

REMINISCENCES OF PENDER COUNTY, NO. 3.

By CHAS. H. UTLEY

Soon after getting acquainted with the people in the Canetuck section and around Currie, I was invited to Point Caswell; this is a village located on the east side of Black River, and in the olden days when the people used the river as a principal thoroughfare Point Caswell was an important center of trade as well as a depot for transportation. However, before I knew the community its glory had departed. It had been named many years before in honor of Governor Richard Caswell, who had won distinction at the Battle of Moore's Creek bridge less than three miles away. When I knew the village, I think, there were no less than four steamboat captains living there. Perhaps the best known of whom was:

Capt. R. P. Paddison

Capt. Paddison was a very bright man, intellectually superior, read much and thought even more; he had a good home and took great pride in it. In conversation Capt. Paddison was a stimulating talker, always posted on current topics, fond of the best magazines, and several of the best were always found on his tables. He was perhaps the only man I have known who really delighted in milking a family cow and then caring for the milk; he insisted he liked only the milk he cared for, knowing it to be clean. He had only one daughter, an accomplished lady, who married a Pretlow; a son was in the South. Capt. Paddison was a son-in-law of Dr. Simpson and therefore brother-in-law to Dr. Lucas. Capt. Paddison was a friend of education. At the time there was such opposition to every proposition to improve the schools of the county that, naturally, those favorable to educational development impressed me most favorably.

Mr. George Moore, Custodian of Battle Ground

Here too, was a progressive citizen, and perhaps all the time I worked in the county, he was one of the county commissioners. And be it said to his credit, he took great pride in performing his official duties. He was popular with all the people; never so hurried he could not stop and talk with any person desiring to be heard or to hear, and the friends of this commissioner facetiously accused him of taking especial pride in talking.

But he was a very interesting talker, knew what he talked about, and was also ready to listen to one with something to say. He was certainly one of the most loyal men to his county I knew. He rightly believed in the future of the county, in the agricultural possibilities latent in its soil, and its favorable climate for fruit and for crops not then in cultivation.

When the National Government took the Moore's Creek Battle Ground under its auspices Mr. Moore was appointed its custodian and since then has taken great delight in helping preserve for posterity the memories of those who on an early winter morning, by a simple but effective strategy, outscotted the Scotch, won a victory, and undying fame in the land of their devotion. For they saved North Carolina from an early invasion by British soldiers. Tradition says my ancestors fought there under Col. Hinton of Wake county. Tragic indeed, the fact, there is no known roster of the soldiers who took part in the famous engagement! And it is nothing less than a tragedy that practically all the patriots who fought in the Revolution, as well as those who, not only fought, but died fighting or froze or starved to death, fill not only unmarked, but unknown graves. It is a reasonable guess that all over this great state whose freedom their valor and sacrifice helped to win their graves are now plowed over, unknown and unknowable.

A Veteran Virginia Lady Teacher

Near Point Caswell, in the home of her sister, Mrs. Simpson, lived Miss Lou Frasier, Virginia born and Virginia trained, a typical Southern lady of the olden days. For more than a half-century this splendid lady taught the younger generations, how many hundreds perhaps she herself never knew. The last time I saw her, in the spring of 1923, she was well passed 80. She had passed her prime before I knew her. She had lived a long and useful life and radiated an influence from a cultivated and refined character. Few such have given finer lives in any county to the cause of purity, righteousness and education. She had never married, but is immortal through the influence she exerted over hosts of pupils, many of whom are no longer living. Such gentle, unassuming, sacrificing, altruistic, opti-

mistic people as Miss Lou Frasier make the world a better and brighter place to live and work in.

A German Takes A Collection

There is a small Baptist church located at Point Caswell and I had an afternoon service there much of the time while serving the churches in Canetuck. Among the membership was a Mr. Vollers, a native of Germany, but for many years a citizen at the Point. He was a regular church attendant at all the services and a teacher in the Sunday school. One afternoon his class was duly seated by the pulpit as usual. At the proper time Mr. Vollers said, "We will now have the collection;" and very deliberately walked along the front while his quarterly passed from hand to hand until it was returned to him just as he had sent it on its mercenary mission. On taking it back, he said in his characteristic manner, with his distinct German accent: "Vel den, I am glad I did not take my hat for I might not have got it back." At another time, there was an appointment across the river at Bethlehem to pray for rain during an unusually dry time. In due time Mr. Vollers, having arrived, while walking around shaking hands observed very casually: "Vel, I see you did not bring your umbrellas; you must not look for rain."

Persuasion Failed

This is a Point Caswell story. Once upon a time, as I recall it, Sampson's noted evangelist, Mr. A. B. Cumber, now a lawyer as well as a preacher, in the heyday of his sanctifying all types of folks who would give up their pleasures, held a meeting at the Point. Tobacco was an enemy to sanctification to be forever cast out. The women were throwing away their tooth brushes; and twists and plugs were left at home by the half-persuaded. In the congregation was a Mr. Black, many years an artist at the end of a pipe stem, a veteran, with no competition for frequency, perseverance, and endurance. Really, his neighbors said he smoked only three times daily—after breakfast, after dinner and after supper. However, the three were long-meter, the last after-supper smoke lasting well into the night. Anyhow the morning service was aimed at ridding all candidates for regions where fire never enters, of all pipes, old-field, Bull Durham, Duke's Mixture and all other clogs to perfection. So on walking from the door the artist referred to walked to the edge of the woods and gave his old pipe a fling, and into the thicket it went, with a longing, wistful look following it and a care-marking of the exact spot where it fell. There was dinner on the ground, eating a light meal, frequently looking toward that forsaken pipe, the veteran artist turned to an old friend and observed: "I just throwed my pipe away in that thicket; but I be dagged if I hadn't better go get it while I know where it is; I will have to have it again." And off he went immediately to retrieve his constant comforter. Thus his sanctification ended.

Emerging From Isolation

When I first went into the section the bridge at Colly was new, and the ones at Point Caswell and Sessoms' over the Black so recently constructed that a frequent topic of conversation was the former isolation when only ferries provided public crossing, and canoes private. The coming of the bridges also brought better roads. Now not only the Black is bridged, but a long up-to-date bridge spans the two Cape Fears, at Wilmington. In the language of Luther Beasley, long a prominent attorney at Kenansville, when a student at Wake Forest, "Change, mystic change." This reference to the marvelous changes that have taken place in the lifetime of people yet in the prime of life, recalls the fact that when I went to Wilmington in the spring of 1904 the passenger train was steamed by pine wood and the train frequently stopped to load up for power. On that train the conductor was about the most profane man I ever heard talk; he was Captain Branch. The Captain not only cursed by note, he cursed in soprano, tenor, bass and alto. Later missing him, I asked why, and was told the railroad had placed him on freights where he would have all the time he needed for cursing, but that the demotion was due to his profanity. In those days the passenger trains never ran more than four or five hours late between Sanford and Wilmington, while the freights tried to get in the next day after scheduled time. Those things too, have changed. Why, we ask. Well, we just live in an entirely different world. Several years later I met Capt. Branch again on a passenger train and he seemed to have learned his lesson, for he

Milton A. Barber, Senior and Junior

The Dunn friends of Mr. Milton A. Barber, Jr., as well as the thousands of friends of his father, Rev. Milton A. Barber D. D., for 28 years rector of Christ church, Raleigh, regret the necessity of the father's resigning his long-time pastorate because of ill health. Dr. Barber's pastorate has been a most successful one, and as evidence of the continued esteem in which he is held by the church it is noted that he has been named pastor emeritus with an honorarium accompanying the title. Mr. Barber, Jr., has been a resident of Dunn for several months, being employed by the Carolina Power and Light company. He is a most delightful young gentleman, and only a few moons ago brought a charming bride to our little city. Accordingly, Dunn people are not unconcerned in the news that comes out of Raleigh with respect to Dr. Barber's health and retirement from his pastorate.

A Dunn Native to Become A Major

Capt. Wm. Lee, of the U. S. army, and Mrs. Lee are visiting Captain Lee's brother, Mr. Henry C. Lee, of Dunn. The Captain is soon to be elevated to the rank of major. Captain Lee entered the army in the spring of 1917 as second-lieutenant. He has served in many areas since. The gallant soldier is a native of Dunn, was educated at Dunn high school, Wake Forest College and State College, entering the army from the latter institution. Dunn is proud of the record of her soldier son.

D. H. Hood Celebrates 65th Birthday

Mr. D. H. Hood is one of the near pioneers of Dunn. He came here from Smithfield where he was reared and where his brother, a druggist as is the Dunn man, was long president of the First-Citizens Bank, which has recently risen to a high rank among the banking institutions of the state. D. H. Hood celebrated his 65th birthday a few days ago, or rather his Sunday school class, of which he has been a teacher at the Methodist church for many years, celebrated it for and with him. Mr. Hood is a notable Bible student, and his class has reason to appreciate his services.

But there is that other fine and long-time citizen of about the same vintage, Mr. J. W. Jordan, who is stricken and his life almost despaired of.

then used the most choice and chaste language. A man's vocabulary must be very limited to have to resort to "cuss words" to express his thoughts.

Black River Swamp Commended to Snakeology Preachers

I still lived in Pender in 1907 when the great freshets came and overflowed almost the entire Canetuck section, making it necessary for me to cross Black river for weeks in a canoe, and the local man paddling, for some reason, never followed the road but meandered around through the swamp. The crossing carried us perhaps half a mile, and I do not believe that I exaggerate when I say I have seen a thousand water snakes in crossing that river one time. They literally lined the bushes, dropping from their sunning positions as the boat approached. Along this narrow passageway there were so many even an expert mathematician could not have gotten an accurate count. The swamps of Black River are certainly a paradise for preachers who have abandoned theology for snakeology. None for me, thank you, for I have a strong instinctive aversion for snakes and snake-handlers. This may be, as held by scientists, that my prehistoric ancestors lived in caves and were constantly exposed to dangerous and deadly reptiles. If so, they must have kept faithful dogs for their protection, for from childhood I have been a dog fancier.

A Fox's Cunning

One Saturday night I was spending with a friend, Dick Croom, when all of a sudden the most awful noises I ever heard, frightful and hideous, literal screaming, shrieked through the night's stillness. Mr. Croom grabbed his lantern, saying, "There is a fox in my trap, come with me." Rapidly as we could walk we hurried some three hundred yards into the field; but before we reached the spot the screaming ceased. On reaching the spot and viewing the trap, we saw only hair and blood, where a fox had pulled his foot out at considerable loss. I then innocently asked, "Will he go near that trap again?" Mr. Croom gave me a strong, surprised look, and said, "Never, a fox has too much sense for that, he is wiser than many people, once caught in a trap a fox never goes near it again." And perhaps he was correct in his conclusion.