

Leaksville of "Ye Olden Times" written by Rev. D. E. Fields

(Retyped from pages glued into a scrap book by Allie Hopper Ivie. They were cut from the Leaksville Gazette. The date, Thursday, June 20, 1901, appears on one of the cuttings. The original printing was several installments and the entire history was printed over several months. There are several places where lines were cut out, and I have noted those places. Some of the language is no longer in use, but I used the spelling as printed. J. Ivie)

The early people of this country were a thrifty people; if comfortable living may be regarded a mark of thrift. There were three distinct classes; the rich, who were the owners of large landed estates and negro property; the middle class, those who lived bountifully without ostentation of effortful display (a very happy class;) and a thriftless, profligate class. These classes had but little intercourse the one with the other. There was more class distinction than now.

The marketable products of the country were corn, wheat, bacon, and tobacco. There was enough cotton raised to meet home demands. Nearly all the country people spun and wove their clothing. Both for male and female. And nearly every farmer raised his meat and bread and enough to sell to purchase sugar, coffee, and Sunday wearing apparel. Lynchburg, Va. was the most accessible market for sparse marketable products, accessible because of its nearness. Nearness was an important thing when heavy freight was to be transported, for as yet, railroads were unknown.

They had two methods of transportation, the road-wagon and hogshead rolling. The first of these was championed by Barney Cabal, a pigmy in physical proportions, but a gigantic teamster. Barney knew the capabilities of "horse flesh," and utilized them to the fullest extent. He was an accomplished sampler of "spirits," and no less an adept at "cussin." He claimed that "cussin" did horses as much good as currying. With 3000 pounds of freight on his five horse "spike team" wagon, he made the trip to Lynchburg and back in ten days, receiving \$1.25 per hundred as satisfactory compensation. He also received half freight on the back loading of the farmers, whose products he carried; for they generally spent the last cent for family supplies. The other very unique method I shall endeavor to describe comprehensively. A hogshead of tierce six feet long was

packed full of leaf tobacco, with secure heads. An iron rod or wooden beam passed through the center of the heads to as to form an axle for a pair of shafts. A seat for the driver was attached to the shafts so as to rest just over the center of the revolving hogshead. A horse was hitched between the shafts and another to the ends, right in front of horse No. 1, while the check line was on horse No.2. A rim or fellows was fastened around each end of the tierce so as to lift the middle from the ground; and away they went through streams and mud, over hill and dale, to the great city of Lynchburg to receive four dollars per hundred for their crop of tobacco. Contrast these methods with the present railroad facilities, and we are forced to "Jasper's" conclusion, that "the world to move." Uncle Barney lived to be more than eighty, reformed his life, died triumphantly and was transported to the clime "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

But returning to men of yore, prominent in Leaksville's history we name Davy Kyle, McDonald, Davy Campbell, Alick, Robert and John Muir, all typical Scots who lived and wrought in those early days and have long since passed to the country unknown. But esteemed by them much like their fairy Scotland. The three brothers last named were men of the "needer and the shears" and plied their calling successfully, accumulating each a nice estate.

Mr. McDonald was noted for his frolic and fun, often playing severe pranks to the discomforture of his victims. But turn about being fair play the boys resolved on paying him back to his own coin; and one dark night while Mac as basking in balmy sleep induced by grog, they utilized a large pile of rails that he had hauled to build a lot fence by building a pen right in front of his door. Making a floor as high as they could reach, they lifted his year-old calf upon this floor, and continued this process until his majesty, the calf, stood bleating some forty feet above terra firma. Our old hero, rising at grog time, just before day, being confronted by a heathen temple with its deity a veritable calf, began pouring forth his accustomed vocabulary of harsh invectives; when one of the scapegraces emptied the contents of a blunderbuss, which had been loaded with mush, into the bosom of the said Mac. He, imagining that a deadly wound had been inflicted, changed the spirit of his imprecations, and was born to his chamber "to give up the ghost." Twas well for the participants in that joke that they were never identified. But one old friend lived many years to retaliate this prank, but

died at last and was buried in the old Charles Gallaway burying ground and no one knows the spot. Davy Kyle and Campbell left this country many years ago, and no doubt are dead.

In 1837 J. M. Morehead, North Carolina's greatest son, appears prominently in Leaksville's history. Full of enterprise, acumen and energy, he set about developing the water power that has become the "Lowell of the South." His stone factory, that was destroyed by fire in 1893 began work in 1839 and was increased in capacity from time to time, being successfully run by him until his death in 1866. A great lawyer, a profound statesman, and a true patriot, he served his country as governor of the State of North Carolina, member of Congress, and many other positions of trust and responsibility. He was a friend to the poor and a general benefactor of his race. Grand old man! "His bow will abide forever."

One of the most conspicuous characters first at Leaksville Mills was Uncle Jimmie Ray, whom I delight to honor. He moved from the farm just across Smith River soon after the starting of the mills, and had charge of the packing department, but his daughters, Mary and Tabbie, who preceded him spun the first threads "doffed" from the establishment in 1839. The family lived continuously in hearing of the old factory bell, until, one by one, life's threads overdrawn by the spindle of time began to snap.

And the funeral knell,
By the same old bell,
Resounded rom hill to hill;
When we laid to rest,
On the near hill's crest,
The first old pair at the mill.

About 1842, in Leaksville, the churches had all reached a stage in their history, that it may be interesting, to many of the young especially, to learn their status.

Rev. Nelson Mebane, father of the late Wm. Mebane, Esq, was the first Presbyterian minister I ever heard preach. If I am rightly informed, he was converted at a meeting held at a "camp ground" near Leaksville. His occasional

visits to the old town in his early ministry, his marked reverence, his earnest clear, pathetic preaching, and his irresistible magnetism, impressed everyone with his deep piety, his dignity of character and the unmistakable certainty of his calling to the ministry. He was pastor of the small membership of his church in and around Leaksville. Though at this time, there was no preaching place except the old brick Academy, which he used as all the other denominations were wont to do. His residence was near Spring Garden church of which he was for many years pastor. He did a noble work while living, died triumphantly, and went to the reward of the good many years ago.

The Missionary Baptist church was organized in 1839, and the first pastor that I have any recollection of was Reb. John Roberson. He was a man full of zeal and the Holy Ghost, well versed in the Scriptures, and inclined to doctrinal controversy. He had charge of the old Providence church four miles west of Leaksville, with a considerable membership. He had quite a large following at Leaksville factory, and doubtless accomplished much good. The first baptism by immersion I ever witnessed was performed by him. The old church in Leaksville was erected under the supervision of John Gaulden, a wealthy farmer, who had recently married Mrs. Charles Gallaway, and they were members of this church. The old church served the purpose of housing the congregation until it became too large, and a splendid new church was erected in 1889.

The various members of the Episcopal church in and around Leaksville were organized into a church in 1844, using the Academy as a preaching place until the erection of the present church in 1847, with Rev. John R. Lee, of Virginia, as rector. Mr. Lee was a man of fine ability, thoroughly equipped as a teacher, a theologian of no mean attainments, and gifted as a writer. His sermons were sound, sensible, practical, entertaining, and convincing. He lived a life of eminent service, exemplified by true Christian character, died respected and loved by all, and sleeps beneath the shadows of own little church.

The Methodist church about this period was represented by Rev. W. W. Albea, then quite a young man, of good preaching ability, sound in doctrine, loyal to his church, a good revivalist, and above all, a most godly man. His success in the ministry was as much attributable to his discreet faithful pastoral visiting, as to the his sound sensible earnest preaching. He was of bright cheerful disposition, a

good conversationalist, and urbane in manners; hence always a welcome guest in every home. After superannuation he resided in Winston, N.C. until his death a few years ago at a very advanced age. The Methodist continued to use the old Academy until the building of the present church in 1858.

The Primitive Baptists have never had a church in Leaksville, but had occasional preaching by Rev. John Stadler, Robt. Shreve Hubbard, and Arthur Eans, Billy Davis, and John McNeely. All these old "defenders of the faith" acquired quite a reputation as old side Baptist preachers, and many of them were as true men as ever lived. They were thoroughly versed in their distinctive doctrines, and preached them fearlessly. I know John McNeely more thoroughly than any of the above named, and am sure that no stain ever marred his Christian character. He lived well, and though dead, is not forgotten. All those old men preached a great many funerals, and these were noted occasions in those early days. The services were generally held at the residence of the deceased. The appointments were generally made some time prior to the coming of the event. Great crowds convened on the occasion, and generally several ministers would discourse at length, consuming the greater part of the day. When fit eulogies were pronounced and services ended, a large number of the friends were expected to remain and partake of the liberal hospitality of the bereaved. In olden times more attended the burial of the dead than a present. Position in society had but little influence upon the attendance. The rich and poor, all alike, attended the burial of their neighbors, and no man exempted himself from service in filling the grave. No one inquired, "Who is my neighbor?" but all felt duty bound to do to others as they would wish to be done by (*note: there is at least one line missing in the clipping here*) in like circumstances. My heart sickens at the neglect of some of the worthy poor in our midst recently. But returning to funerals of long ago, I call to mind a case under the old regime, where a newly married bridegroom had his former wife's funeral preached after his second felicitous marriage, his new bride being present as one of the mourners. It is said that preparation for both events were in progress at the same time, the preparations for the anticipated marriage at the house of the intended bride, while the heart broken widower, was arranging the feast for the funeral. Well, by way of economy, I don't see why both events might not have been celebrated at one and the same time, as both, no doubt, were alike joyous occasions. I am inclined to the opinion that an

appropriate burial service, held at the home or church of the deceased, is best under most circumstances.

In 1839 the frame of an old building, half covered and partly weather-boarded, once intended for a church, I was told, unfinished, had been forever abandoned and was then appropriated by a flock of sheep and cattle of the town as a shelter from the storms. It stood near the spot or R. L. Moir's stable. Why it was never finished I could never conjecture, unless it be that the collapse in financial affairs induced also a collapse in religious matters. And, judging from the apparent status of religion when we first knew the town, we may reasonably infer that this was the case, as the fact that two whisky shops and no church, in an old town of several hundred inhabitants, does not auger a very commendable state of religious fervor. No doubt the town had seen better days in this respect; for, some years before this time, a revival of religion at the "old campground", one mile north of Leaksville, was conducted by the Methodists, Presbyterians, and the Baptists united; and the like of which, even in the days of "evangelist counting," was never witnessed; for hundreds were converted, and made the welkin ring with hallelujahs of praise. The great center of attraction at this meeting was a Methodist minister by the name of Maffet, an Irish silver-tongued orator, who swayed the people like straws before the wind. No minister ever created such a sensation in this country as he did. But, alas! In the end, he went down beneath a shadow. I learn that he took to that soul destroyer, drink, and was never reclaimed. St. Paul says: "But I keep under by body and bring it into subjection, lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Here he failed.

Digging a water-way in front of any store a short time ago, we found imbedded in the rotten limestone, about one foot below the surface of the street, a block of cast iron, about ten inches square and two inches thick, with a hole about two inches diameter in the centre. Which I remembered to have been placed there when I was a boy, by Uncle Terrel Hopper, as a socket for assign-post, which stood at the corner of Henry and Washington Streets. The sign extended from this post to the house at the corner of the two streets, and read as follows; "T. Hopper, Tavern Keeper." His tavern was the old Morehead and Barnett house, built by Samuel Hester, the finest house builder in all the country. He was the architect that built Dr. Travis Broadnax's residence, and died before its

completion, leaving his carving tools in his possession, and I still have some of these, descended as an heirloom, through my father, marked "S.H." But to Uncle Terrel's tavern. The building was as little suited for a hotel as can possibly be imagined. The rooms below, except one used for the dining-room, were occupied as a store and counting room. Two pairs of steps running from the ground outside up to porticoes extending out from the second story, received the two flights of stairs. The hall, fifteen feet wide, ran from one portico to the other. On one side of the hall was the ball-room, and on the other three rooms used for family rooms. A flight of winding stairs led to the third story, where, on either side of the hall, were bedrooms and same on the fourth floor. The kitchen, fifty or sixty feet from the main building was of the most inconvenient, uncomfortable kind. A chimney in the center, between the two rooms, with a fire place on either side, regular wood consumers about the dimensions of good-sized bedrooms, and equally as well adapted for cooking utensils, furnished the conveniences for cooking. On either side of the interior of the fire place as an immense iron crank or derrick, something after the style of an old-fashioned gate frame, with the palings that could be opened and shut at will, was the only convenience about the whole establishment. A pot of any desired size might be swung upon this crane, and turned to any convenient place over the fire, for cooking bacon and cabbage, pork and beans, "punkin," etc., at pleasure. Ovens for cooking potatoes, chicken pie, "risen bread," light bread, and "peach cobbler," filled their places admirable; and like the one balky horse which the owner, describing his good qualities, stated that, when he came to the foot of a hill, "he was thar." So the ovens when once they were placed, were so ponderous that they were "thar" until some Samson should move them. Long-handled skillets and frying pans were also in very extensive use for frying ham and eggs, chickens, etc. and for baking biscuits. But, lest some epicurean should desire to return to 'olden times' to satiate his longings, we refrain from giving additional menu.``

Uncle Terrel's tavern was a great place of resort for the young bloods and belles of the country to engage in an old-fashioned dance or arousal. These bloods, came from every point of the compass, through Rockingham and adjoining counties. These occasions paid the proprietor of the tavern handsomely, as each beau was expected to bring his partner, put up at the tavern, and pay all expenses, including grog. These balls generally lasted several nights and days as

well; or as long as physical endurance and pecuniary supply continued. And, in some cases where amorousness predominated propriety, and change was scarce, “tick” was tolerated. Spirits flowed freely on these occasions and Uncle Terrel’s sideboard was never lacking the pure effervescence of apple, peach, and rye, which cheered the hearts and sharpened the wits of overwrought nature. For these performances Uncle Terrel’s boys – Dick, Sam, and Joe, Jim D., P.D.H., and Charles H., - discoursed inspiring music and the hours of mirth went merrily, merrily by. The old-fashioned reel or cotillion were the only figures of that day. The voluptuous waltz and german would have been considered immodest, and an innovation in a circle of purity. Nor would the modesty and refinement of young ladies and their mothers have tolerated any such indecorous performances – be it said to their honor. The churches were all agreed as to the secularizing tendency of the dance, and all discouraged it in their members. Still, it never has been, and always will be a hindrance to spirituality and a clog to the advancement of Christian piety. Revelry and dissipation cannot be conducive to refinement of character or Christian growth. Nor will the catering to the opinions and aping the conduct of most society leaders in this respect, elevate the girl, whose mother has instilled in her the principles of purity and true womanly virtues. These need no such accomplishments as the german is designed to supply, to win their way into the affections of men whose lives have been pure and who alone are worthy the affections of pure women.

But, resuming my theme, I must not neglect dear Aunt Rhoda, the hostess, for she was the synonym for neatness, and the very soul of kindness. Notwithstanding the inconveniences of the culinary department of the tavern, her board was always supplied with the best the market afforded; and re-enforced by her two excellent daughters – one of whom still lives – the tavern was a benediction to the weary traveler, and a home for the homeless. The travelling then was chiefly on horseback, as we had no railroads. But the beast, as well as the rider, was well cared for;

And they bled away,
In the opening day,
To bless their host,
For the sweet night’s rest.

It was at this tavern that Cupid first pierced this scribbler's youthful heart. The object of his affections was a tall, handsome brunette, of about fifteen summers. Oh! she was fair to look upon. With a seraphic voice, eagle eyes, and Venus-like grace, she just bewildered me. And, while I was regaining my senses, another fellow, afflicted with the same malady, put in his claim, and captured the prize. "How vain are all things here below; how false, and yet how fair!" I thought. But I surrendered gracefully and learned to love a fairer; and am living a life of conjugal bliss to-day. The old tavern, under the pressure of competition and hard times, finally collapsed; the host and hostess moved to a quiet country seat, where they lived happily, died peacefully, and sleep side by side to await the resurrection.

From the old tavern my mind drifted to Independence Day, the glorious Fourth of "ye olden times." This was a great day to us in those early times. We put into it all of our characteristic Southern enthusiasm. Well, we had a blood brought right to glory in the Fourth of July. No State in the Union might be prouder of her record than North Carolina. She furnished as brave a little band of soldiers as ever carried flint and steel, and our State fought at Cowpens, Kings's Mountain, and at Guilford Old Court House, that entitles us to sing:

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty.

Well on one of these occasions we had a very great celebration. Extensive preparations were made. A flag, not of the Stars and Stripes variety, was pressed into service – a blue flag, with this inscription in gold letters, (it was the flag of our debating society): "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." We used this flag because we had it already made, and it also expressed the sentiment of every heart. Our whole country was at peace. True the clouds of sectionalism were lowering down East, but we supposed it was a wind cloud, and would soon pass over. But it continued to mutter, until Clay, Calhoun, and Webster, seeing its approach Southward, put their heads and hearts together to arrest its progress; and the result was that mighty bulwark, the great Missouri Compromise Line, proclaiming to the fanatical East: "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther," and the cloud mutterings ceased for a time, and we felt we were forever at peace. Well, it was under this delusion that our hearts glowed with patriotic fervor. We felt proud that we were American freemen, and that

Washington, Madison, Henry, and all such were our common heritage, and we felt,

The Star Spangled Banner forever shall wave.

O'er us southern people, the true, and the brave.

So we used to celebrate the Fourth with great enthusiasm. On this occasion, as I have stated, our banner of brotherly love floated to the breeze, while martial music rendered by Lindsay B-----, Jim D-----, Thom. F-----, and others, led thousands of the yeomen of our country commanded by Capt. P. M. Henry, to the old Academy grove, to listen to the reading of the Constitution of the United States, by Dr. Wright, of Wentworth, and an address by B. P. Dick, Esq., a brilliant young attorney of Greensboro, N.C.(Judge Dick)

The reading by Dr. Wright was clear and impressive, and when concluded, received three hearty cheers. The address was characteristic of Judge Dick in those days – of faultless composition, elegant enunciation, profound thought, patriotic, and glowing with rhetorical utterances, soon as we seldom hear. While this part of the programme was being executed, Joe Lane, Sen., the barbecue artist, of ante-bellum renown, with his corps of assistants, Uncle Jim England, Neal Cayton, and “Little Billy” Carter, with their heated pits, salt, pepper, and vinegar, were barbecuing the pork, beef, and mutton which had been patriotically donated by Jessie Hopper, Captain Dillard, Thomas Hamlin, Robert Strong, Dr. Brodnax, Tilman Coleman, and other enterprising spirits while everyone was expected to furnish his quota of vegetables, fowls, pickles, bread, etc. Great quantities of lemonade and sweet cider helped to make up the bill of fare. It is worthy of remark that no “spirits” were visible on these occasions.

A table of rough planks, covered with domestic, was constructed, of sufficient length to accommodate the whole crowd at once. And now comes a scene long to be remembered. Joe Lane, with his efficient lieutenants, has made a splendid success, when Uncle Jim Neal, and “Little Billy” could be kept in statu ??? until after their services were (*here one or more lines were cut off before pasting into the scrap book*) time. The odor of savory meats now fills the air, and every stomach yearns to satiate its longings. The welcome word is given, the space around the table filled, a blessing invoked, and a bewildering scene is witnessed. All classes, rich and poor, feast on beef and patriotic sentiment until every hungry

soul is filled and every heart made glad. And now begins a multiplicity of toasts, varying as much in sentiment as in acumen. First, in order then, prompted by a plethora of fresh meats:

Here's to Joe Lane, our cook-in-chief,
He's good on pork, on mutton, and beef,
He's kept Jimmie sober, and Neal is all right,
And Billy can travel, though a little bit tight.

Three hearty cheers went up for Lane, and his assistants, while another toast was in course of preparation – “The Union, cemented with the blood of our fathers; may she never be severed,” was vociferously responded to. “To the speakers of the day” received hearty applause. “The South, loyal in peace, invincible in battle, and true to her country's best interest,” received an enthusiastic response. The toast, “Our women, lights of our households, and the hope of country,” closed the table exercises with long continued applause. And now our band, glowing with ardent patriotism played “Hail Columbia, Happy Land,” and the “Star Spangled Banner,” and we dispersed to our homes as loyal to our country as Lincoln ever dared to be, and happy as a big sunflower. Thus passed the Fourth fifty years ago.

But before closing this sketch, we must be permitted to delineate a very quaint character, Uncle Neal Cayton, who was the most remarkable man I ever knew – remarkable, because he was unlike any other man, and because no other man resembled him. He looked like no other man ever looked, and had traits of character no other man ever had. Neal made no pretensions to piety, and yet he sometimes assumed the role of a saint. His witticisms remain to this day, and are quoted by many who never knew him. At repartee or scathing retorts, no lawyer dared to cross swords with Neal. He was not pretty, but, on the contrary, claimed that he was as ugly as a mud fence. Six feet three was his height, and as straight as a fence rail; broad-shouldered, raw-boned, small-limbed, disproportioned to his giant shoulders and immense, well developed head. He was a good-natured bully, who fought from principle and not from passion, always flogging his antagonist without malice prepense; and as soon as he was flogged, he was forgiven and advised to go and fight no more. Neal was a professional charcoal burner, and an up-to-date wood chopper. The blacksmiths of our town always preferred his coal, as it was always free from dirt or stones. One hot summer day

Neal was passing down the street with a load of coal, wet with perspiration and blacked with coal dust, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet – homelier, if possible, than when at his best. Meeting a bevy of handsomely dressed ladies, one of them, addressed the rest, commenting upon our old disguised friend exclaiming; “Oh, what an ugly man!” when Neal retorted, “Madam, did you ever see Dr. R----?” (who was her husband), The risibilities of the lady’s companions were affected audibly, while our lady commentator blushed visibly.

Neal loved his grog, and frequently took more than was healthy; but, in his cups, was always very docile and harmless until his principle was assailed, and then he was a perfect threshing machine. He was a Confederate soldier, brave and true, returned from the army broken down in health, died, and sleeps, like man a brave Confederate, in a grave unmarked.

Allow me to express my gratitude and appreciation to *Webster’s Weekly* for its frequent complimentary notices of my “Remembrances,” published the past month or two in the *Gazette*, and for its jogging my memory with regard to the toll bridge and its adjuncts. Then mention of the old bridge carries me back to my boyhood days, before any bridge spanned the Dan near Leaksville. The crossing was by a ford, a few hundred yards below the present bridge, and very unsafe, as the water was swift and very deep just below the ford. During the fish shoaling season these shallows were sought for gigging the red horse, then very numerous in our streams. Since the building of the dams at Danville this excellent fish has become almost extinct at this point. These dams have been a great hindrance to our fish supplies. The first bridge across Dan river at this point was built by a stock company about 1835 I think. Governor J. M. Morehead, Dr. E. T. Brodnax, Thos S. Gallaway, Charles Gallaway, and others, constituted this company and it was run as a toll bridge until it was washed away in August, 1850. By the great August freshet, which is a noted era in our history. This bridge paid a handsome dividend on the investment, as its cost was far below the present one. The first bridge was a plain frame structure with double sills or sleepers, resting upon two stone abutments, and three intervening piers. The floor was 31 feet above water, and, when the bridge moved from its pillows, the water had not gotten over the floor, but was forced by the accumulation of timbers from the Eagle Falls bridge and other raft that gathered in great abundance. A number of young bravadoes

(of whom this scribe was one) were on the bridge when it began to move and came very near losing our lives by our folly; as, in half a minute, the whole structure tumbled into ruins, and was soon lost sight of in the rushing waters.

I remember an amusing circumstance that occurred in the south end of this old bridge when I was a boy. A facetious old friend of name Pleasant Ellington, whose besetting sin was drunkenness, had paid our town a two or three days visit, and was returning to his home with as much of the “over joyful” as the inner man could accommodate, resolved also on taking along, in a gallon jug, a three days’ supply of “crack head” to make things agreeable at home. On crossing the bridge the last plank receded with his feet, the abutment rose to catch the unfortunate victim, and the old man lay prone upon the declining roadway – when the jug, uncorked by the fall, went rolling down the hill, spurting out its contents at every turn, with the sound, good, good, good; while the old man lay powerless to stop proceedings, and sighed piteously. “Ah” yes, I know you are good but gone forever. For a year or two a ferryboat was used for crossing, but this was attended with such inconvenience that the company resolved on building another bridge, and a better one. This bridge was built in 1852, under the direction of the same stock holders as the old. A man by the name of Hughes was the contractor, skilled and competent; and, furnished with the best material, he constructed a first-class lattice bridge, that has stood the test of time and floods for all these years, and is likely to pass many thousands of travelers safely over the rapid stream beneath, when this generation shall have crossed the turbid stream of death, and rest secure on the other shore.

This bridge has the two abutments and only one central pier being of immense strength and self-supporting. The floor is five feet higher than that of the former, and, in order to move it from its moorings the stream would have to rise at least four feet higher than it was ever known to be. It was used as a toll bridge until a few years since, when Rockingham County purchased it, and made it a free institution – a (there is a line missing). Could we but boast of as good roads as we now have bridges, no country could offer more inducements to home seekers than old Rockingham. Let the good work go on, regardless of grumbling tax payers, until every settlement shall have safe bridges and good roads. Then will our property be so enhanced in value that the best class of people will be seeking

home amongst us. But lest Brother Webster requests us to desist, we will change our subject.

From 1848 to 1860 our village enjoyed a season of seeming prosperity in every department of business. Merchants sold enormous quantities of goods, at good profits, and every other business appeared to be on a boom. At periods during this interval J. H. Bullard, Reynolds & Co., T. & P. Reynolds, J. W. Burton, Pate & Swepson, and Burton & Smith all did a thriving business apparently. Some of these firms sold each fifty thousand dollars annually. An extensive bartering business was carried on with the mountaineers of Patrick, Carroll, and Floyd, of Virginia; and Forsythe, Stokes, and Surry, of North Carolina. A number of country merchants from the surrounding counties bought their supplies in Leaksville, and gave, in part exchange for these, their bacon, lard, maple sugar, venison, tow cloth, jeans, buckwheat flour, and common wheat flour. I use the expression, "common flour," because it was more descriptive of its real quality than any other word. An old darkey, in describing a load he was delivering to a merchant of our town, said "it was so white, it was fairly blue," which was literally the case; for they had no machinery in those days adapted for cleaning the cocol, cheat, smut, and dirt, out of the wheat; so it all went in to make up the quantity, and left the flour about the color of a brindled cow. Whiskey and brandy was, at this time, one of the chief articles of exchange, as several of our leading merchants, as well as the "doggeries," traded extensively in this course.

It was then as now – that many men would do anything for money, so they sold whiskey. One of the richest and best men, now in Forsythe county, is the son of an old man who used to sell large quantities of the "pop skull" to our dealers in those days. This man (then a little boy) used to come as wagon boy with his father, barefoot, and with tow breeches on; and no one would have imagined that the boy would have made the man he is today. But in the early boom at Winston, N. C., this boy settled there, was thrown under religious influences, became an exemplary Christian, a successful business man, married one of Rockingham's best women, and is now one of the richest and best men in all the country. I stated at the beginning of this subject that all of our merchants appeared to be doing a thriving business. They sold quantities of goods at paying profits, but they sold them on time – or, rather, for eternity – as many of these old accounts will remain unpaid when Time shall grow hoary with age, and turn them

over to a merciful, but more exacting tribunal than their creditors have been, for balancing old accounts. The credit system has always been a curse, both to the buyer and seller. When the civil war was at an end, two thirds of our men were overwhelmingly in debt. A general bankrupt law was enacted, and the men who were in debt had means enough to pay the bankrupt fee and lawyers' fees, were relieved of all legal, if not moral, obligation to pay their debts. But the poor men who were in debt and had but little – not enough to pay bankrupt expenses – were the greatest sufferers, as many of them had to sacrifice all their living and still remain a prey to greedy creditors until the enactment of the homestead law, when most men felt that all obligations to pay their debts were cancelled forever. At the close of the war a large proportion of our merchants were deeply in debt to the North, and had thousands due them. Most of these were settled with bankrupt notices. In this sad plight the close of the war left us.

With the advantages the North had – in overwhelming numbers, great wealth, the navy and naval supplies; with the general Government at their back and unlimited credit – had the result of the war been different, their national sun must have gone down in eternal disgrace and contempt. With 2,688,000 men, including the regular United States Army, and all other resources in the same ratio, fighting an army of 6900,000 with meagre supplies, and these constantly decreasing, the wonder is that they did not crush us out of existence in twelve months. Sparta never sent braver troops to battle than the State of North Carolina sent; and Rockingham stood in her foremost ranks. But the hour for surrender came, and with it a realization of extreme poverty. Every soldier on his return, was greeted with a joyous welcome by his expectant family and friends while he listened to a sad tale of poverty and distress. He found his cribs and larder empty, his stock dead or so impoverished as to be unable to pitch a crop. For lack of money, all the trades where obstructed. We had no currency, and nothing to offer in exchange for it, save a little poor tobacco. Our wives and daughters still wore their homespun dresses and our men their jeans and old Confederate uniforms. Lawlessness to a great extent, prevailed; and for a time, those who labored least had the most. Confederate broken down mules, that had fallen into the hands of returning soldiers, or had been bought up by the poor of the country, were seized and taken to the quarters of the United States troops stationed at the towns throughout the county, and the owners were required to

give bond for their surrender whenever called for. Under this military rule our women were often insulted, and our men incarcerated, and sometime cruelly treated. Many of our best men were deprived of the right of suffrage, while their former slaves, under the control of unprincipled Yankee officers, were taken to the polls and influenced to cast their votes in direct opposition to all the interests of white and black. Mr. Bancroft says: "The most distasteful act of the general Government, to the people of the South, was clothing the blacks with the rights of citizens. They received the elective franchise and assisted to rule over their former masters."

The colored vote was not half as objectionable to the South as was the incompetent mercenary "carpetbagger" and the ignorant, unprincipled Southern white man, who with bit and bridle, rode into our legislative halls and conventions by this vote. No despot ever ruled with such rigor as did these assumed leaders of the colored people in the South, and their boasted liberating of the slave was but his transference from one master to another; for he was a mere automaton, appearing to have the right of franchise when really his suffrage was at the behest of the party in power. Had it not been for this class of treasury despoiler, no trouble would have arisen between the colored man and his former master. But in their efforts to hold the power, they have used every possible means to alienate the colored man from the white man, and the bond of sincere affection that once existed between them has been weakened, and in some localities, well nigh broken. Under the new regime, the servant became the master and the master a serf, using their coined expression, "the bottom rail had go on top."

With the colored people, many formerly sacred matrimonial bonds were dissolved, and bigamous practices, from this standpoint, allowed. Miscegenation was tolerated, and, to some extent, practiced. Secret Union Leagues, so called, were formed of the colored people throughout the State, who paraded our streets with martial music and other demonstrations, from time to time, and every other scheme was resorted to in order to antagonize the two races, by the Shylocks in office. Taxes were levied for public schools, State government, etc., and misappropriated or stolen by such men as Swepson and Littlefield and their avaricious clan, leaving the treasury depleted and the State government bankrupt in morals and money. No school houses were built, and but few schools, poorly officered were in operation. But the colored man satisfied with his false

conception of freedom, submitted quietly to the great fraud, seeming to feel that, in his new relations, "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." With the appropriations back, every district in the State might have been furnished with a comfortable school building had it been properly applied. And never, until the State government changed, did the colored man receive the benefit of the appropriation made for his education. And it should not be overlooked, that more than 90%, of all this fund came from the Southern whites, who were, and still are, the best friends the colored man ever had. But, with all that said for and against the reconstruction measures adopted by the national Government, which were calculated to debase the white and exalt the black man in his own estimation, many of them deserve commendation, and the respect of all good white men, for their prudence and gentle deportment, during this defenseless period, with the whites. But few crimes were committed by the blacks in this locality, and no well-raised colored man sanctioned the violation of the law.

From the close of the war I taught a large number of them in Sunday school and found them docile and confiding on all subjects excepting politics. I taught dozens to read the Bible and become religious and feel amply repaid for all my efforts in the general good order manifested in their lives. I believe much of their reprehensible conduct is attributable to their association with the lower class of white men – grog sellers, grog drinkers, political bosses, etc. No person, black or white, could have such association without becoming contaminated.

But the first few years after the war are gone, and with them many hardships supposed to be unendurable. No Union Leagues parade our streets; no Ku Klux Klan disturb the quiet slumbers of the dead. No nightmare dreams of bloody insurrections, urged on by sable goblins, mar our peaceful slumbers; but all is tranquil, as a summer's eve, and night is but a starlit day, secure as a sunny morning.

On April 9th 1865, Lee surrendered to Grant; April 26th Johnston surrendered to Sherman; and on May 26th the last confederate force in the Southwest surrendered; and Destiny closed the final scene in the great tragedy.

Peace, smiling Peace, kissed the hand that held the dagger, red with gore and paralyzed the threatened stroke, and all was still. Richter says: "Time which deadens hatred, secretly strengthens love." This is verified by the intimate

relations existing between the North and South; and we are slowly learning the Abrahamic lesson, “that we be brethren, and there should be no strife between us.”

But we should be recreant to the duty we owe our citizens not to speak of the closing scene of the great tragedy, as it appeared from this standpoint. On April 9th news reached us that General Lee’s surrender was inevitable. Numbers of soldiers, who saw the unavoidable result of the next day’s operations left their commands and hastened across the country (by way of Leaksville) to Johnston’s army, then near Greensboro. Large bodies of soldiers – hungry and tired – were constantly passing, day and night, for ten days or more, until it was estimated eight or ten thousand had passed. At their sad plight – hungry, poorly clad, tired, and dejected – every heart was moved, irrespective of party, sex, politics or color; and the liberal spirit seemed to catch from soul to soul, like sparks from tinder until every family in this community was giving food to the hungry or clothing to the needy. Tables were spread in the old Dillard porch and adjacent building, and supplies of vegetables, meats, and nick-sacks, with great quantities of buttermilk, were placed upon these tables; while our noble women, old and young, gave them a hearty welcome from six in the morning until nine at night. Good order prevailed all the while, and at least eight thousand hungry soldiers went away with their hunger satisfied, and with the expressions of gratitude to “Old Leaksville.”

I feel that my task is but half performed unless I make mention of some of the patriarchs in the suburbs and country places adjacent to our old town in the long ago. Many of these, though scarcely known outside their neighborhood still deserve enrollment on honor’s scroll, for their many virtues, their dignity of character, or true moral worth. “Lives of such men oft remind us we can make lives sublime, and departing leaves behind us footprints on the sands of Time.”

Others should have mention because of peculiar traits of character and indents in their lives of interest to others, or as moral sign posts, to point travelers on the uncertain road of life away from impending dangers that beset their course. These all have left their impress upon the descendants and the following generation for weal or woe, and this tendency should be known and heeded. And, though I am but a novice, unskilled in the science of physiognomy, yet I

discovering almost every family, some marks in person or character indicative of ancestral habits. In one we find the brawny physique, ruddy countenance, glow of health, and flow of soul, indicating a temperate, robust ancestry; in another the hectic flush wan complexion and the shrunken muscles, betraying ancestral taint, or defective hygienic living. Here is the sedate, thoughtful, dignified, intelligent young man, a facsimile of his prototype; while again you will discover dispositions like these – thoughtlessness, rowdyism, ignorance, indolence and lasciviousness, indicating most clearly, as a rule, a parentage of perverse temperament or of corrupt morals and loose habits. “Blood will tell.” Its corrupting stream ceases not to flow through the veins of the third or fourth generations of descent. The fathers partook of the sour grapes, and the children’s teen are set on edge. The father’s tastes and habits, as well as his religious predilections, if practically demonstrated by exemplary living, will tell upon the destiny of his children and children’s children for ages to come. The sons of Tories of the Revolution were, in very many cases, the fathers of the deserters in our last war. I know that pecuniary consideration has purchased the time, talents, and influence of many who have turned their backs upon their race and Southern interests; but much of this tendency, if investigation could be had, would be found flowing down through ancestral veins of many generations past.

I have a case in mind, whose name I need not give, whence every prominent trait of disposition in the grandfather is today visible in the grandchildren.

This old man, though addicted to very many censurable habits, had quite a following in his own neighborhood, because of a vein of humor permeating his whole being, which cheered and enlivened all who chanced to meet him. His besetting sins were laziness, prevarication, and drunkenness. His sharpness was not blunted by his inebriety, nor did want drive him to work. Lying was the rule with him and truth the exception. He had no distinctive religious opinions – no aspirations to a better life. Uneducated and coarse, he was a scab on the world’s escutcheon, a blank in society. He lived to a good old age, never having performed an act for the betterment of his race, and died drunk, “unhonored and unsung.” His descendants have inherited his characteristics to a great extent and to-day are unreliable, drunken, and drones in the world’s great hive of usefulness. Another old citizen, whose name and character all delight to honor, comes vividly in contrast to my mind’s eye. He owned the farm, fifty years ago, that now

belongs to Dr. Van Rook, three miles east of Leaksville, and lived there in ease and comfort. His highest ambition was to rear his large family in respectability and usefulness. To this end, he practiced industry, temperance, and economy, and required obedience from his children. He was a pure Christian kind neighbor, and worthy citizen – a blessing to his race, though unknown in history. Uncle Pryor Reynolds and Aunt Prudence, Governor Morehead's sister, were the parents of Mrs. Susan Winston, a woman of spotless character, whose husband, Edmund Winston, was one of the first adventurers – on foot – across the great Rockies and the limitless prairies beyond, attended by Zera McDaniel in search of California gold.

Armed with such tents, and defensive equipments as pedestrians were able to carry, they set out, in 1848, to make their fortunes. After encountering untold difficulties with wild beasts and savage Indians – often half famished for food and water, and overcome with travel – they reached the Golden Gate, prospected for a find, killed the neighboring bears and catamounts, set to work for their ideal fortune, and found that “things are not always what they seem.” Struggling for several years against insurmountable difficulties, they returned to their homes wiser, if not richer, men than when they embarked in the great enterprise. Winston lived a few years and passed peacefully to the great Hunting Ground beyond, “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”

McDaniel, the rough blacksmith at home, went South, acquired a vast amount of information, became a learned geologist, almost rivalling the great Hugh Miller, made some important discoveries and inventions – one of which, the torpedo, distinguished him during the Civil War – returned with a bag of gold, took to drink and might easily prophecy his end. Uncle Pryor reared, besides Mrs. Winston, Miss Annie Reynolds and Mrs. Mary Millner; Mesars. J. M., George, James, Dr. T. P. M., and Samuel Reynolds; all persons of true moral worth, who living, honor their ancestry; and dying, leave no blur upon their honored names.

Thus a good man sinks to rest,
Full of honors, crowned with peace;
No stately monument he needs,
His children's lives proclaim his deeds.

Once, when visiting his boys – about 2 o'clock in the evening – the younger boys and I were enjoying the shade of the spreading oaks that stood in front of his

house, half-mile distant from his corn field, now in need of attention, the old man came tottering along, merry as a lark, and remarked that those trees were very damaging to his corn.

I had heard the hackneyed phrase that “the roots of trees draw the life out of all vegetation.” But how could this be the case with corn so far away? The old man explained that the trees did not so much draw the corn as they did the boys who were expected to work this corn. This was accepted as a lucid explanation of the philosophy of shady bowers damaging the growth of corn, and I always think of it when I see farmers spending too much time under the shade of the trees. But, since experiencing the depressing rays of this summer’s mid-day sun, I am inclined to be a little apologetic for the out-door working class, and recommend that you

Work while the sun’s glowing rays fall
Askance.
While the dewdrops yet sparkle, or
Zephyrs entrance;
Use morning and evening and squander
No time,
And, when noon approaches, you may
Safely recline.