is with much pride that I mention the present fulfillment of these aspirations in the operation of our mouth health program. Through the Dental Division of the State Board of Health Dr. Branch and his staff of dentists have done a noble and glorious piece of work solely in the interest of the health of our people. They have emphasized the need of mouth care among our school children, and they have carried the story of healthy teeth in healthy mouths in a telling and most effective way, so much so that we in private practice can note the improvement in the mouths of our young school boy and girl patients.

I am heartily in accord with the dentistry program as directed by Dr. Branch for North Carolina, and should like to see the activities of this department enlarged rather than any part of them delegated to inexperienced local units. I would like to see North Carolina the healthiest state in the Union and its people possess the best-treated teeth in the world.