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COMMITTEES OF SAFETY IN NORTH CAROLINA

By Edward Taylor, Who Was Awarded Reid Medal for Best Essay on North Carolina History.

During the troublous days just preceding the Revolutionary War, when the province of North Carolina was being changed from a king's colony to a free and independent State, the plan of government employed by the people was that of the Committees of Safety. This committee government existed, in its fully established form, from September 9, 1775, to November 12, 1776. It was a unique system, noted for its peculiar combination of democratic spirit and oligarchical methods—"A tyrannical administration by patriots seeking individual and national liberty."

In this system there were at least four kinds of Safety Committees, viz., the Central Committee or Provincial Council, District Committees, County Committees, and Town Committees, all of which were active, at least part of the time, during their existence. The central governing body of the province was the Provincial Council, a committee of thirteen members, two from each of the six districts into which the province was divided, and one appointed by the Congress for the State at large. This committee was subordinate to the Provincial Congress, existing only when Congress was not in session. The regular time for the meeting of the Provincial Council was every quarter, or oftener if it was deemed expedient. It adjourned at discretion.

Next in order were six District Committees, viz., Wilmington, New Bern, Edenton, Halifax, Hillsboro, and Salisbury. Each of these committees were made up of thirteen members, elected in Congress by members of the respective districts. District Committees were intended to aid the Provincial Council (and Congress) and to supervise lower committees.

Each county in the province was supposed to have a committee, but there is no proof that all had committees. County Committees existed for more than a year before the Provincial Council and District Committees were organized. They were authorized by the First Provincial Congress at New Bern, August 27, 1774, and it is possible that they existed as early as 1773. Before September 9, 1775, County Committees were made up of five members each, appointed by the respective counties; but after they became a part of the organized government they had not less than twenty-one members each, elected by the freeholders of the respective counties.

The towns of Edenton, New Bern, and Wilmington each had a committee of fifteen persons, elected by the freeholders of the town. Every other town "having a right of representation in Congress" might have a committee of seven members, elected in the same manner. The records show but few separate town committees. They usually acted in conjunction or were consolidated with the committees of counties in which they were situated. County and town

committees regularly met on the first day of their respective courts, and if necessary, oftener.

While there had been some committee activity previous to September 9, 1775, the system of committee government, consisting of Provincial Council, District, County, and Town Committees, was not established until the meeting of the Third Provincial Congress at Hillsboro, August 20, 1775. This Congress voted to keep the Town and County Committees, and to institute the District Committees and the Provincial Council, in order to strengthen the system and to bind it more closely together.

This system, as established by the Third Provincial Congress, existed until the meeting of the Fourth Provincial Congress at Halifax, May 11, 1776. During this period the District and Local Committees held a prominent place in the government, the Provincial Council being merely the centre of the system.

But about this time the province reached the position where it could no longer endure the term "Provincial," implying allegiance to England. So by the Fourth Provincial Congress at Halifax, May 11, 1776, the Provincial Council was changed to the Council of Safety, a body with the Provincial Council, but having more power, since by the same congress the District Committees were abolished and their power was transferred to the Council of Safety. The Council of Safety sat continuously, and at any convenient places in the province. From this time the Council of Safety gained in power while the local committees declined. Although the county and Town Committees still existed, they were active only under the direction of the Council, and as the Council for the most part dealt with affairs directly, the local committees lost significance. This stage of the government lasted until the close, the calling of the Constitutional Convention, November 12, 1776.

Much might be said of the work done by the committee government in North Carolina, but to express it briefly, the entire government of the province rested on these committees for about fourteen months. And when we remember that the whole province was in a state of unrest that finally culminated in rebellion, we can appreciate more the great work they did.

The minutes of the Provincial Council show an extension range of proceedings in many fields. In a word, the Provincial Council was empowered "to transact all matters as members might judge expedient to strengthen and defend the colony, so as the same shall not extend to altering or suspending any act or resolution of the Congress." After the Provincial Council was changed to the Council of Safety and the District Committees were abolished, the Council of Safety, being practically the only legislative, executive, and judicial power of the province, exercised great authority along all lines.

There are records of the proceedings of committees in fourteen counties, and it is thought that all the counties had committees. While the power of the county committees was not so great, their

BOOSTING SPARTANBURG.

Special Train Of Eighty-Five Passengers Here Tuesday Night On Advertising Tour.

The Spartanburg booster train, which is making a tour of Western North Carolina to advertise Spartanburg arrived in Marion Tuesday night with eighty-five passengers, who were representative of Spartanburg's commercial and business life. They were met at the station by Mayor Carlton and a party of citizens who extended a welcome to our town, and assured them of our good wishes and fellowship. They had with them a splendid brass band that gave an open air concert Tuesday night and Wednesday morning in front of the Marianna hotel. The party was one of jolly good fellows, each one having an abundance of booster spirit and many good words to say of their thriving city.

The spirit of each citizen composing this party is but an indication of the booster community spirit which permeates Spartanburg, and which will, no doubt, make the city come to be a more important commercial and business center.

Many of the citizens of Marion mingled with the men on the streets and in the hotel lobbies to inquire into the attractions of Spartanburg, and to give them assurance that they and their fellow citizens would be welcome to Marion any time they choose to come. A dance was given the party in the Manufacturers' Club rooms, which was enjoyed by a large number of the party, and many of Marion's young men and young women.

May these Spartanburg citizens visit us again, and may the spirit which they now possess continue to grow.

number and the almost incessant activity of some of them rendered them the most important factor in the committee government. County Committees acted under the authority of the council.

The town committees in most cases were lost in the county committees. The work of the District Committees was not essentially different from that of County and Town Committees. The Wilmington Committee, owing to the location and importance of the town, seems to have been the most important Town Committee.

The purpose or aim of the committee system of government is well set forth in the reply of the Committees to Governor Martin's charge, which reply is of this nature: "The committees appointed by the people in the several towns and counties of this Colony, in consequence of the resolutions of the Continental Congress held at Philadelphia were the result of necessity, not choice, as the only means left them to prevent, as far as in them lay, the operation of those oppressive and unconstitutional acts of Parliament, endeavored to be imposed upon America by Great Britain." J. S. Jones says: "The advancement of the great American cause and not justice was the motto of the County Committees." The people were determined to be free and self governing, and while a better system than the committees was no doubt possible, they paved the way for the splendid government of which we are so proud today.

Gilliam-Corn.

"Open thy lattices, O friends so bright! The earth lies calm in the fair moonlight: Gaze on the glint of each glancing cell. And listen to the note of the wedding-bell."

Mr. Willie P. Gilliam, of Old Fort, and Miss Eugene Coro, of Gastonia, were united in the holy wedlock of matrimony at the bride's home, Sunday morning, at seven o'clock, Rev. Robertson officiated, who is the bride's pastor. After the ceremony was performed the bride and bride-groom boarded the train for Asheville, where they will spend their honeymoon.

Mr. Gilliam is a son of Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Gilliam, who are well known throughout the country. He is a very successful young man in business, and has many friends wherever he has gone.

It is understood that the young couple will make their future home near Old Fort. We welcome them here. We also extend our hearty congratulations to them, and may their future life be one strewn with many flowers.

Old Fort, June 19.

"Back Home" to Dixie.

Johnson City, Tenn., June 17.—The mail of the "Back Home" Association is the heaviest of any in this city. Hundreds of letters for it are handled at the local postoffice each week. The secretary, W. D. Roberts, says that sometimes one letter from the West contains fifty or more names of Southerners who want to know about present opportunities and conditions "back home," and that a majority of them want land for farming.

The "Back Home" movement is apparently growing popular in the West. One man, N. H. Gwyn, at Mansfield, Wash., writes as follows: "I took the 'Back Home' circular with me to Sunday school yesterday, and today I send you the names of twelve who were there and wanted a copy of the 'Back Home Magazine.'" Somewhat similar letters are coming every day from all the states and territories west of the Mississippi river. A man in San Francisco, T. R. Hill, says:

"The 'Back Home' call touches my heart. I am repeating the 'call' to all the 300 members of our 'Southern Club' here in this city, and we are all coming 'back home', back to 'God's country' one of these days."

[Send the name of every Southerner you know in the West to W. D. Roberts, Secretary "Back Home" Association, Johnson City, Tenn., then clip this item and mail to someone who will do likewise.]

Automobile Licences.

This is the month for the renewal of the licenses and registrations of automobiles in this State. There are 2,596 automobiles registered and all of these will have to procure renewals before July 1 or be subject to penalties. In addition new machines are being put on every day.

Senator F. M. Simmons will address the State convention of Rural Letter Carriers at Winston-Salem, July 4th. The convention promises to be the largest and best ever held. There will be other prominent speakers.

BIG FINANCIAL DEAL.

Change In Ownership Of Piedmont Wagon Works At Hickory.

Charlotte Observer, 17th.

Hickory, June 17.—The biggest financial deal in the history of Hickory took place last evening, when the Piedmont Wagon Works changed hands in a deal involving more than \$400,000. The deal was engineered by Mr. J. A. Martin of this city and he and his associates were the purchasers. Just who these associates are is unknown at this writing as their names are withheld from the public. That they are Northern capitalists, however, is definitely known.

It is said that the new owners desire no change whatever in the management of the plant, but Mr. G. H. Geitner, president and manager, and his associates have not yet decided what they will do in the matter and have given no definite answer. The great majority of the stock changed hands and Mr. Martin insisted every share should have the privilege of going at the same price and it is possible that every dollar of the \$200,000 stock will be transferred to the new owners.

Four Convicts Killed.

Four convicts were killed, twelve seriously injured and fourteen convicts and three guards slightly injured last Saturday in the collapse of a bull pen near Waterville, N. C., in the heart of the Smokies, the only remaining mountain pass to the east. The convicts were all negroes, the property of the state of North Carolina, and were being worked in connection with the construction work of the Transcontinental railroad.

Rutherfordton News.

Rutherfordton, June 19.—Friends in Rutherfordton have received the following cards:

"Mrs. Mollie E. Harrell requests the honor of your presence at the marriage of her daughter, Velma, to Jonas Edgar Elliott, on Monday morning, July the tenth, nineteen hundred and eleven, at eight o'clock, at the family residence, Jacksonville, Texas."

Mr. Elliott is a native of the "Old North State" and formerly lived in Rutherfordton. He is a brother of our townsmen, Messrs. H. C. Elliott, attorney-at-law and Julius L. Elliott, agent of the Southern Express Company. Mr. and Mrs. Elliott will make their future home in Rutherfordton.

The citizens of Rutherfordton are laying plans to celebrate the Fourth of July this year. It is expected that the committee of arrangements will announce the program in a few days. GORDON.

Rocky Pass News.

Rocky Pass, June 20.—We are glad and thankful for the little rains we have had and hope for more in the near future, for the ground is dry for three feet beneath the surface. Farmers are cutting wheat and have had fine weather for some up to now.

Mrs. J. H. Hensley, who has been very ill, is slowly improving. The infant of Mr. John M. Hensley, is very sick and is not expected to live. Brantley England died of typhoid, and was buried at Pinacle church. Another child of the family has fever but is doing very well.

Mr. James Haney, of near Chapel Hill, visited his aunt, Margaret Haney, Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Huskins, J. B. and W. W. Huskins were in Marion Saturday. —ROSA.