

"GENTLEMAN" JOHN PERKINS

Some Account of the Life and Times of "Gentleman" John Perkins, of Lincoln; and of His Contemporaries, Successors and Descendants; Together With a Glance at the History of the Manners, Customs and Development of What Is Now Caldwell County and of the Adjacent Country, During the Latter Part of the Eighteenth and the Beginning of the Nineteenth Centuries.

By W. W. SCOTT

INTRODUCTORY

These compilations do not assume the guise and dignity of history or biography, but are submitted as material that may be used by the exact historian after verification.

Born in 1733 and dying in 1804, John Perkins has been succeeded, during the 115 years following his death, by six generations of descendants, the progeny of five sons and two daughters, whose families in each generation have been prolific beyond the average. The principal "habitat" of the members of this family who have remained in North Carolina is comprised within the boundaries of the counties of Burke, Caldwell, Buncombe, Iredell, Catawba, Wilkes and McDowell, although they are to be found in nearly every county in the State. From time to time many of them have moved to other States, and they have been traced to every State in the Union except the New England States, and some of them may be there. It is probable that they could be found in considerable numbers as citizens of foreign countries, although Brazil is the only foreign country to which any of them has been traced as citizens. Thus scattered there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of them living in the United States and in other countries, and yet the date and place of birth of John Perkins was known to few if any of these descendants before 1907, when it was first published. In one branch of the family the story was handed down, inaccurate as traditional statements are apt to be, that he was born in England, the son of a wealthy family, on intimate terms with the Earl of Granville, and that he was sent, as a youth, to North Carolina under the tutelage of a guardian who helped him to establish himself upon a valuable grant of lands made to him by the Earl of Granville. This tradition was disproved by the following publication made in the Lenoir Topic of June 7, 1911:

"I note with pleasure that Rev. J. H. Shuford is to write a series of local historical articles for the Topic, and I was especially interested in the first installment in the last number of the paper on John Perkins.

"The late Judge McCorkle of Newton wrote a series of articles concerning John Perkins and his family, which was published in the Newton Enterprise in 1883 and republished, with Judge McCorkle's permission, in the Topic on April 30 and May 7 and 14, 1890. Like Mr. Shuford, Judge McCorkle did not know from what section John Perkins came to North Carolina. I can inform you. Mrs. C. B. Harrison of Lenoir owns an old English prayer book which was the property of her great-grandfather, Parson Miller—Rev. Robert Johnstone Miller of blessed memory—and on one of the blank pages of this book is written in Mr. Miller's own hand the following:

"John Perkins of Lincoln county, State of North Carolina, son of Elisha Perkins, of the State of Virginia, was born in Virginia, on the fifteenth day of September, 1733, A. D., and departed this mortal life on Friday morning at five minutes past 7 o'clock, the thirteenth day of April, 1804, aged 70 years and 7 months, wanting 2 days."

"In think it probable that Elisha Perkins was a citizen of Frederick county, Virginia, which in those days covered a large part of the Valley of Virginia. Winchester is the capital of the present smaller county of Frederick, as it was of the older and larger Frederick. Stannard's 'Virginia Colonial Register' reports that in the Virginia Assembly of 1752-5, sessions of August 22, 1754, May 1, 1755, and October 27, 1755, Frederick county was represented by George William Fairfax and Perkins. The journals of the Virginia Assembly of that date are concisely written, making little reference to members except those belonging to committees. In the proceedings of Wednesday, May 21, 1755, is this record: 'Ordered, That Mr. Perkins have leave to be absent from the service of this House for the remainder of this session.' In the Dinwiddie papers Governor Dinwiddie makes a number of references to having advanced to Mr. Perkins 500 pounds for the purchase of flour for the army, engaged about 1750 in holding the French and Indians at bay, but refers to him simply as 'Mr. Perkins.'

"These facts are derived from an article written for the Baltimore Sun of Dec. 8, 1907, which states further: 'John Perkins was born in Frederick county, Virginia, in 1733, the son of Elisha Perkins, and removed to North Carolina in 1751 or 1752. This would make Elisha Perkins, father of John Perkins, of an age between the minimum of 40 and the maximum of 50 years in 1752, eligible in age to represent Frederick county in the Assembly of 1752-5.'

"No record has yet been discovered that shows what was the given name of Perkins, who served in the Colonial Assembly of 1752-5 as one of the representatives of Frederick county. The Baltimore Sun's writer makes a plausible, though not conclusive, argument in favor of Elisha Perkins as the man.

"One incident not generally known in the life of Parson Miller (who married John Perkins' daughter, Mary, and resided at Mary's Grove, two and a half miles west of Lenoir) is that he took part in political as well as in religious matters. He was one of the delegates from Burke county to the Constitutional Convention that met at Hillsboro in 1788. (See N. C. State Record.) W. W. SCOTT."

Following is the communication published in the Baltimore Sun of Dec. 8, 1907:

"Stannard's excellent publication, the 'Virginia Colonial Register,' reports that in the Virginia Assembly of 1752-55, sessions of August 22, 1754, May 1, 1755, and October 27, 1755, Frederick county was represented by George William Fairfax and Perkins. In the

STEEL WORKERS ARE READY TO STAND A LONG SIEGE

As the steel strike entered its third week the union workers prepared to "dig in" for a siege, while the steel companies arranged to make another attempt to start idle plants. Through page newspaper advertisements and personal appeals the companies have put forth efforts to get sufficient men to start up some of the works that have been suspended since the strike began.

Secretary William Z. Foster of the national strike committee said he was confident that the companies would fail and that the ranks of the organized men would hold firm. "It is only another attempt to scare our men back to the job," he added. "We are digging in and I feel sure we will hold our ground."

Serious rioting broke out late Saturday at Gary, Ind., when thousands of steel strikers and others hurled bricks and stones, fought the police, deputy sheriffs and city firemen, injuring scores. The local company of militia was called out. The fighting spread virtually all over the south part of the city. The local hospitals were soon filled with the injured and the city jail was filled with men arrested. No shots were fired.

The trouble started when strikers were leaving a union meeting. Several thousand men were at the meeting and others on the streets were involved. The immediate cause of the rioting was the presence of a number of non-strikers on a street car on their way to the steel mills to work. The car was halted by a passing train. The strikers began to hoot and jeer the men on the car, according to the police, and soon sticks and stones began to fly.

OVER \$6,000 GIVEN MAN WHO TRIED TO SAVE LIVES

More than \$6,000 for the benefit of John Miller, a railway watchman, who was injured recently when he sought to save the lives of William Fitch Tanner and his wife, who died together when Mrs. Tanner's heel was caught before an oncoming train, was realized at a testimonial performance of leading actors and actresses now playing in Chicago. Actresses and chorus girls sold tickets and made speeches in behalf of the fund, which will be added to that raised by newspapers in Chicago, New York and elsewhere.

TO ENTRUST THE STATES WITH WORLD WAR EMBLEMS

While the United States government will retain title to the colors, standards and guidons carried by North Carolina, South Carolina and other national guard troops during the world war, they will be entrusted to the several states or donors for safe keeping according to the following principles, says H. E. C. Bryant, Washington correspondent of the Charlotte Observer:

1. Any that were used by organizations which were brought into the Federal service from the national guard of any state will be returned to that state.

2. Any that were donated will be returned to the donor if he so desires.

3. All others will be sent to the state which furnished the majority of men of the organization at the time of its formation.

4. Where original competition cannot be determined, or where any particular organization was so cosmopolitan in its original makeup that it could not be said to be identified with any particular state, the colors will be turned in to the quartermaster general, director of purchase and storage, for national use.

All instructions relative to the disposition of these battle flags will be handled by the adjutant general without reference to the chief of staff.

A GOOD TIME TO PAY DEBTS

(Nashville Tennessean)
There is some good in everything. This is a good time to pay debts, especially so if the debts were contracted before the war, when the American dollar would buy a dollar's worth. Dr. G. F. Warren of Cornell University, in pointing out the advantage of "getting straight with the world" at this time, says: "It is a good time to pay debts because a dollar is worth only fifty cents." It might be added that there is something bad in everything. It certainly is bad to run into debt now, while the dollar is worth only fifty cents, if one has no prospects of settling up before normal economic conditions are restored.

The New York department of markets has completed its plans to put foodstuffs on sale from trucks throughout the city. Companies have been organized by the city to carry out the work.

Dinwiddie papers Governor Dinwiddie makes a number of references to having advanced to Mr. Perkins 500 for the purchase of flour for the army, but always refers to him simply as 'Mr. Perkins.' I would the army, but always refers to him simply as 'Mr. Perkins.' I would the Assembly of 1775-6, session of June 1, 1775, and in the conventions of March 20, 1775, and of December 1, 1775, Pittsylvania county was represented by Peter Perkins and Benjamin Lankford. Was this Peter Perkins a son or connection of Perkins of the Assembly of 1752-55?

"The history of John Perkins, of North Carolina, may assist in the discovery of the given name of Representative Perkins, of Frederick. John Perkins was born in Frederick county, Virginia, in 1733, the son of Elisha Perkins, and removed to North Carolina in 1751 or 1752. This would make Elisha Perkins, father of John, of an age between the minimum of 40 years and the maximum of 55 years in 1752, eligible in age to represent Frederick in the Assembly of 1752-55.

"Stannard says that in the eighteenth century the Burgesses in Virginia were paid their salaries by the counties through the instrumentality of the levy courts at their meetings, following the sessions of the Assembly, for attendance upon which pay was asked. There are, perhaps, records at Winchester that would throw light upon the given name of Perkins."

The writer of this paper from childhood up to comparatively recent years had the most meagre information regarding the history of John Perkins, his great-great-grandfather, which may be summed up in his understanding that his ancestor was a fine old gentleman, a good citizen of son, prominence in Lincoln county, very hospitable, a man of wealth in hopes, cattle and many acres of fertile land, with plenty of servants around him. He really knew little more than this about John Perkins except that there were many other men, women and children with whom he came in contact who also claimed descent from John Perkins and who knew little more about their ancestor than he did. So he placed his great-great-grandfather in a category with Adam and Noah and was content to trace his lineage in a general way from these three worthies. Of course this dense ignorance did not apply to the older generations of John Perkins descendants, but only to most of the present and perhaps the immediately preceding generations.

Not until 1890 did this mist of ignorance begin to lift from the present writer, who in that year, chanced to run across Judge McCorkle's account (published in the Newton Enterprise in 1883) of the marriage of Col. Ephraim Perkins and Betsy Abernethy, and republished in the Lenoir Topic. It was delightful reading and was the inspiration for research for the collection of records, publications, family histories and traditions, kept up from that day to this, that has resulted in the following compilations, which are submitted for what they are worth. Judge McCorkle's contribution, aside from the interesting and charming story that it carries, is of historical value and will add to the interest of these pages. It has therefore been incorporated in the account which follows, certain inaccuracies which it contains being pointed out.

THE MARRIAGE OF EPHRAIM PERKINS AND ELIZABETH ABERNETHY

Col. M. L. McCorkle in Newton Enterprise, 1883.

[Col. M. L. McCorkle, of Newton, has kindly permitted us to reprint the following sketches, first published in the Newton Enterprise in 1883. They are quite interesting and will occupy space in two or three issues of the paper. The first record we have of John Perkins was of his meeting with Bishop Spangenberg and being employed by him as a guide in his exploring expedition. That was in 1752 and John Perkins was just 19 years old. The Bishop had been advised to employ him by Andrew Lambert, "a well-known Scotchman." Adam Sherrill's son married Elizabeth Lowrance, a sister of John Perkins' wife, Catherine Lowrance.]

John Perkins immigrated to this country along with that great pioneer, Adam Sherrill, when he was a mere lad. Whether he was an orphan, or whether he was one of those daring, venturesome, go-ahead boys, that durst not like to brook control from parents or guardians, and left father and mother and kinsmen to seek his fortune in the wilds of North Carolina—we are only left to conjecture. When he arrived at full age he showed himself every inch a man. He acquired great wealth. He owned all that valuable country from the Island Ford, along the Catawba river to the mouth of Lysle's creek, several thousand acres, besides several thousand acres in Burke county, along the beautiful valley of John's river, from whom it took its name. He had great pride of ancestry. He believed in blood, both in men, horses and other live stock. He married Catherine Lowrance and settled on the western banks of the great Catawba not far from Little's Ferry. When Bishop Spangenberg made his tour of inspection in western North Carolina for the purpose of locating lands for the Moravian settlements in 1752 he was living there then. The Bishop mentions his name and says: "I especially recommend John Perkins as a diligent and trustworthy man and a friend of the brethren." His house was so located that he could stand on his eastern porch, and from it look upon his broad acres of river bottom, and see his many servants at work or view his race horses make their four miles in the quickest time. He never allowed his blooded colts fed high or on grain till they arrived at four years of age. To feed them on corn injured their eyes, made them beefy and sluggish; but he never permitted them to become so thin in flesh as to make them crooked and out of shape. He raised some of the finest horses this country ever produced, both for speed, durability and long life.

He was blessed with five sons—Elisha, Ephraim, Eli, John, Joseph and Alexander. The two former inherited all their father's land in Catawba county, the three latter all the lands on John river. All the sons were large, handsome, well-proportioned men. Ephraim Perkins was about six feet high, complexion somewhat light, with blue eyes, finely chiseled nose, a massive forehead, and an intellectual face. He saw Elizabeth Abernethy. He fell in love at first sight. He did not resolve and resolve again what to do. He determined to offer her his hand and heart. Her father, David Abernethy, lived in what is now Lincoln county, about six miles southwest of Beauty's Ford, on a plantation now owned by Miss Sallie Lucky. The maiden name of her mother was Martha Turner. Her parents were from Virginia, but originally from Aberdeen, Scotland. She had six brothers, Robert, David, John, Turner, Moses and Miles, and two sisters, Nancy, who married Gen. Forney, and Martha, who married Robert Abernethy. Betsy was

said to be the handsomest woman of her day. She was tall and handsome, and her form and moving was graceful and elegant. Her eyes were dark and sparkling, and her hair as black as the raven's wing; her cheeks were as the sunny side of the luscious peach; her lips somewhat pouting, challenging kisses. It was said that the Abernethys received their dark complexion from their Pocahontas blood. Whether this was said in envy or as a compliment we cannot tell. The Scotch-Irish blood cannot be enriched by that of any people on earth, especially not by the Indian race. The Scotch-Irish have shown themselves capable of meeting every emergency, in peace or war, in church or state, in the pulpit or forum, in every place of trust, honor or usefulness in this broad land. With the Scotch-Irish to plan and originate and go ahead and the German element to improve the lessons taught, this country is destined to be, if not now, the foremost nation on earth.

The day was fixed for Ephraim Perkins and Betsy Abernethy to be married. A large number of friends were invited. It was about the year 1800. Then the country was prosperous and everything plentiful. The bridegroom and bride lived about twenty-five miles from each other. Everybody rode horseback in those days. No Jersey wagon or English gig had been introduced. A lady could then mount her well-caparisoned steed of dapple grey, chestnut sorrel or blood-red bay, with reins well drawn up, and move off with more grandeur and beauty than to be seated in a delicate phaeton or gilded carriage. It was understood that a party from the bride would go out to meet the bridegroom on his way to the wedding, near Denver in Lincoln county, and there would be a trial of speed between the two parties. The prize was to be, who should have the honor of leading the bride in the first set in the dance. Everybody danced in those days. They did not think there was any harm in a social dance. When the bridal party approached near the place of meeting they sent out a company of videttes. They had not gone far till they saw in the distance the bridegroom's party coming. The videttes advanced within a few paces of the other party, saluted them, threw down the gauntlet and turned and flew back to their comrades. They were immediately pursued. The race was well maintained on both sides for some distance, but the blooded stock of the Perkinses outwinded the horses of the videttes and passed them, and the bridegroom's party obtained the prize.

The party soon arrived at the point proposed. A large number of invited guests were waiting to give them a hearty greeting. The negro servants ran far down the lane, ready to seize the reins of the spirited horses and lead them around to the well-stored racks of hay and troughs of corn and oats. It was an hour or two before Phebus should drive his golden chariot behind the western hills. The large grassy lawn in front of the house was covered with fair women and brave men, assembled on this festive occasion. The older men were talking politics—of the election of the elder John Adams to the presidency of the United States. The younger were engaged in athletic sports, as jumping with a long pole or leaping three jumps. The boys were in the rear of the house, near a straw stack, testing their early manhood in wrestling, either in back or waistband hold. Gen. Peter Forney was there. He had been a member of Congress from that district from 1794 to 1796. He was the husband of Nancy, oldest sister of the bride. He had just come from Washington city and was telling his neighbors and fellow citizens of George Washington's farewell address—that the whole house on its being read was bathed in tears. His son Daniel was there, a mere strapping. He had a peculiar mark—a white lock of hair on a black head, just above his forehead—born so. He afterwards became one of North Carolina's most distinguished sons. He represented her in Congress from 1815 to 1818. Robert Abernethy, the only brother of David Abernethy, was there. He had been the delegate from Tryon county to the Halifax congress, at which the North Carolina Bill of Rights was passed—the masterpiece of political statesmanship. John D. Abernethy, who had married Susan Mariah Forney, was there. He settled on a place on Mountain creek, called the John Abernethy forge place. He and Bartlett Shipp, that sturdy patriot, big-brained, common-sense lawyer and strong advocate, were great friends, and had many a keen encounter of wits. On one occasion Mr. Shipp told Abernethy that he had an overseer (his name was John Fisher) that he desired to swap off. Abernethy having one of his own name, told him that he would swap. Neither knew the name of the other's overseer. Mr. Shipp said his was so lazy he would not work himself nor make any one else work, and he would swap for anybody in the world, except an Abernethy. This soft impeachment might be applied to some of the Abernethy men, but not the women, for they are all industrious and make good housewives. Turner Abernethy, who had married Dicey Abernethy, his cousin, was there. He was the most active man of his day. He could leap forty feet at three jumps—with a pole jump fifteen feet high. He is the father of Dixon, Sterling, Felix, Dr. T. M. Abernethy and Patsy, wife of Hiram Lowrance (the mother of M. E. Lowrance), and Nancy, who married John Perkins, and who is said to have been a paragon of beauty. There, too, was William Abernethy, the father of Albert, Pat, Drury, Joseph, David and Belzy. The latter married Albert Oglesby. Miles, the youngest brother of the bride, was then unmarried.

The minister, contrary to custom, was chosen by the bridegroom. His name was Robert Johnson Miller, who was an Episcopal clergyman. He had been ordained to preach by the Lutheran Synod, ex necessitate rei. He was the brother-in-law of the bridegroom, and at that time was pastor of upper and lower Smyrna churches in the eastern portion of Catawba county. The candles were lighted and the guests assembled in the large and spacious hall. The bridegroom and bride made their appearance with the attendants. The rites of matrimony were celebrated according to the Episcopal service. It was repeated in such a solemn and impressive manner as if it was intended that they should dwell together as husband and wife so long as they should live, and not in the light and trifling manner as is sometimes done in this age of divorces, when the marriage vow only lasts till the husband can find one more congenial to his vitiated tastes. After the wedding was over came the dinner—some called it supper—where was every luxury that taste could select or appetite suggest—enough for all, enough and to spare. After all had feasted the hall was cleared and a few sets—not the German, the racquet nor the square—but the old Virginia reel was danced, and all was over. First the bride disappeared, then the bridegroom—no one knew where.

(To Be Continued Next Week)

AMERICAN WOMAN TEACHES A RUSSIAN BULLY A LESSON

A certain Russian bully learned something about American women that will lurk in his memory for some time through an encounter a few days ago with Miss Annie Laurie Williams in the freight yards at Omsk. Miss Williams' name will be familiar to many New Yorkers as a welfare worker. She is now with the American Red Cross and was one of those twelve women chosen to remain behind when the others were hustled out of Omsk by the American ambassador to Japan, Roland S. Morris, to escape a possible Bolshevik invasion.

The Russian was attempting to climb aboard in a refugee train in which were several girls. The girls were trying to shut the door against him when Miss Williams appeared and grappled with the intruder. She managed to land two blows on his jaw and then they rolled together down the embankment. As they arose she gave him another. Two Czech soldiers then came to her aid and, but for Miss Williams' intercession, would have finished the bully, who was eventually allowed to retreat and ponder on the strange ways of American women.

SWALLOWS SET OF TEETH; DIES ON WAY TO HOSPITAL

Mrs. C. M. Warren swallowed her set of false teeth while sitting in Mount Vernon Square, Washington, a few days ago and died as she reached Emergency hospital. Mrs. Warren, who was 60 years old, was observed by a sailor seated on a nearby bench to be gasping for breath. He rushed to her aid, but she was unable to speak and could only point to her throat. She was pronounced dead ten minutes later by a physician at the hospital.

James Stucky Says: "Rats Cost Me \$125 for Plumbing Bills"

"We couldn't tell what was clogging up our toilet and drains. We had to tear up floor, pipes, etc.; found a rat's nest in basement. They had choked the pipes with refuse. The plumber's bill was \$125. RAT-SNAP cleaned the rodent out." Three sizes, 25c, 50c, \$1.00. Sold and guaranteed by Bernhardt-Seagle Co., Lenoir Hardware and Furniture Co., Ballew's Cash Pharmacy and Hoffman & Son.

KEEP STRONG

As an aid to robustness, thousands upon thousands use

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Scott & Bowne, Bloomfield, N. J. 19-3

LONDON PROFITERS CAUGHT

A dispatch from London says to the present 336 profiteers have been convicted by the Stepheny food committee and have paid fines amounting to \$20,000, while four have served terms in prison. The newspapers insist that more prison sentences are needed to bring the high price traders to their senses.

When That Cold Gets Down Into Your Chest

It is time for you to take quick steps to relieve it, and prevent pneumonia or other serious trouble. Just try a good warming application of

MOTHER'S JOY
Chest and Throat SALVE


It will soothe you how quickly it penetrates to the seat of the trouble, relieving congestion and soreness.

It is also an invaluable remedy for Croup, and can be used freely without irritating, burning effects. Keep a jar on hand for emergencies. Do not use if you are not sure of its genuineness. Good dealers sell it.

Green Cross Co., Glasgow, S. C.

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Cost to you \$3.25 a Gallon when made ready to use
RECOMMENDED BY SATISFIED USERS FOR OVER 40 YEARS
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The Ford Coupe, with electric self starting and lighting system, has a big, broad seat deeply upholstered. Sliding plate glass windows so that the breeze can sweep right through the open car. Or in case of a storm, the Coupe becomes a closed car, snug, rain-proof and dust-proof. Has all the Ford economies in operation and maintenance. A car that lasts and serves satisfactorily as long as it lasts. Demountable rims with 3 1/2-inch tires all around. For the doctor and travelling salesman it is the ideal car.

RUFUS L. GWYN
Lenoir, N. C.

