

# REMINISCENCES OF HON. FELIX WALKER

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

PART TWO.

Such is the instability of all human resolutions and legal repentance, no power on earth can change the heart but the omnipotent power of the grace of Almighty God. During the time we were there we lived without bread or salt. In summer, perhaps in July, my wounds being healed, although very feeble, I was able to sit on horseback by being lifted up. I set out in company with Messrs Decker and Richard Hogan and returned by the way we came to Watauga, a dangerous route. It was a merciful Providence that preserved us from being killed by the Indians, who were then in open hostilities with all the adventurers to Kentucky. However, we arrived safe to Colonel Robinson on Watauga, and from there in a few days I returned to my father's in Rutherford. I lived at home about three months, when that spirit of novelty began to prevail. I wished to be moving, but what course to pursue was undetermined. At length concluded to go to Watauga (This river is a branch of Holstein, heads up in the mountains opposite to Ashe County, in N. C.) where I had formed some acquaintances, on my way to Kentucky. And now being my own man (but with the consent of my father) I set out in October '75, and arrived at Col. Charles Robinson's in a few days, being about ninety miles.

The country being newly settled, in a short time they organized a county and called it Washington. I was appointed Clerk of the Court. It was then a county or district of self-government, not incorporated in the state of North Carolina until some years after. It was then taken in by Act of Assembly and so remained until it was ceded to Congress in 1789, and since a part of the state of Tennessee. This was the first court ever organized in that section of the western country. I continued in this office for nearly four years.

The war of the Revolution commencing about this time, I considered it a favorable opportunity, a fine theatre, on which to distinguish myself as a young man and patriot in defense of my country.

Accordingly I went to Mecklenburg county, and meeting with some recruiting officers, by the recommendation of General Thomas Polk (father of Col. William Polk of Raleigh) I was appointed Lieutenant in Capt. Richardson's company in the Rifle Regiment, commanded by James Stuger (then a Colonel) and was there furnished with money for the recruiting service. I returned to Watauga and on my way throughout that country I recruited my full proportion of men and marched them to Charlestown in May, 1776, joined the Regiment, and was stationed on James Island.

Sir Peter Parker with his whole fleet arrived in the bay while we were stationed on the Island. General Lee arrived in Charlestown and took command of the troops, but did not tarry long; he went on to Savannah to assist the Americans against the British and Indians, and to regulate the troops. Sir Peter Parker commanded an attack on Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island on the twenty-eighth of June 1776, was repulsed with loss of two British men-of-war and a number of men; did not succeed in the reduction of Charlestown.

The war now becoming general through the American provinces, the British stimulating the Indians on the frontiers, the Cherokees breaking out and murdering the inhabitants of Watauga and Holstein, where my property and interests lay, I was constrained to resign my commission, contrary to the wish of the commanding officer, and return home to engage against the Indians in the defense of my property and country.

I was appointed to a command of a company of Light Dragoons to range on the frontiers, was stationed at Nolachucky for a year and prevented the Indians from making any depredations on the inhabitants.

The war subsiding with the Indians, I returned to Watauga, attended to the duties of my office as clerk

of the court. Having experienced some of bitters with the sweets of life, I became more local in my disposition. Thinking it necessary to become a citizen of the world, in its utmost latitude, concluded to marry.

Accordingly, I was married to Susan Robinson, a beautiful girl of fifteen on the 8th of January, 1778, daughter of Col. Chas. Robinson (where I had resided for three years past). In March ensuing, my wife and self paid a visit to my father in Rutherford, designed to spend the summer. On the 28th of June, my dear girl had a miscarriage, which terminated her existence. She died on the 9th day of July, 1778, six months after our marriage.

This was the most momentous and eventful year in which I lived, through the whole period of my life. I was so shocked and impressed with so unexpected an event, that my mind was almost lost. Absorbed in grief almost unsupportable, I felt so deeply afflicted that I thought all my prospects of happiness were buried with the woman I loved. However, happy for man, that in cases of the most deep and deplorable affliction, the constitution of our nature affords some resources for recovery, and finds his way from under the most pressing calamities; but as excess of any kind is not intended to last, after some time I be-

gan to collect my scattered faculties and realize what would have been the consequence had I been called off in place of her that was gone, and although it is now 48 years since (1826) that melancholy scene, yet I tremble as I write when I consider the goodness and merciful forbearance of Almighty God in sparing me to this day, who am a sinner, through all the vicissitudes and vanities of life which I have been destined to fill. To Him be the praise forever, under the alarm of so feeling a dispensation, I became seriously and solemnly impressed with mighty concern for my own salvation.

Reflecting on my past life, I found that I had been traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, had lived in a state of sin and rebellion against God, ungrateful of his goodness, and trampled his mercies under my feet. I resolved to reform and turn from my wicked ways and be a good Christian, and so ignorant was I that I thought all was in my own power with my good intentions; and but endeavoring to obtain forgiveness for all my sins through the merits of the Redeemer (delusive hope) which I fear thousands are carried away on the quicksands of their own confidence.

In this resolution I was serious and determined. Accordingly, I read my Bible, prayed much, abstained from every evil as I could avoid, dejected corrupt company, was sober and reserved in my manners and morals, and so continued until I thought I was not only an almost, but a real Christian indeed, and in truth so I was settled on the fatal rock of self-righteousness, that when the rain descended and the wind blew and beat upon it, it fell and great was the fall; indeed, it swept

away the refuge of lies; but glory, honor and praise be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the lamb forever and forever.

I was not suffered to rest on so fatal a delusion; the Lord by his spirit cautioned me that all I have been doing was as filthy rags and then the commandment and sin renewed and the purity and extent of the law was discovered to my mind with irresistible force, and I was constrained to say "what shall I do to be saved?" The spirituality of Divine Law was as a piercing sword in my back, with condemning power

This produced a deep sense of the depravity of my nature and pollution of my heart, and my utter inability to save myself by the utmost exertions of my moral powers. In this deplorable and depressed situation, almost to desperation, I remained for a time in inexpressible anguish of spirit, until it pleased the Almighty in His mercy to discover to my mind the way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ as a Redeemer and Savior for lost sinners, such as I found myself to be, and at a certain time on a certain day, which was Sunday, I received power to believe in His Name and obtain pardon for my sins to my inexpressible joy and comfort. It appeared to me indeed that old things were done away, and all things become new, or as if I had really been born in a new world, for which may I be enabled to praise Him through the ages of eternity; so confident was I at that season of happiness, that I did then believe that all men on earth and all devils in hell could

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