

REMINISCENCES OF HON. FELIX WALKER

Memoirs of Rutherford County's First Court Clerk, U. S. Congressman, Explorer, and Soldier Officially Presented.

(This transcript from the original manuscript of Hon. Felix Walker, written in 1826, is officially presented by permission of Mrs. Estelle Trichelle Oltrogge, of Jacksonville, Fla., a great-great-granddaughter of Congressman Walker.)

In attempting to give a history or biography of our ancestors, I cannot look back and avail myself of eminent family distinctions as others may do and have a right to do; honest poverty appears to be the lot of our inheritance.

The only honorable title we can claim by birthright, on which I can proceed with certainty, although we might have a claim on the merits of George Walker, a dissenting clergyman who distinguished himself in the wars of King James, in Ireland, about the year 1690, in saving the city of Derry, by his valor and stratagem, when it was thought all was lost when besieged by the King's troops.

From the information afforded by my father, and what I could collect from an old and respectable citizen, Mr. William Smart, (an elder of the church in Rutherford county, North Carolina, now deceased) relative to our family descent, states that my grandfather, John Walker, was an emigrant from Ireland about the year 1720, settled in the state of Delaware about or near a small town called Appaquimney, lived and died in that State, was buried in a church called Back Creek church on Bohemia River.

I passed the church in my travels through that country in the year 1796. Mr. Smart related that my grandfather Walker was a plain, honest man (a farmer), in moderate circumstances, of upright character, and respectable in his standing. He, Mr. Smart, made one or two crops with him when a young man. We must suppose he died in the meridian of life. He left two sons and three daughters. The eldest son, Thomas, died young; my father, the youngest, was bound to the cooper's trade, and followed it some years within my recollection after he had a family.

One of my father's sisters married a man by the name of Humphreys, father of Colonel Ralph Humphreys, who died at or near Natchez about thirty years past, the father of Geo. Humphreys, who lives in that county. One sister married Benjamin Gruble (Grubb?), a respectable farmer of Pennsylvania, but removed to South Carolina and died there. The other sister married Colonel Joseph Curry, settled about five miles below Columbia on the Congaree River. I was boarded there to school in the year 1764, at eleven years old. The school house stood on the site where Granby is now situated. It was then nearly a wilderness, a sandy desert, and so thinly inhabited that a school could scarcely be made up, and now a considerable commercial town.

My father, John Walker, after his freedom from apprenticeship, went up the country as an adventurer, settled on the south branch of the Potomac in Hampshire county, Virginia. Being a new country and game plenty, he became a hunter of the first order, famous in that profession, in which he practiced nearly to the end of his life. He was with General Washington in Braddock's Army in the year 1755. Previous to that time he married my mother, Elizabeth Watson, of a good family from Ireland, by whom he had seven sons, no daughters. I was the eldest, born nineteenth day of July, 1753. The names of his sons after my own were John, James, Thomas, Joseph, George and Jacob. I like to have forgotten William who was the eighth son, although the fourth in succession, and only now living (William, Jacob and myself). After Braddock's defeat, which happened on the ninth day of July, 1755, the country exposed to the depredation of the Indians and in continual jeopardy, my father removed to North Carolina, settled in Lincoln county on Lee Creek, about ten miles east of the village of Lincolnton, worked at his trade and hunted for his livelihood according to the custom of the times: game was then in abundance.

About this time the Cherokees, a powerful and war-like nation of Indians, broke out and murdered some

of the inhabitants on the frontier. He went out as a volunteer against the Indians, joined the army from South Carolina, under Colonel Grant, a Scotch officer, marched on to the Cherokee nation (a battle was fought at Estitoe, a town on Tennessee River about fifty miles distant from my own residence) in the fall of 1762. Colonel Grant was there repulsed with considerable loss, yet in the event, the Indians were partially subdued and made peace, for a time. It did not continue long; the war broke the year after.

On his return from the expedition he purchased a beautiful spot of land on Crowder's Creek, about four miles from Kings Mountain, in the same county, and removed there in the fall of 1763, being then a fresh part; he cultivated some land and raised stock in abundance and I can then remember that my mother and her assistants made as much butter in one summer as purchased a negro woman in Charlestown. My father hunted and killed deer in abundance and maintained his family on wild meat in style. I remember he kept me following him on horse to carry the venison until I was weary of the business, which also gave me a taste for the forest. He resided on Crowder Creek until the year of 1768 the range began to break and the game not so plenty, his ardor for range and game still continued. He purchased a tract of land of four hundred acres from one, Moses Moore, a brother hunter for one doubloon, which at this time could not be purchased for five thousand dollars, such the rapid increase of the value of land in half a century. This is the farm and plantation at the mouth of Cane Creek (or second Broad River) in Rutherford county, settled by my father in 1768, on which he resided until he raised his family until they were all grown, and on part of said tract I lived for seventeen years, and had six children born, Betsie Watson, Elvira, Felix Hampton, Joseph, Jefferson and Isabella.

In the year of 1787 my father removed to the mouth of Green River in the same county (about ten miles distant) where he lived until he died on the twenty-fifth of January, 1796, in the sixty-eighth year of his age; left that valuable inheritance of land in the forks of Green and Broad River to his youngest son, Jacob Walker, who lives on it to this day. My mother died on Easter Sunday in April, 1808, about the age of 75, and buried by the side of my father in the family burying ground on the plantation. I trust she was a good woman and gone to rest.

My father bore several commissions under the old government; was colonel-commandant and judge of the court for many years in the county of Rutherford, but on the commencement of the Revolutionary War he resigned all his commissions, both local and military, and united his interests and efforts in defense of his country against the oppressions of the British government and was a member of the First (Third) Public Convention held in North Carolina at Hillsborough in July. (August) 1775, on the Revolution of the American States. I was with him at that place. He took an early and decided part in that war, was appointed a regular officer in the Continental army. His grown sons were all active in that war in defense of their country. He was in person a man of slender habit, full of energy and swift on foot; a suavity in his manners that was graceful and attractive, and a cultivated understanding for his times and his day, and proper enthusiast in his friendship. Among my acquaintances I knew no man of a more liberal, hospitable and benevolent disposition (even to a fault) which often proved injurious to his pecuniary circumstances, but have thought he was wanting in that cool, deliberate, calculating faculty so necessary in all the occurrences of life, to balance the scale of our existence; yet he maintained such a consistency of character as insured him the confidence and friendship of society through life and left a good reputation and inheritance to his children. This is a narrative of our ancestors down to the present generation so far as my information extends.

When I proceed to relate the

reminiscences of my own desultory walk through life, variable as the winds that incessantly charge through the atmosphere, I blush to record the working of the needle in the compass of my mind which has played and vibrated in every direction, like the fool's eyes to the ends of the earth. A restless and enterprising anxiety was my constitutional misfortune, which in my later years I most sensibly see and feel, and has lost me half a life-time of repentance, and, to speak comparatively, ten thousand disappointments. But to do the same justice to myself, and that I would to others, can acquire myself on the ground that my irregularities were entirely and exclusively my own, and, on the most scrupulous and strict examination, I cannot charge myself in any of my transactions through life, intentionally with malice or fraud aforethought, of doing injury or injustice to my fellowman, Honesty, truth and integrity has been my guiding or polar star through all the vicissitudes of my variable and checkered life.

At the age of sixteen my father bound me to a merchant in Charlestown (Mr. George Parker, an English gentleman of high standing in trade) for 5 years. He had three pretices of very singular names, one Noy Milly Stuckings, one Atlard Belin, and myself, Felix Walker (the youngest). He used to boast that he had three young men of such singular names none such to be found in the city of Charlestown in one house, either for name or service. I was highly gratified with my mode of life, well approved by my master, carressed by my mistress, who treated me with the sympathy and kindness of a child. I lived most delightfully for a time while the novelties of the city arrested my mind and occupied my attention.

At length those pleasures began to lag and I became weary and satiated with the continual sameness of the city. My restless and anxious propensities began to prevail and I thirsted and sighed for those pleasures that variety afforded. Some more than a year after being bound, I solicited my master to give me up my indentures and permit me to go home for a time, under promise to return and serve out my apprenticeship. This he absolutely and promptly refused, saying he could not, nor would not do without me; my father's and my own acquaintance in the country brought in a great custom. At length my father coming to town, I renewed my solicitations to go home and through the influence of my father, and he seeing I was determined to go, he let me off with seemingly great reluctance. In this I believe my father committed an error in taking me away. He ought to have compelled me to business, and I have since thought that too much indulgence to a child, particularly in the rise or dawn of life, is the greatest injury we can do to them. I have experienced something of this in my own family.

During my residence in Charlestown in the Christmas of 1769 I heard the celebrated Dart Whitefield preach with great power. He was the greatest awakening preacher that perhaps ever filled the sacred desk. He had most crowded congregations. I felt the power of the awakening spirit under his preaching but it soon went off.

On my return home my father put me to work on the farm, which did not well accord with my feelings. Yet I submitted and worked faithfully for a while. I applied myself to music, for which I had a predominant taste, and soon acquired a great proficiency in performing on the violin (then called a fiddle) in which I excelled and although accustomed to frolic, I could never learn to dance. My father, discovering I had neither inclination or capacity for a farmer, he put me to school to Doctor Joseph Dobson of Burke County, from whom I received the best education I have ever been in possession of, although no more than the common English, so-called. I returned from school in less than a year and lived at home nearly two years without much restraint, yet I obeyed my father and mother with the greatest punctuality, but at the same time living according to the course of this world, fulfilling my desires of the flesh and of the mind and of the vanities of life with the greatest avidity. At length, becoming weary of so limited a circle, I solicited my father to suffer me to go to Kentucky (which was then called Louisville) with Colonel Richard Henderson, who had made a purchase of that country from the Cherokee Indians. He consented, and according my father and myself set out to a

treaty held for that purpose, on the Watauga in the month of February 1775, where we met with Colonel Henderson and the Indians in treaty. I there saw the celebrated Indian Chief called Atticullaculla—in our tongue "the little carpenter." He was a very small man and said to be then ninety years of age and had the character of being the greatest politician ever known in the Cherokee nation. He was sent as an agent or plenipotentiary from his nation to England and dined with King George the Second with the nobility, so I heard him declare in a public oration delivered at the treaty. He was an eloquent orator and graceful speaker in his Indian way. The name of "Little Carpenter" was given him by similitude. The Indians said he would modify and connect his political views so as to make every joint fit to its place as a white carpenter can do in wood. You may find his name mentioned in Weem's "Life of General Marion."

The treaty being finished and a purchase made, there associated and collected together about thirty men. Mr. William Twitty with six men and myself were from Rutherford; the others a miscellaneous collection.

We rendezvoused at the Long Island in Holstein. Colonel Daniel Boone was our leader and pilot. Never was a company of more cheerful and ardent spirits set out to find a

new country. We proceeded and traveled, cutting our way through a wilderness of near three hundred miles, until we arrived within about twelve miles of Kentucky River when, on the twenty-fifth of March, 1775, we were fired on by the Indians while asleep in our camp; Mr. Twitty and his negro man killed, myself badly wounded, the company despondent and discouraged. We continued there for twelve days. I was carried in a litter between two horses to the bank of the Kentucky river, where we stopped and made a station and called it Boonsborough. I well recollect it was a "lick". A vast number of buffaloes moved off on our appearance. I saw some running, some loping and some walking quietly as if they had been driven. It was calculated there were near two hundred.

But let me not forget, nor never shall forget, the kindness, tenderness and sympathy shown me by Colonel Daniel Boone. He was my father, my physician and my friend; attended me, cured my wounds, consoled me in my distress and fostered me as in my own child. He is no more, has gone to rest, but let me pay my tribute of gratitude to his memory and his ashes.

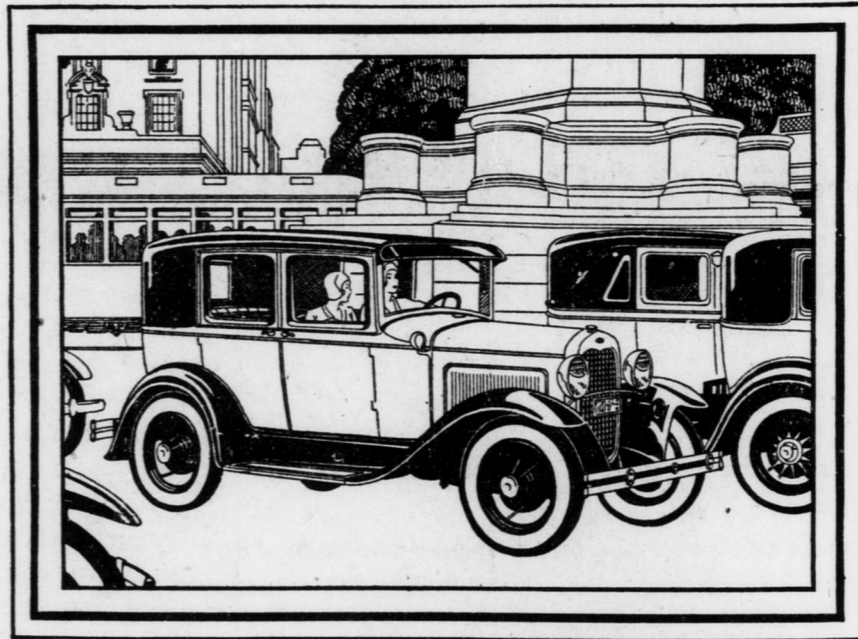
In a few days after we had fixed our residence, Colonel Richard Henderson, Colonel Luttrell and Colonel Slaughter (from Virginia) arriv-

ed with about fifteen men, who stationed with us. This addition, our company consisted of about fifty men, well armed with good rifles. Colonel Henderson, being proprietor, acted as governor, organized a government. We elected members, convened an assembly, formed a Constitution, passed some laws regulating our little community. This assembly was held about the beginning of May, 1775. This was the first feature of civilization ever attempted in that flourishing and enlightened state now called Kentucky.

From the recent occurrences of an unexpected event, my friend and protector, Mr. Twitty, taken dead from my side, myself deeply wounded without much expectation of recovery, brought me to solemn reflections should I be taken off, what would be my destination in the world to come. I could make no favorable calculations as to my future happiness. Under these impressions I was indeed excited to make every possible exertion to meet death, prayed much and formed solemn resolutions to amend my life by repentance should I be spared; but on my recovery, my feelings wearing off, and my duties declining, I gradually slid back to my former courses and pursued my pleasures with the greatest avidity.

(To Be Continued Next Week)

Meeting the Needs of Millions of People



The low-priced automobile has brought greater opportunity and added hours of recreation to millions of men and women.

BECAUSE the automobile is such an important factor in the lives and prosperity of so many people, the purpose of the Ford Motor Company is something more than the mere manufacture of a motor car.

There is no service in simply setting up a machine or a plant and letting it turn out goods. The service extends into every detail of the business—design, production, the wages paid and the selling price. All are a part of the plan.

The Ford Motor Company looks upon itself as charged with making an automobile that will meet the needs of millions of people and to provide it at a low price. That is its mission. That is its duty and its obligation to the public.

The search for better ways of doing things is never-ending. There is ceaseless, untiring effort to find new methods and new machines that will save steps and time in manufacturing. The Ford plants are, in reality, a great mechanical university, dedicated to the advancement of industry. Many manufacturers come to see and share the progress made.

The greatest progress comes by never standing still. Today's methods, however successful, can never be taken as wholly right. They represent simply the best efforts of the moment. Tomorrow must bring an improve-

ment in the methods of the day before. Hard work usually finds the way.

Once it was thought impossible to cast gray iron by the endless chain method. All precedent was against it and every previous experiment had failed. But fair prices to the public demanded that wasteful methods be eliminated. Finally the way was found.

A better way of making axle shafts saved thirty-six million dollars in four years. A new method of cutting crankcases reduced the cost by \$500,000 a year. The perfection of a new machine saved a similar amount on such a little thing as one bolt. Then electric welding was developed to make many bolts unnecessary and to increase structural strength.

Just a little while ago, an endless chain conveyor almost four miles long was installed at the Rouge plant. This conveyor has a daily capacity of 300,000 parts weighing more than 2,000,000 pounds. By substituting the tireless, unvarying machine for tasks formerly done by hand, it has made the day's work easier for thousands of workers and saved time and money in the manufacture of the car.

All of these things are done in the interest of the public—so that the benefits of reliable, economical transportation may be placed within the means of every one.



FORD MOTOR COMPANY