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CITIZENS OF NORTH CAROLINA FIRST TO DEFY KING GEORGE

Proclamation of Freedom Made at Mecklenburg More Than 152 Years Ago.

In spite of doubting Thomas Jefferson and the reluctance of certain less interested Virginians to admit that anything good ever came out of North Carolina, no sufficient reason now exists for questioning the proud boast that the citizens of Mecklenburg county, in the latter state, didiling defiance in the face of Great Britain in the form of a declaration of independence just thirteen months and fifteen days before the Continental congress in Philadelphia saw fit to make the same decisive move. The date was May 20, 1775, the place was Charlotte, N. C., and the immediate provocation of precipitate action was the arrival of the express with the news of the shooting down of Capt. John Parker's Minute men by British regulars under Major Pitcairn on Lexington common.

It was in 1819 that a newspaper reprint of what was said to be the declaration itself—a document containing several of the phrases of his own famous paper—was called to the attention of Thomas Jefferson by John Adams. Writing to Adams from Monticello, Jefferson said he believed it spurious, because up to that moment he had never heard of it, though he lived in the adjoining state of Virginia. He called attention also to the circumstance that the witnesses appealed to were, most of them, dead.

Jefferson's Mind Open.
However, Jefferson was careful to add that he based his opinion on negative evidence which positive evidence was perfectly competent to overthrow. One of the most valiant collectors of this evidence has been Archibald Henderson, who is otherwise known as the American familiar of Bernard Shaw. Another—furiously assailed when he first collected the data—was Dr. George Washington Graham, who has written a whole book on the subject. The controversy was heated and acrimonious.

On the affirmative side it extended to the insinuation that one of the Virginia champions of Jefferson's priority had used his position as minister from this country to the Court of St. James to abstract from the British colonial archives a copy of the Cape Fear Mercury, which was material evidence because it contained the text of the Mecklenburg declaration printed within the month after it was issued. It was known that such a copy had, in fact, been sent to Lord Dartmouth by Josiah Martin, the royal governor of North Carolina at the time. Martin described it as "the late most treasonable publication of a committee in the county of Mecklenburg explicitly renouncing obedience to his majesty's government" and added that it "surpassed all horrid and treasonable publications that the inflammatory spirit of the country has produced." On the negative side there were charges of forgery and mendacity—the manufacture of history out of whole cloth.

Events Leading to Action.
Assuming the evidence as sufficient, the story of what happened becomes a part of a well-connected series of events in the province whose position between two ostentatiously aristocratic neighbors has sometimes, it is said, deprived her of due consideration. In March, 1774, Governor Martin had dissolved an unruly assembly. In August of that year a convention had met under the governor's nose in New Bern and sent delegates to the Continental congress. For the rest of that year the separate counties had been busy with meetings and preparations, and in April, 1775, the assembly which met by the authority of the crown—the last one—was also a convention of the people. They "transformed themselves from time to time" into one and then the other, so Governor Martin, who was a soldier, said, and thus, as Doctor Morrison sees it, strained the British constitution to the utmost—or, in other words, the breaking point. At the same time, a certain Col. Richard Henderson and his associates, all North Carolinians, had formed a company, with Daniel Boone for field leader, and set up a government in a tract of land which they had bought from the Cherokee with-

Scene of Washington's Funeral Ceremonies



General view of historic Christ church in Alexandria, Va., and the churchyard where many notable figures of Revolutionary times lie buried. On the left is the rectory which through the years has been occupied by many famous Episcopal clergymen. The church was completed in 1773. Washington and Robert E. Lee were among its worshippers, and Washington's funeral services were held here in 1799. In the churchyard are buried contemporaries and friends of Washington, including several who acted as pallbearers at his funeral. The church has a number of relics of Washington's time.

out royal warrant. That land, which they named Transylvania and which included a great part of Tennessee and Kentucky, they had practically proclaimed to be independent not only of Great Britain but of North Carolina, and Virginia as well. They asked, indeed, to have it acknowledged by congress as the fourteenth province of the Confederation.

Denounced King George.
Obviously, the North Carolinians were not in submissive mood when the news of the first blood shed in the North arrived. What happened at Anson county courthouse when the messenger rode into that place is recorded in a certain family Bible to which Doctor Henderson has had access. The writer is a young man named Morgan Brown, an eyewitness. He says that the messenger found the county court in session and the magistrates, some of whom were Tories, on the bench. The people forced the court to adjourn without the form of doing it in the king's name. Then they rushed out bearing the sheriff with them, leaving the tory magistrates still sitting on the bench. Afterward: "The people consented for them to meet and close some unfinished business upon condition that it should not be called in the king's name or that the words 'God save the king' should be added by the crier, 'for,' said they, 'we will have nothing done in the name of a king who has his troops slaughter our citizens.' And thus ended the royal authority. For the court, after closing their record, never sat again."

Gathering of the Citizens.
At Charlotte, some fifty miles away, the messenger appears to have found an assembly of the leading citizens of Mecklenburg summoned from the various "companies" throughout the county by the colonel commandant, Thomas Polk. According to the received chronology, the messenger arrived May 19 and threw the gathering into a fever. The secretary, John McKnitt Alexander, says they "sat in the courthouse all night, neither sleepy nor hungry nor fatigued," and in the morning passed a set of resolutions prepared by Ephraim Brevard.

In the resolutions occurred the following declarations:
"Resolved . . . That we dissolve us with the mother country and absolve ourselves from allegiance to the British crown; and
"Resolved, That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people; that we are and of right ought to be a sovereign and self-governing people under the power of God and the general congress."

It should be noted that the text is taken from Judge Francois X. Martin's "History of North Carolina," which text is supposed to be the same that was printed in the lost Cape Fear Mercury, for even the more ardent North Carolinians do not deny that the original document was destroyed in 1800 when Alexander's house was burned.

Sought Only Their Rights.

Returning again to the story: These resolutions were read to the people outside the courthouse by Colonel Polk and received with "shouts and huzzas." In accordance with a provision in the resolutions themselves, they were transmitted to the Continental congress, where the persons approached said that the "subject of the resolutions was premature to be laid before the congress."

At that time the cooler heads still hoped to compose matters with the mother country without an actual breach. The strongest statements of the Colonists' determination not to submit to coercion or to what they regarded as the abridgment of their liberties as subjects of the British crown were coupled with expressions of loyalty to the crown itself. Indeed among Americans who were far from being Tories there were many who were proud of their own connection with Britain and reluctant to sever it. George Washington himself about that period, as Archibald Henderson reminds us, "abhorred independence"—which meant that he desired to be a good Virginian and still remain a good Englishman.

Independence Not Sought.

As a matter of fact, even Jefferson at this date was not an open advocate of independence, nor did Patrick Henry in his "ringing resolutions" (as Jefferson called them), adopted in Virginia after the Lexington bloodshed, take so rash a stand.

The sum of the matter is that the declaration of independence which Mecklenburg, N. C., issued one year ahead of time and the revolution which Virginia started a century ahead of time had each to wait till the country at large was ready for the real thing. They were dramatic gestures, not things accomplished. Nevertheless, the Virginia affair cost many lives of patriots and some of those who were not so counted, and tons of ink have been spilled over the North Carolina outbreak.—New York Times Magazine.

APPEAL TO HEAVEN IN THE DARK HOUR

Washington's Fervent Prayer at Valley Forge.

This is said to be word for word the prayer that Washington sent up to the Great White Throne of God in that dark hour of the republic when his barefoot army shivered in the snows of Valley Forge:

"Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; and entertain a brotherly affection and love for each other and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large; and finally, that Thou



Washington's Headquarters During the Agony at Valley Forge.

wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

So the prayer ran—so wonderful then and still more wonderful now when there are those in the land who seek not only to sow the seeds of hatred and dissension but who also in their blindness shake their fists in the face of God.—Los Angeles Times.

PAUL REVERE HOME MADE INTO SHRINE

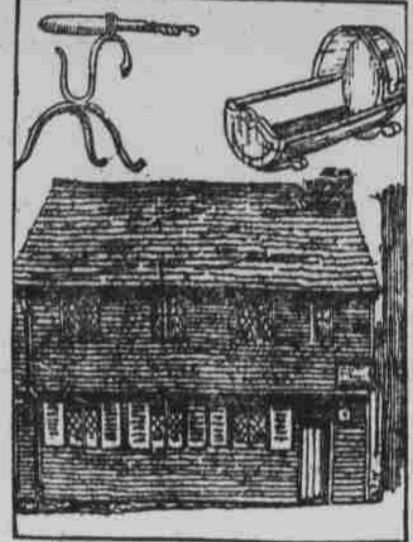
Practically as It Was in the Revolutionary Days.

The home of Paul Revere in North square, Boston, Mass., was built sometime between 1650 and 1680. It was purchased by Paul Revere in 1770 and he lived in it until 1800. The house, which is now owned by the Paul Revere Memorial association, has been restored to its original condition and is open to the public.

Once inside the small paneled entry one sees the flight of stairs that rise sharply to the second floor. From the entry one passes through a left-hand doorway and finds himself in a pine-sheathed room. The walls on all but the fireplace are covered with quaint wall paper.

The other downstairs room is the old kitchen. This room is both paneled and plastered. Above the fireplace on a narrow shelf are found sundry candlesticks and other paraphernalia. One of the most interesting things in the entire kitchen is the

toddy warmer, shown in the accompanying sketch, which was made by Paul Revere himself. When in use, the straight iron rod of this utensil was removed from its resting place in the thimble-like cap, and after being heated in the coals of the fireplace.



The todody stick or todody warmer in its holder (upper left) and the cradle are two of the prized antiques in the Paul Revere home (shown below).

was thrust red hot into the cold wine or ale, producing a burned taste which was much esteemed in those days. Near the fireplace is a battered baby's cradle fashioned from a barrel (see illustration). Its worn rockers and scarred sides testify to its ancient origin and faithful service.

Though Revere's memorable ride was undertaken over 150 years ago, thanks to Longfellow's immortal poem, "Paul Revere's Ride," practically every school child knows the story well. When criticized for mentioning neither William Dawes, Samuel Prescott, Sexton Robert Newman, nor Captains Pulling and Barnard in the poem for the parts they played on that memorable night, Longfellow replied, it is said, that the name Revere was a poetic one, and that it would do no one any harm because the poem would soon be forgotten. But histories show that he was wrong, for they have been founded on that poem. In fact, it is claimed that if it had not been for the poem, Revere would not have been honored in so many ways.—Pathfinder Magazine.

THE MINUTE MAN

By ISAAC BASSETT CHOATE



Blithe speeds the plow this warm sweet day of spring,
When April's sun has broken winter's reign,
Unclassed the hold frost had on lake and plain;
Swift hurry swallows north on eager wing;
To plowboy's whistle thrush and blue-bird sing.
The brook runs glad, escaped from icy chain
Which tyrant winter forged, but forged in vain;
All fields and woods with songs of freedom ring.
Now halts the plow in furrow, ready hand
Grasps ready musket in defense of right;
The plowboy is a soldier at command,
His country serving well; before the night
Shall sound of musketry assurance bring
That now hath Minute man succeeded king.