

# MEMOIRS TRADITIONS AND HISTORY OF

## ROCKY MOUNT AND VICINITY

(By L M Ford)

### ART 1

Before the advent of the white man these were an open forest, destitute of undergrowth and covered with wild peavines from one to two feet high, while great cane brakes grew to great height on the creek and river bottoms. The woods were made noisy by the chattering of the cat squirrels and the fox squirrels made his home in the pine and waxed fat on its juicy cones. Numbers of wild turkeys stalked leisurely through the forest partaking of the daintest morsels only. Deer browsed and gamboled on the hillside unmolested, while the more ferocious animals such as the wild cat panther, etc, made their homes on the swamps on the streams. In winter blackbirds and wild pigeons visited the hills in vast numbers and duck and geese could be seen gliding on the surface of every stream. The streams teemed with fish of many varieties. Occasionally Indian wigwams could be seen clustered about a spring near some stream.

#### Names

When the first settlers came here they found a tribe of Indians who made their home on the banks of our river and its tributaries. They called Catawba and from them the river took its name, Catawba. As such it is known from its source in North Carolina to the mouth of Wateree Creek where it changes to Wateree. The Indians called the river Eswa Tavora. These Indians were friendly to the settlers

from the first and have held sacred every obligation entered into and every treaty made. They fought on the side of the patriots in the Revolution and on the side of the Confederate in our late war. A remnant less than a hundred, still live on a reservation in York County on the banks of this river. They make pipes and earthenware which they exchange with neighboring merchants for such goods as they desire. They may be hired to perform some labor also.

The names of Turkey branch, Rocky branch, Rock creek and Crooked creek suggest a reason why they are so called. On the banks of one of our branched a deputation of the whites would meet a deputation of Indians in council and transact business and adjust their differences to the satisfaction of all. The calumet was passed around and all went home in a good humor. From this it was called Deputation branch, which was corrupted to Debutary, which is its name to this day.

During the Revolution a Whig drummer was killed on a hill near the Point of Rocks which gave it the name, Drummer's Hill.

#### Customs and Usages

Our first settlers began to come into this section about 1760. They came from Maryland and Virginia principally. How they traveled is not known, probably in wagons or some other vehicle, as they owned horses then. Their first dwellings were rude log huts such as they could build with their axes principally. Very likely they had stone chimneys to their huts. They cleared a few acres about their cabin in which to grow their grain and other edibles. Venison was their principal meat diet. Other animals, such as the otter and wild cat, were killed for their skins. A part of these were made into moccasins.

and caps, and most of them were sold.

Elisha Eye, grandfather of our friend, R. J. Dye, was the gun smith of that day and kept the settlers' trusty rifles in good shooting order. His usefulness extended through the Revolution as many of the guns of the Whigs were repaired by him and thus he enabled them to continue in the service.

As the settlers increased in numbers the game became scarcer and wilder. More attention was then given to domestic animals. Horses and cattle kept fat on the commons and hogs were killed in the woods and their flesh cured for the family supply during the next season. They grew tobacco for a money crop. It was hauled to Charleston, but often it was condemned and could not be sold.

The vehicle mostly used was the common home made sled in which crops, firewood, etc., were hauled.

Some of the children of these men could read and write, if not all of them, but they were not very religiously inclined.

#### Revolutionary Times

Charleston fell into the hands of the British, May 12th, 1780. Lord Cornwallis sent detachments of troops to Augusta, Ninety-Six and Camden to insure and hasten the subjugation of this State. From Camden a detachment under Colonel Houseman was sent to Rocky Mount. About one-fourth of a mile northwesterly from the present residence of John G. Johnston, the British built three log forts which they surrounded with a ditch and abattis.

With the advent of Colonel Houseman and his attachment came an end to the feeling of good fellowship of one with another and social intercourse of neighbor with neighbor. This change was

brought about by the promises and threats of Colonel Houseman. From this time it was Whig and Tory and deadly hatred was engendered. Instead of cracking jokes with each other the crack of the deadly rifle was heard. One of the first acts of Houseman was to distribute handbills among the people, calling upon them to meet him at Beckhamville and enroll their names as loyal subjects of King George and receive British protection.

Soon after this he visited Justice John Gaston, who resided on Fishing Creek, to induce him to become a loyal subject to the King, as he verily believed that the old Justice could and would bring many if not all his neighbors to his way of thinking. While the old Justice treated him with all the kindness and courtesy due a visitor, he did not follow his advice. After the officer departed, Justice Gaston sent runners to various places in the community for men to meet at his house that night. The summons were obeyed with alacrity and by midnight thirty men of no mean mould, strong in spirit and of active and powerful frames had collected together.

These men were commanded by John McClure and were armed with the deadly rifle, clad in their hunting shirts and moccasins. With their otter-skin shot-bags and butcher knives by their sides, they were ready for any enterprise in the cause of Liberty. Next morning they paraded before the door of the aged patriot and according to the custom of that day he brought out a large case of bottles. Commencing with the officers, John and Hugh McClure, he gave each a hearty handshake and then presented the bottle, after which they took their course noiselessly along the old Indian trail down Fishing Creek to the

old field near Beckhamville, where many of the people were already gathered. Their sudden onset took by surprise the promiscuous assemblage, about two hundred in number. The enemy were defeated and "their well directed fire," says one who speaks from personal knowledge, "saved a few cowards from the coming Tories, and taught Houseman that the strong log houses at Rocky Mount were safe for his myrmidons."

This encounter was the first effort to breast the stream after the suspension of military opposition, the opening wedge to the recovery of South Carolina.

Filled with rage, Houseman sent a party early next day to bring the hoary-headed patriot, then 80 years of age, to his headquarters, but they found the dwelling deserted. His wife concealed in some bushes nearby saw them plunder the house of everything and carry off the stock from the plantation, nothing was left but the family Bible, a precious relic which may be still preserved in the family.

John Gaston had nine sons in the army, three of whom were killed and the four one shot down at the battle of Hanging Rock. When their mother was informed of these facts, she replied, "I mourn their loss, but they could not have died in a better cause."

## ART II Revolutionary Times

The occurrence at Beckhamville and a similar one at Mobley's Meeting House alarmed the commander at Rocky Mount and he sent out Captain Christian Huck, a profane and unprincipled man, with four hundred cavalry and a body of well mounted Tories "To push the rebels as far as he might deem convenient". He executed his orders with alacrity. He destroyed Colonel Hill's iron works and burned the residence of Rev. William Simpson, pastor of Fishing Creek Church. He hated the

presbyterians bitterly and made them suffer when he could. Well loaded with plunder, he fell back to Rocky Mount and made preparations for other depredations.

Sumter was gathering a little army together and Huck proceeded to execute his orders before Sumter's approach. He marched to and encamped upon James Williamsons's plantation, now Brattonville, July the 11th, 1870. Shortly after midnight Colonel Andrew Neel companies of Captains Bratton and McClure came down from Sumter's camp in Mecklengurg and cautiously approached the sleeping enemy in his encampment which was in a lane. At dawn they fell upon Huck's party with fury. The surprise was complete and the battle ensued fiercely for about an hour when Colonel Huck with Colonel Ferguson of the Tory militia were killed and the party dispersed. The whole patriot force consisted of 133 men. McClure and his men, who were well mounted, pursued the fugitives almost to Rocky Mount and within four hours the army of Huck was as completely dissolved as if they had never seen each other. Colonel Neel lost only one man.

These defeats had encouraged the Whigs and had the opposite effect upon the Tories. Many joined Sumter and he soon felt able to attack the force at Rocky Mount, which was known to be a third larger than his own. The post at Rocky Mount at this time was under the command of Lieut. Col. Turnbull and consisted of about one hundred and fifty New York volunteers and some South Carolina militia. They were stationed in three log houses upon a slope surrounded by a ditch and abatis and encircled by open wood.

At an early hour July 31, 1780, General Sumter, accompanied by Colonels Andrew Neil, Irvice, and Lacy, Captain McClure and some of the Gastons, appeared upon an elevation northeasterly from the forts. The British commander having been warned by a Tory was prepared to receive

them, and though the Americans poured some severe volleys upon the forts, but little effect was produced thereby. They leaped the abattis and after three assaults drove the garrison into the houses. They were without artillery and could not dislodge them with musketry. They endeavored to burn the houses by throwing burning fagots upon them and this failed also. An old wagon was procured which was loaded with brush and straw and these were ignited and the wagon was rolled down against the houses. The British, seeing their danger, hoisted a flag. Supposing they intended to surrender, Sumter ordered the firing to cease. Just at that moment a shower of rain fell and extinguished the flames. The enemy defied him. Having no other means to dislodge or seriously injure the garrison, Sumter withdrew. The Americans lost the gallant Colonel Neel early in the action, two white men and a Catawba Indian lost their lives and ten were wounded. The British loss was ten killed and ten wounded.

Some trace of the foundation of the old forts may be seen today. The rocks behind which some of Sumter's men fought were be spattered with British bullets during the fight. During the digging of the old canal some of these rocks were split up and used probably in the lock at the mouth of Rocky Creek.

Hopping John Miller, one of Sumter's partisans, would get behind a big rock, carefully load his gun, come out openly when about to shoot, and always after taking deliberate aim utter the brief ejaculation as he pulled the trigger: "May the Lord direct the bullet."

Some days prior to the battle, William Stroud of Beckhamville section borrowed some ammunition of the garrison at Rocky Mount to kill some Whigs, he told them. He went into the battle with Sumter's men and while the fight was raging he told the British that he was then returning his

borrowed ammunition. After Sumter withdrew, a squad of British went up and caught him in a neighbor's crib shelling corn. He was arrested, carried to the main road, and hanged to a tree on the west side of the road, a few hundred yards north of the residence of Mrs. R. B. Boyleston, Backhambille, and there his body hanged three weeks in August with a placard attached to the corpse forbidding his burial under severe penalties. But at last a few friends, bold enough to risk the vengeance threatened, came at night, dug a hole under the corpse, climbed the tree, cut the rope and let the body fall into the grave. This young man during the last months of his life killed more soldiers than any other man during the entire war. Captain Dickson, York county, cut him down. Other accounts state that he was buried by Sumter.

Some time previous to the battle of Rocky Mount, Captain Ben Land was drilling some patriots near where the Ebenezer Methodist church now stands, when they were charged upon by some British dragoons. The patriots, having no previous notice of their approach, dispersed. Captain Land was overtaken and surrounded by the dragoons, who attacked him with their broad swords. He defended himself with his sword. To the last and wounded several of the enemy severely before he fell. Soon after his death his widow gave birth to a son, whom she called Thomas Sumter in honor of the American General. The grave of Captain Land is still pointed out on the waters of Little Rocky Creek.

It is said that the person who carried the information which led to the death of Captain Land did not die in his bed. While this was happening part of Captain Land's men were at a neighboring shop having their horses shod. They were followed, fired upon, and one man was killed. The dragoons then crossed Big Rocky Creek and went to the residence of Rev. William Martin took him prisoner and carried him to Rocky Mount, where



was Thomas Walker, who had been taken prisoner some time previous. During the battle of Rocky Mount these two men were bound to the floor of one of the houses. The British had a wholesome dread of the storm eloquence of Rev. William Martin.

Esther Gaston and her sister-in-law, Jane Gaston, having been informed of the expected attack upon Rocky Mount early in the morning of the day of the battle, mounted their horses and galloped towards the scene of action. When nearly there, they met two or three men coming away with faces paler than become heroes. Esther stopped the fugitives upbraided them with cowardice, and entreated them to return to their duty. While they wavered, she advanced and seizing one of their guns exclaimed: "Give us your guns and we will stand in your places." The most cowardly of men must have been moved by such a taunt. Covered with confusion and for very shame, these runaway soldiers wheeled about and returned to the fight with these two heroines. During the action these two ladies were idle spectators, but busied themselves diligently in rendering whatever services were required, assisting to dress the wounds of the soldiers and in carrying water to allay their thirst. A Catawba Indian severely wounded was succored by them and his last looks were turned in gratitude to those who had soothed his pain and supplied his wants.

For the account of the battle of Rocky Mount and the Revolutionary incidents above mentioned, I am indebted to that part of "The Women of the Revolution" written by Daniel Stinson, Fishing Creek.

### ART III

#### Richard Gaither

Richard Gaither migrated from Maryland some years prior to the Revolution and settled on Little Rocky Creek, Chester County, but spent the

greater part of his life in the vicinity of Rocky Mount, where he accumulated a considerable estate of lands and some slaves. Much of this land is still in possession of his descendants. He died in 1825, at more than ninety years of age.

Richard Gaither was a Whig soldier in the Revolution. Very little is now known of his soldier life or military record. At one time he was confined by the British in Camden until he was nearly eaten up by vermin. He was condemned to die and the day of his execution was set and heard at hand, when a British officer intervened and his life was spared. It is regretted that the name of this officer has not been preserved in the family. The crime for which he was to die was that he loved his country and fought against the King.

His daughter, Rachel, obtained permission to carry some clothing to take the place of that infested with vermin. After accomplishing her mission she and a neighboring lady Mrs. Ben Land, who had accompanied her, started on their way home, a distance of forty miles through an unbroken forest. They had not traveled more than half the distance when a party of mounted Tories who had no regard for passed commanded the weary travelers to halt. As soon as Miss Rachel ascertained that they wanted her horses she bestrode the back of her fleet-footed animal and used her whip to good advantage. After racing several miles, she made good her escape while her more timid companion gave up her horse and trudged her way home on foot.

On another occasion a squad of Tories came to her father's house and ordered a meal for themselves. Rachel informed them that nothing could be kept on account of the British and Tories. After she was threatened, her mother told her where she could find some coarse meal and to prepare some bread and milk for them. When they had partaken of the bread and

milk, Rachel said to them: "If the basin was melted and poured down your throats, it would be the desert, of all other, that I desire you should have."

This lady had descendants, Bradshaw and others, in York County.

#### William Lewis

William Lewis came from Virginia before the war of Independence and settled in the vicinity of Rocky Mount where he continued to reside until his death in the thirties at an advanced age, probably more than ninety years. He was twice married and left a large family of children.

The record of Mr. Lewis in the Revolutionary was excellent, although little of it is now known. He was at Cates' defeat near Camden, Rocky Mount, Sumter's surprise at Fishing Creek, Hanging Rock, and other places.

Some Tories stole a number of horses and encamped on Big Wateree Creek in the plantation now known as LaGrange and belonging to Mr. John G. Mobley. They had divested themselves of all their clothing save their shirts and had them hanging around rousing fires to dry them. The night was very dark. Mr. Lewis and a few others charged upon completely surprised them, and captured the horses. But the Tories jumped into the creek in their denuded condition and betook themselves to the woods.

On another occasion he chased a Tory and captured his horse and two sides of bacon which he had stolen from a poor woman.

Reuben and John Pickett came from Virginia and settled on Wateree Creek. They often aided William Lewis in his raids and skirmishes.

A Tory was killed at the spring near the present residence of William S. Sibley and another was shot and killed scimbing the fence on the roadside near the house now occupied by Robert Meeks, colored. These were cold-blooded and were probably done to expiate some former offense against Whigs

Samuel McCrarey, Fishing Creek, was an ardent patriot and did much service against the British and Tories around Rocky Mount. When hostilities ended, he secluded himself from his neighbors and friends for ten years. He then joined the Baptist ministry and served his church faithfully until his death. He was pastor of Mr. Aion church for many years. Mentally he was much above mediocrity. His arguments in favor of the tenets and doctrines of his church were considered the best advanced in his day. His sermons brought delight to the Christian and terror to the sinner. These are all the Revolutionary incidents we have been able to gather.

#### ART IV

##### Grimkeville

On the crest of hill west of Rocky Mount ferry the town of Grimkeville was surveyed in 1792. The two main streets, which trended northerly and southerly, were called Washington and Pinckeny. The Cross-streets were Blanding, Manigault, Jizzard, Cripps, Barnett, Laughton, Davie, Kean, and Allen.

Among the first lot owners and probably residents were Mr. J.F. Grimke L. Smith, J. Allen Smith, Manigault, John D. Maxwell, William Houston, and Hugh McMillan. The hill on which this town was built is the true and original Rocky Mount. Lots were reserved for a seminary, parsonage, church, and cemetery. The residence of John G. Johnstone stands upon the church lot.

It was named in honor of J.F. Grimke, prominent in South Carolina affairs in his day.

Judge J.F. Grimke owned much land along the west bank of the River. The legislature passed an act Dec. the 18, 1817, to purchase these lands, which purchase was consummated May the 1st, 1818. The price was \$19,258.

This purchase was probably made preparatory to digging the canal.

This once populous and growing town bade fair to increase in size, population, and importance. It was situated at the head of flat boat navigation, and the bugle blast announcing the arrival and departure of boats was often heard. It was surrounded by fields of fertile soil, cultivated by thrifty and energetic husbandmen, and a considerable trade was carried on in it. Now the town is desolate and forsaken, no boat now comes or goes. Those who walked to and fro on the streets have passed, and their habitations have moulded into dust. The streets have been obliterated by plow share. The lowing cattle on the hill side and the plowman's phrases in the cotton field, take the place of the bustle and hum of business on the crowded streets.

#### Catching Shad

Charles Wald came from Virginia and settled near the Catawba Falls, Chester County, probably shortly after the Revolutionary war.

In his Virginia home shad were caught in a dip net. As he settled near a river in his new home, nothing was more natural than for him to try it in the Catawba. success crowned his efforts. From this beginning catching shad and carp grew to be a very lucrative business and continued to be so for many years. Some time after the war, however, the catches began to dwindle and grew less until the State established a fish commission, whose business it was to put millions of young shad in the upper part of the river. After that, fish were caught in increased numbers and became plentiful. To lop off some expense the fish commission was abolished, so that for the past several seasons shad are scarcely caught at all.

The May Picnic

The writer heard Mr. William Nichols, who was born in 1797 and spent his entire life in this vicinity, say he could not remember when there was not a party of some kind at the Falls on the first Saturday in May.

As the proprietors of the fisheries needed their hands on their farms afterwards, the first Saturday in May was the last day on which they fished. Some of the friends were invited to a dinner of fish, cooked on the river bank on the last day. Very likely fish were served in different ways and everybody partook of the toothsome delicacies until all were satisfied.

May not this neighborly and friendly intercourse with a fish dinner attached be the beginning of what is now a gigantic meeting of people, mostly strangers to each other without the fish dinner.

(At this point Mr. Ford included in his sketches the admirable account of Mr. Dearborn Military establishment by Dr. Carlisle.)

ART V

Historic Graves

Col Senf's grave is somewhere on what is now known as the "Sweat Place". The exact spot is known to few if any white persons in this community.

In the early part of the century Beckhamville was a place of some note and the neighboring men would congregate there in considerable crowds at times. On some of these occasions an officer from the "Establishment" would attend, and while his fife and drum rendered some martial music, he would solicit recruits in the crowd. In addition to the other uses Mount Dearborn was a recruiting station also.

Hardby the old ruins is the cemetery where repose the remains of several privates and one officer. Nothing marks the grave of the privates except a common stone at the head and foot. That of the officer is walled

over with common stone, but is without inscription. Not even his name is out on it.

Tradition says the last squad left in 1817. It is thought that they joined Gen. Jackson's forces, who were fighting the Indians in Southern Georgia about that time. David Reynolds went off in this squad. Some time afterwards he returned and reported that he was discharged in Florida. He spent the remainder of his life among the people on Rocky Creek, and died quite an old man.

### Boating

After the completion of the Santee canal in 1800, boating from Rocky Mount to Charleston grew to be of considerable importance. The farmer's produce was carried and their supplies were brought back on flat boats. Nattie and Dickie Barnett were the noted boatmen of that day, William Nichols was the boat builder and one Farrar kept a warehouse near Rocky Mount ferry. This was before the day of steamboats and railroads.

### Rocky Mount Canal

This canal begins above the head of the falls and extends some distance below Rocky Mount ferry. Several locks were built on it to lower and raise the boats at the declivities. They are splendid specimens of stone masonry and are well preserved and seemingly as firm and tight as when they were first built.

I am indebted to Thomas Caine for the date of the digging of this canal. He left Liverpool, England, in 1816 and landed in Charleston in the same year. Briggs and Thomas were the contractors of the Fishing Creek canal, which they began to dig in 1817, and Thomas Caine came up to do the smithing. A picnic was given at Beckhambille July the 4th, 1823, to

celebrate its completion.

Shortly after this picnic, John McCullouth, contractor, began to dig the Rocky Mount Canal, and completed it in the early thirties, Thomas Caine did his smithing also. After this canal was finished, Thomas Caine did the smithing for the farmers around Beckhamville, as long as he was able to perform the labor. He died 1883, nearly ninety years of age.

About a mile below the road, entering the picnic ground at the falls, a rock house was built for the lock-keeper. The stone walls are in good condition still; the wood part has decayed and disappeared. John McCullough contractor, was the first occupant of this house, Green Roberts the second, and Huldah Arledge and her family were the last who lived in it. Jonas Backstrom, the first and only lock-keeper, never occupied it. He resided his own farm nearby.

It is said this canal cost the State three hundred thousand (\$300,000) dollars. William Wall, Beckhamville section, used the entire length, and William Nichols and Jerry Gaither below the ferr, but very few boats ever passed through it. Shortly after its completion, the South Carolina railroad reached Columbia and the trade of this section was diverted to that city, and transportation was carried on in wagons.

While digging the canal, John McCullough, contractor, was married to Miss Sallie Kingsbury at the residence now occupied by family of the late William Nichols, then by James Westbrooks. John Guntharpe, Esq., officiated. From this union sprang Miss Sallie McCullough, of Columbus, who produced a sensation as a vocalist in the sixties and seventies. She married Brignoli, an Italian tenor singer. A few years afterwards a divorce was obtained. His last song in her presence on the stage was "Goodbye, Sweetheart, Goodbye." This was in New York. The last heard of Miss Sallie



she was singing in a choir in New York and receiving a handsome salary therefor. This was many years ago.

#### Kingsbury's Ferry

In the early years of the last century our ferry was known as the Kingsbury ferry from the owner and operator, John Kingsbury. He was the father of Mrs. John McCullough and the grandfather of Sallie McCullough, the vocalist. His residence was the old rock he kept at the eastern end of the ferry. It is told of him that he died in 1820, and a costly monument marks his grave on the brow of the hill above his home.

#### Wire Grass

Bermuda grass, or wire grass as we call it, was first sown on the banks of the old canal to protect them against the washing rains and high river waters. From there it has been scattered by birds, animals and farmers until this whole section is badly infested with it.

#### ART VI

#### Bethesda Church

William Lewis of revolutionary memory was a member of the Methodist Church. He and his neighbors-Picketts, Jacksons, and other-erected a crude log hut on the land then owned by Col. A. F. Peay in the vicinity of what is now Bucklick. This they called Shady Grove. At that time the Methodists were not objects of popular favor, especially in that locality. The ministers were threatened with mob violence if they continued services at Shady Grove.

In consequence of those threats Bethesda Church was organized. This was in 1812. That portion of the worshipers who resided in this vicinity proceeded to erect a house of worship at a place then known as "Grant's Old

Field." This house was located a few hundred yards southerly from the Pine Grove Negro Baptist Church. For many years the name, "Grant's Old Field." clung the Bethesda with unaccountable tenacity. Frequently "Grant" was dropped and the "Old Field" retained. Many years ago the preacher sent to this circuit, on his first round, being as he supposed near the Church, asked a young man, whom he chanced to meet, the distance to Bethesda Church. He declared his ignorance of the existence of a church bearing such a name. He was then asked the distance to the "Old Field Church". This question he answered promptly and explicitly. This young man was to the manor born and his mother was a member of Bethesda.

The names of the person who contributed to the building of the first house of worship are: Rev. Jno. Pickett, a local preacher, Foster, Piper, Jackson, Gibson, Lewis, and Graham, commonly called "Grimes".

The following are some of the names which were on the church roll many years ago, to wit: Lewis, Piper, Jackson, Stokes, Graham, Barber, Ellison, Backstrom, Reynolds, Pickett, Howze, Brown, Grant, Wilson, Walker, Mills, and Templeton. All these have gone to their rewards, and but few, if any, have any descendants bearing their names and connected with the church here. Their places are occupied by others.

Owing to the inconvenience of the location or the condition of the building, another house was built on the west side of the road that extends northerly from the residence recently occupied by John O. Jackson where the Rocky Mount road intersects. This was in the late thirties or early forties.

The present house of worship is a neat and commodious brick building, erected in 1854-55 by the untiring efforts of Rev. L. A. Johnson, pastor at that time. The means to erect this building were mainly contributed by Mr. Wm. E. Hall and his brother, Mr. Daniel Hall. They were assisted by

others according to their means. The congregations of Bethesda have generally been small, yet the quarterage paid by these benevolent and liberal brethren brought some of the best talent in the Conference to this work. During their lives Bethesda was a prominent factor in every circuit in which it was placed. Six of the members of this old church have entered the ministry and served in the South Carolina Conference.

The first was Absalom Brown who entered the Conference in 1828. He died in 1833, and was buried in Montgomery county, N.C. He was an uncle of the James L. Brown of this section. Hugh A. C. Walker was admitted in 1831. He died in 1836, is buried in Marion county, N.C., John R. Pickett was admitted in 1845. He died in 1870 and his remains rest in the Methodist cemetery in Winnsboro, S.C. It is said his ministry brought more than ten thousand persons into the communion of the church.

Phillip L. Pickett was admitted in 1835. He travelled two years and located. He settled on a farm near the Falls and continued to reside there until his death in 1862. He was buried at Bethesda. He served the neighboring churches from the time of his location until his death.

James Tillman Kilgo was admitted in 1850. He died in 1888 and is buried in Marlboro county. It is told of him that he was so proficient in mathematics in his school boy days that his teacher called him Archimedes. He has three sons in the ministry: one is president of Trinity College, North Carolina, the other two are members of the South Carolina Conference.

Edward L. King was admitted in 1839. He died in 1875 and his ashes repose in Columbia, S.C. He was an uncle of Hon. P. L. Hardin, Bascomville, senator from Chester county. He has a son Rev. J. Rufus King in the North Georgia Conference. who has served as P. E. for some years.

Since 1850 Bethesda has sent out no minister.

Mrs. Rodgers, a shouting member of this church for many years, was the first to be laid to rest in the church yard. This was in 1855. Since that time more than ninety have been buried there.

At time since the war the prospects of this old church have been gloomy, at other times cheerful. Sometimes it has been neglected, yet the members have always been courageous. High water mark in attendance, accessions, and spiritual growth was reached during the four years (1895-8) pastorate of Rev. R.A. Yongue. Since that time a gradual decline has gone on along the whole line.

Camp meetings were held on the same hill and not far distant from the Pleasant Grove Negro Methodist church in the 1920's.

## ART VII

### Mills

A mill was operated on Turkey branch near the residence of W.S. Sibley at an early day, and hard by was a whiskey distillery. Both were known as Cook's. They were abandoned and the houses were going to decay some seventy years ago. Probably they were operated in Revolutionary times. Trace of the old canal is now all that can be seen. A grist mill was operated on the Rocky Mount canal near the old "Rock House" in the late twenties and early thirties. This probably belonged to the canal company. No trace of it can now be seen. A grist mill was built on Rock Creek by a Hart some time in the thirties, probably. James Pickett next came into possession. He being wealthy added a cotton gin and saw mill. Green B. Montgomery became possessor in the early 50's. He changed the cotton gin house into a flour mill. This was the first mill to grind wheat in the community. These mills were all washed away by the high creek of 1856. At that time they belonged to Samuel McAliley, Chester.

He then put in a stone dam and built a fine mill house with a stone basement and put in it three sets of stones, two provided with bolting cloths, and a saw in the shed. An over shot wheel about 18 or 20 feet in diameter and five to six feet wide furnished the power for all this machinery. This was probably the finest mill in the up country at that time, 1858, and paid a handsome per cent on the cost about ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). It was burned by Sherman's army.

The present Machinery was placed by Jesse A. Gladden in 1882. It is in the possession of his family at this time.

John Doig built and began to operate a grist mill at the head of the falls in the late 30's which was continued for ten years and then abandoned. Jerry Gaither erected a saw mill on Debutary in the 30's and operated it for some years. It was abandoned in the 40's.

#### Mount Dearborn Cotton Factory.

On the west bank of the river at the foot of the falls Capt. Daniel McCullough built a cotton factory. It was completed and began to be operated in 1849. A northern man, Russell, placed the machinery and trained the negroes to do the work, and returned to his home. It was never operated by any other than slave labor and it paid. It only spun thread.

During the war this factory was thronged with orders for thread to be used as warp in the cloth which was woven at home.

This was probably the first cotton factory built in the up country. It was destroyed by Sherman's firebugs.

Captain McCullough operated a grist mill on the old factory side for a few years after the war. This was abandoned and no more machinery has been placed there.

### First Cotton Gin

The Gaithers built and operated the first cotton gin in this community. Horse power was used.

### Tanneries

William Lewis, Jermiah Gaither, Green B. Montgomery, and a later day Hilliard J. Gayden each owned and operated a tannery.

### Buggy and Carriage Factory

During the years 1854-5 John T. Matthews manufactured buggies and carriages near Gladden's mill. He sold the place and left the community in 1856. The factory was then abandoned.

Sherman played havoc with the buildings during his visit here in 1865

## ART VIII

### Bridge Across Rocky Creek

The first bridge ever built across Rocky Creek at what is now Gladden Mill was destroyed by the high creek of 1856. Aleck Baker, an old time free negro, contracted to build it. While at work on it his son, Hamp Baker, and another free negro, Bill Sanders, made it up with Rachel and Susie Jordan and their brother Zach, slaves belonging to Dr. W.E. Hall, to leave the country. Their object was to get the girls to a free state (Ohio) and marry them. The effort was made and they went as far as Charleston where all were apprehended and brought back except Hamp Baker who made good his escape. Dr. Hall strapped his negroes according to their deserts and Bill Sanders was put in jail and the sheriff daily put on strips sufficient in number and degree for several days to satisfy the law. That learned him that it was much more risky and painful, if caught to steal a wife among slaves than among free negroes. This was about 1857. The bridge was

finished that year or the next.

This bridge was destroyed by a freshet in the creek in 1888.

The stone pillars under the present bridge were erected by Robert Hallburton, contractor, and the bridge was put up by an Atlanta firm. The whole was completed and the bridge was thrown open to the traveling public in 1890. The cost of this bridge is said to be twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000).

It is several feet higher than the old one.

#### Whiskey Drinking

During the first three or four decades of the last century two whiskey distilleries were within easy reach, and every store dispensed the stuff. In addition to this wagons from the mountains of North Carolina would haul to the door of the people and fill a three gallon jug for one dollar or roll a forty gallon barrel in the house for a ten dollar bill. Most of these people kept a three gallon jug and always had one dollar on hand when the jug was empty. During these years a new and different era prevailed. Gambling, boxing, wrestling, fisticuffs, fist and skull fights, then called, throwing bullets and horse racing were often indulged in. When Mount Dearborn military establishment was abandoned, a large number of small sized cannon balls were left. These were taken and used in throwing bullets, the one sending the bullet farthest "on the fly" was considered the victor. The race track was north of, parallel with, and not far distant from that part of the Rocky Mount road lying between the residence of the late Robert Ford and that of Stark P. Martin.

#### Temperance

The temperance wave struck this vicinity in the early 50's. A division of the sons of temperance was organized and a house was built for its occupancy. This house stood on the south side of the road nearly in front of the

then residence of William Nichols. Since this then there has been but little dram drinking, yet "total abstainers" are very few. There are no habitual drinkers among the negroes. Even in the flush of their freedom drunkenness did not prevail boisterously drunk.

#### Masonic Lodge.

The temperance division flourished a few years and died. Shortly after its death a Masonic Lodge was organized and made its home in the old temperance hall. The meetings of the Masons were held here for a few years. From this place it was removed from the neighborhood and the house was removed to lands near Rocky Creek belonging then to T.B. Lumpkin. Here it was used as a schoolroom a few years. From this place it was removed to a site near the present residence of C.S. Ford. Here it again became the house of the Masonic Lodge, and then it went up in smoke at the instance of Sherman's fire thugs.

#### Rocky Mount Soldiers

Beside those mentioned in the battle of Rocky Mount and the Revolutionary incidents I know of no others who have served in this war. While it is thought that a company from Fairfield served in the war of 1813, with my present means of information I am unable to state whether Rocky Mount furnished any members or not.

The Rocky Mount soldiers in the Florida war were Corp. R.C. Bailey, Peter Hollis, Edward Lewis, T.B. Lumpkin, Andrew McDonald, and Dr. William Pickett. Edward Lewis was wounded.

Those who went to the Mexican war were Corp. Judge Wilson, Turner Brown, Edmund Brown, James Connor, and Aleck Montgomery, Turner Brown was killed and Aleck Montgomery died.

In the Confederate war the reserves were J.F. Aldridge, James Aldridge



Robert Ford, Aaron Ford, R.M. Ford, H.J. Gayden, Mansel and S.H. Roberts. In the army were S.T. Aldridge, Dr. Jephtha Aldridge, James Bailey, William Branen, John Cartlege, J.C. Caldwell, J.A. Caldwell, Dr. William Dye, L.M. Ford, J.L. Ford, R.T. Featherston, E.T. Gayden, Elisha Hall, Sam Kilgo, R.F. Lumpkin, J.B. Montgomery, Dr. R.C. Montgomery, C. McClenahan, Dr. John Mobley, R.S. Nichols, Thomas Robertson, William Robertson, James Robertson, Frank Robertson, W.T. Scott, Walter Scott, Ben Scott, W.S. Sibley, Wm. Stevenson, J.A. Stewart, Nicholas Wilson, Green Wilson, and Wash Wilson.

Those who lost their lives in this war were, James Aldridge, James Bailey, John Cartlege, Dr. William Dye, Thomas Nichols, Thos. Robertson, Wm. Robertson, James Robertson, Ben Scott, and Nicholas Wilson.

#### ART. IX

##### Tragic Incidents Among the Whites

Robert Robertson, Rocky Mount, stood on the "Round Rock" at the falls and dipped for fish. He left this stand and waded toward the bank. Before reaching it he was drawn into a swirl or "suck hole." He was never seen or heard of again. This was about 1808.

Two Hall brothers and Susan Wall, a negro, made an effort to cross the river at the mouth of Rock Creek in a boat. All three were drowned. This was 1821.

Isaac Meek and Jacob Meek, both of whom were workers on the canal, were drowned from a boat at the public dam in the 20's. The public dam was built above the falls to divert water into the canal.

John Montgomery, a young man of Lancaster county, was drowned while bathing in the river at Rocky Mount ferry in 1832.

A young Owens who was playing leap frog with a companion, accidentally pitched into the creek and was drowned. This occurred in Rocky Creek near

the mouth of the Hagues branch sometime in the 30's.

John Reynolds was killed with his own pistol by Charles Lewis near the mountain gap in the 30's.

An infant which had been murdered and thrown into the Rocky creek was caught on Pickett's mill dam in the 30's. Diana Sweat was suppose to be its mother.

Captain Charles Thorn was killed and his body was thrown into the river above the falls by his slave, Bob, in 1835. For this crime Bob was tried, convicted and executed. The hanging took place near the residence of the late W.P. McCullough. Bob's head was then cut off and stuck on the end of a pole stuck in the ground on the roadside near the place of hanging and remained there until it was thoroughly decayed.

Thomas Pickett was killed by John Sweat with a pocket knife. This occurred in Link's tavern on the Hill Island in the 30's.

Robert Guntharpe rode on horseback to what is now Old Rossville. His horse became unmanageable there and ran under a horse rack and Robert was killed. This occurred in the 40's.

James Barkley was returning from Camden in a gig. His horse became frightened and ran off. He was thrown out of his vehicle and killed. This was in 1847.

Timothy Connor was killed by a tree falling on him. As he was alone the circumstances attending the accident can only be conjectured. He cut the tree down that killed him. His body was not found for several days. This occurred near Camp Welfare about 1856.

Willie D. Scott, son of Dr. I.S. Scott, was killed by an accidental discharge of his gun while hunting near Rocky Mount ferry in 1868.

Tillman Dixon was drowned while scining in Gladden's mill pond in 1887.

Mansel Hollis, son of A.A. Hollis, was killed by an accidental discharge

of his gun while hunting near his father's house in 1891.

Aryoung Gregory was killed by an accidental discharge of his gun in a boat in the river near the "point of Rocks" about 1894.

John Turner and four of his sons went out in a boat to fish near the Hill Island. They got into rough water and could not manage the boat. They were thrown out into the water. John Turner and one son were drowned, the other three were rescued. This occurred about 1894.

J. Rinaldo Massey was killed by an accidental discharge of his gun in a boat near the Hill Island in 1895.

Stark Perry Martin was called to his back door in the night and shot by Henry Nettles, a negro, in 1900.

Fred Habenicht, of wirnsboro, was drowned while bathing near the "Point of Rocks" in 1903.

#### Tragic Incidents Among the Blacks

Peter Allen rode a horse into the river to fish thr traps at Pickett's Ford. The horse went into some quick sand and Peter dismounted to assist the horse. The horse, relieved of Peter's weight, came out but Peter was unable to extricate himself and consequently drowned. That the horse could not be caught for some days was regarded with awe by the superstitious. This occurrence was in the 20's.

A man and woman, names not remembered, a whole walking a log across Rock Creek near its mouth, fell into the creek and were drowned. This occurred in the 20's.

Joe Adams was shot on his horse and killed near "Stinking Pond" by George Gibson, a white man, in the early 40's.

Scipio Doig was crushed to death in the machinery of his owner's (John Doig) Mill at the head of the falls in 1846.

Green Dunn was killed by lightning on the home place of the late Jesse A. Gladden in 1865.

George Perry, Peter Perry, and Edith Perry were drowned from a boat at Benson's Landing in 1870.

David Tillman, a small boy, was drowned while bathing in the river near Pickett's Island in the early 80's.

Blount Hagood, an expert swimmer, was drowned in an effort to cross the river at Rocky Mount ferry in 1886.

Lewis McIllwain was killed by the derrick while at work rebuilding the pillars under the bridge at Gladden's mill in 1889.

Joe Watson and John McDowell, a white man, occupied a boat which they allowed to get into rough water. John McDowell jumped into the water and was rescued. Joe Watson clung to the boat and was drowned. His body was caught on Johnston's fall trap at Rocky Mount some weeks later. This occurred at the falls about 1892.

Allen Tidwell, while walking a log across Debutary, fell in and was drowned about 1892.

#### ART. X

##### Some of the Men of Rocky Mount

Miles Farrar, in the early year of the last century, ran the falls in a boat and came out uninjured. We have heard of no other ever making the effort.

In the early settlement of Rocky Mount Drs. Edwards and McCullough were the practicing physicians. Dr. Edwards was a very wealthy man and of cultivated manners. He died at Rocky Mount and left a large estate which did his children but little good. The old people of that vicinity could have unfolded a story of great wrong had they been disposed to do so.

Dr. Briggs of a later date had very great social wrong practiced upon him. In consequences of this he drank to such excess that he died in a few months.

Thomas Minton was by far and at long odds the most useful man of this day in his section. He repaired clocks, watches, etc., manufactured tin vessels of all kinds, made furniture of every description, did any smithing needed, and built the machinery of all the cotton mills of every character. All this was done in a day when every piece used was taken from the forest, prepared, dressed, and shaped to fit the place for which it was designed by hand. After his death his tools were thought to be worth \$1,000. He left no one who knew how to use many of them.

Berry Montgomery was surveyor, auction cryer, merchant, mechanic of no small import, and was often called upon to treat the sick though no M.D.

When a boy the writer saw a wagon which this old man made after he was seventy years of age probably. It looked well and did good service. At each meal he took his brandy and at no other time. He used tobacco also, yet he lived more than ninety years.

Timothy Connor was a master mechanic. He built the first residence of any pretension in all this country. It was erected for one McCrarey at Beckhamville in the 20's. This house was the residence of Dr. W.C. Cloud for many years. It was burned in the early 90's. His next large house was built for Laban Hall. It was erected in the 30's. The family of the late Jesse A. Gladden now own it and part of them live in it. He made the model of the first bridge across the Congaree River at Columbia. The strips of this model were thinner than a table knife, yet it would hold up the weight of any man. It is said that he sold this model very cheap to John McCullough, the contractor of the Rocky Mount canal, who built the bridge by it. Timothy Connor's death was a tragic one and has been mentioned.

Barney O'Neale has left his imprint on many plantations around about. His favorite work was digging and walling up water springs. A specimen of his handi-craft may be seen on the "Sweat Place." This work may have been done by order of Col. Senf, as this place was his home for several years previous to his death. On account of the character of his work Barney O'Neale was known everywhere as the "Spring lizard."

John Guntharpe, a twelve years old boy, secretly entered a vessel at an English port and concealed himself until well out at sea. He was landed at Charleston, S. C. This was shortly after the Revolution. He remained at Charleston some time and then came and settled on Rocky Creek. He spent the remainder of his life which was full of years. He reared a large family. He was a good and useful citizen and died esteemed and respected by all. As he never communicated with his relatives in England, they never knew what became of him.

William Montgomery is said to have been a very eccentric man. Many amusing anecdotes are told of him. He lived to be quite an old man and it is believed that he never took a dose of medicine of any kind in his life.

#### ART. XI

##### Memoirs, Traditions and and History of Rocky Mount and Vicinity

Tacitus Cassidy was an Irishman and a man of very great strength and endurance. He overcame each and every antagonist in his many fist-cuffs. On one occasion he was subpoenaed as a witness in a lawsuit. He knew his evidence would greatly injure the cause of a warm friend, whom he esteemed very highly. When the day of trial came Tacitus filled himself well with red liquor, the kind that makes men bold. When called up and sworn he took his stand and said with loud voice, "Nolus, bolus, bull and injuns; Judge, I am

a horse." The Judge told the sheriff to "stable that horse and curry him off with a ten dollar bill." Tacitus had accomplished his object and his friend paid his fine. This occurred in the 30's, at Winnsboro, Judge O'Neale probably, presiding.

William Bowles was a native of Connecticut and taught in this community in the 30's. In that day the pupils voiced their studies or, as it was then called, "studied out loud." Mr. Bowles would stretch himself out at full length on his back on a bench and close his eyes. If any pupil made a mistake, it was corrected; if any one was not studying, he was ordered to work; the name of the derelict was called on each occasion. His scholars were large and he was a man after Solomon's own heart, as he spared no the rod. In figures he was a prodigy, as no problem was stated to him that the solution was not given as soon as heard without making a figure or giving the least mental concern apparently. His mind was a regular cyclopedia of recollections. He could give the date of frivolous and insignificant happenings for years afterward. He owned a mule (Tommy) which was his constant companion and faithful dependence for locomotion in his journeyings and wanderings, which were not few. In the heat of summer and the iciness of winter he wore an overcoat made of buffalo skin. He was never known to sleep on a bed, but always on a pallet, which he wanted before the fire in the winter. He suffered greatly with asthma and for relief would take ground red pepper stirred in honey. After returning to his home he kept up a correspondence with an old pupil, until the beginning of the war.

John G. Totton taught a singing geograph school in 1843. The lessons assigned were sung to some tune and the singing continued until the lessons were learned. As the tune "Old Dan Tucker" was familiar to the school, the lesson for it was soon learned and brought forth the greatest volume of music. Each lesson had a separate tune. The patrons were well pleased with

the progress made and the knowledge gained.

Dr. Ira Seaborn Scott graduated at the Medical college, Charleston, in 1843. He commenced at once the practice of his profession. His career of usefulness was one seldom attained by a country physician. His practice extended from Beckhamville down the river to the Kershaw line and eight miles below. To see him leaning on his crutch and staff one could scarcely believe him able to such an extensive practice. He was a cripple from childhood. His practice extended over a period of more than forty years.

Years ago when the typhoid fever raged in this country he lost not more than three per cent, of the cases he treated. In obstetrics his patrons believed him to be without an equal. He died in 1888, esteemed and lamented by this whole community.

William Dixon Benson was a physical wreck and scarcely a week ever passed without his taking medicine. He kept a small shop near Gladden's mill where he worked upon watches, clocks, and almost anything made of leather, wood or iron. During the war his skill was well directed. He made a machine with which he manufactured buttons of horn and bone. He also made spinning wheels and hand looms, by means of which these people could spin thread and weave cloth, which was made into wearing for both races and sexes. He thus enabled our girls to sing with truth and in spirit that song about "The Somespun Dresses."

He made a pistol which could be set in a house or field and the one causing it to fire, when so arranged, would certainly receive the contents. He made a shooting lock for a house door. When properly set, it could not be unlocked without an explosion, which would again fasten the door with another bolt. He also made a burglar catcher. When this was set, any one stepping on an unnoticeable platform in front of the door, would be jerked up by an unseen iron loop and held hard and fast until relieved.



The men carried all kinds of farm tools and the ladies their jewelry, watches, etc., to him for repairs and all were accommodated alike. His work always left his hands in good shape and was a fine specimen of workmanship.

He was a harmless and innocent old man and scarcely left his shop except to fish, of which sport he was very fond, and occasionally to hunt. He died in 1885, respected and beloved by all.

Dr. William E. Hall was the wealthiest man of this community. He was his own manager and attended to the slaves on his five plantations in South Carolina. He also owned two places in Georgia, which he frequently visited. His crops were paying ones. He was the best of neighbors and a very benevolent man. No one ever went to him for a favor and came away empty handed. His slaves loved him devotedly and some of them, even after emancipation could not speak of him without tears coursing down their cheeks. He was a strong pillar in Bethesda Church. This was broken by his death and his place has not since been filled. Not a dollar's worth of the large property left at his death is in possession of any of his descendants now.

William Robertson was probably the best financier of ante bellum days. He incurred a debt of ten thousand dollars for a plantation and his only resources were a few horses and his family, (he had several children). He paid the debt, built several thousand dollars worth of houses on the plantation, and owned a considerable number of slaves before his youngest child was near grown. He was quite energetic and an excellent manager.

William Nickels was boat-wright for the river men. He built all the boats used in navigating the river in his day. When boat building was no longer a business, he opened a shop at his home to repair wagon and all kinds of vehicles. This he did as long as he was able to do the work. He died in 1887 nearly 91 years of age.

Mansel Hollis, probable, performed more manual labor than any man, white

or black, in the county. He began as soon as he was able to do anything and continued until his death at about eighty years of age. To recount the amount of labor done in one day by him on several occasions would almost stagger belief. His health was excellent until the last few years of his life. He died in 1899 and left a considerable estate.

Robert S. Wickels was the best manager in a small way among us. He made the best living in the community on very slender resources and without much manual labor on his part. He worked and managed to get eighteen bales of cotton ahead when it was worth about one hundred dollars per bale. After his death in 1899, his funeral and current farm expenses were settled sixteen bales could still be seen lying around. Since his death two bales about eleven years old have been sold. This was probably the oldest cotton ever sold in the county. His practice was to sell a bale when he needed some money and only then.

Thomas Bradshaw Lempkin undoubtedly possessed the greatest mental caliber of any one in the community. With a collegiate training and such environments as would be most conducive to the greatest literary effort, it is difficult to conjecture what manner of man he would have made. With scarcely any education he enjoyed reading good literature and his composition was fairly good. He was a poet in the rough; he knew how to make the lines jingle at their ends and to put sense in their middle. He wrote two poems which were notable; one was about a neighbor, which caused much anger, the other was on a meeting of Flint Hill Masonic Lodge, in which a stanza was devoted to each officer and member present. The most prominent frailty of each was ridiculed most unmercifully. This was taken in the spirit of fun and caused no little merriment. No copy of either is now in existence or of his many squibs in doggerel. The old story of "Is it shelled", which went the rounds of the press many years ago, was the product of his brain.

His voice was the strongest I ever knew in a human being. On one occasion he stood on the platform of Robert Ford's gin-house and called Fred, a negro boy, two or three times and told him to come to Mr. Ford's gin-house and drive the gin. In the course of a half hour up walked Fred. He was asked, why he came. His reply was "Mas Brad called me to drive the gin," and said he was gathering chinquapins at the "wash hole" when he was called. This was more than a mile on an air-line. Dr. I.S. Scott says he heard him once five miles, and it is said that he "hollared" once in the middle of the river and was heard ten miles down stream.

Many of his quaint and witty sayings are still quoted and will be for days to come. He had an inexhaustible supply of anecdotes and no man ever told one in his presence that he could not tell one to match it and very likely a little better.

He lived to be an old man.

## ART. XII

### SHERMAN'S OCCUPANCY OF ROCKY MOUNT

Concerning the occupancy of this section by Sherman's army the late Robert Ford writes as follows:

The writer who tells of Sherman's march through South Carolina has a prolific as well as a sorrowful theme.

Several days before the arrival of the army at Rocky Mount, February 22, 1865, the southern heavens were covered with the smoke of burning buildings. Each day the smoke appeared nearer and nearer, and the heart of the people beat faster. Next came a throng of fugitives fleeing from their homes, endeavoring to save their stock and some valuables. Then came straggling soldiers with many tales of woe and horror. Next was heard the skirmish near Gladden's, then the smoke of the neighbors'

buildings was seen in black columns ascending heavenward, then came the sound of taps on the drum. The yankee soldiers dashed up to the doors; gold and silver and silver plate were demanded; and whether given or not the houses were thoroughly searched, and everything they wanted was stolen. Often when they did not wish the articles themselves, they took them and gave them to the negroes. Yards were cleared of dogs. In one instance a soldier presented his gun to shoot a dog, which had fled to its mistress' feet for protection. Had not an officer ordered him to desist death might have been the result to the lady, Mrs. Robt. Ford. Firearms were taken and destroyed, a great many were thrown into the Catawba river. The poultry was all taken. Bacon, flour, cornmeal, corn and provisions of all kinds were removed. Every locked door was forced open, gin-houses and cotton were burned in every instance. This much was done by the first instalment. Late in the afternoon they put pontoon bridge across the river and a part of the army went over in the afternoon of the 22d. It rained and the water broke the pontoon. On the morning of the 23d the encampment reached from Mitford on both roads to Rocky Mount ferry. The six days and nights the army spent here was a time of much sorrow and fear to the ladies and a few old men who were left at home.

Gen. Jeff. C. Davis, of the U.S. army, had his headquarters at the residence of Robert Ford for twenty-four hours. He drove Mrs. Ford, her aged mother-in-law and the children of the family from her room to an open portico to spend the night, an unpleasant and wet one. He occupied the room much to her discomfort. Gen. Davis traveled in a fine silver-mounted carriage drawn by two fine white steeds, all stolen on the march. His meals were served on silver waiters.

Gen. Sherman traveled the vicinity on horseback and, save the wanton destruction of property, did nothing to render himself obnoxious.

He had ten buildings belonging to Robert Ford burned, among them a large barn and stable. Several secret efforts were made to burn the dwelling house, but it was saved by the kind efforts of an Indiana soldier, whose name I would gladly mention if it were known. The family of Mr. Ford had a steadfast friend in the chief of artillery. He found some Masonic articles about the house and asked Mrs. Ford if her husband was a Mason. Being answered in the affirmative, he soon had the house and yard cleared of pillagers and gathered a few provisions and sent them in and placed a guard over the premises.

When he moved, he left a paper which he hoped would be some protection. There was little left then to protect. The yankee soldiers shot down all kind of stock, destroyed all farm implements, and burned the fencing. During their six days' stay at Rocky Mount they foraged the country for miles around, going in squads of from four to ten, sometimes without arms. Gen. Sherman's headquarters were near the Barkley mansion. He treated the ladies in this section politely.

The neighborhood was so pillaged that the people for several days had to subsist on the gleanings from the camp. Mr. Joseph H. Stroud of Chester county was very kind to the people in their distress. He sent an ox cart regularly with meal and flour. His name will ever be green in the memory of the unfortunate people of the Rocky Mount section. The good people of Bascomville, Chester county, also aided them. All aid received was from persons. For two years the rations were mainly cow peas boiled in water and a bit of corn bread. Without money, clothing or credit, there was real danger of starvation.

After the army passed, persons in the track of the march came and claimed all unknown stock and broken down and abandoned vehicles of all

kinds. A few had some cattle left. They had to keep them under guard or they would have been claimed and driven away.

Mr. Steven R. Ferguson of Chester county, an aged man, asked for a detachment of Wheeler's cavalry, and with them came down and skirmished with the yankees in the yard of Robert Ford and at Dr. I.F. Scott's, which greatly frightened the ladies. Ferguson rode boldly to the window and told them to stand between the chimneys. He captured a few stragglers and left.

The army began to move across the river about ten at night, seemingly in great excitement. Ferguson came with a large detachment, but he was too late: the army had crossed the river and the pontoon was raised.

The family of Mr. J.G. Johnston was assigned to one room of their residence and were requested to put everything they needed there and it would not be molested. Very soon after their arrival, Miss Sarah Barkley Mrs. Johnston's sister, saw a yankee thief with all their chickens tied and strung across a mile's back. She took a pair of scissors and cut two hens and a rooster from the string and put them in their room and saved them. A barrel of molasses was placed there also. A yankee seeing it, went into the cellar and bored a hole through the floor to hit the barrel but he missed it about six inches. The hole is still there.

While the yankees were crossing the river, a detachment of Wheeler's cavalry charged up to the front door of Mr. Johnston's residence and found one yankee in the hall. He was called upon to surrender, instead of which he took to his heels and was shot at. The bullet missed him and hit the floor; its mark may be seen yet. The yankee escaped through a window, calling upon those around the house to get away, and they did in good style. Some soon returned in line of battle and engaged the Confederates, who were protected by the house. Several bullets lodged in the

house, but no casualty on either side was reported.

ART. XIII

ANTIQUÉ AND CURIOUS

Miss Mary A. Nickels has a certificate of membership of Masonic Lodge No. 257, Ireland. It was issued to Thomas Nickels signed by Q. McCair and dated Oct. 12, 1761. The seal is red sealing wax on a blue ribbon and the ribbon is inscribed in the parchment on which it is written. It is in a fair state of preservation and writing is legible.

When Richard Gaither left Maryland and came to South Carolina some years previous to the Revolution, he brought a very small gourd which has been handed down to the eldest child with instructions to continue to do so. It is now in the fourth generation and the possessor is an old bachelor and does not know what to do with it.

Thomas Nickels bought a "spy glass" (telescope) more than a hundred years ago. It is still in good order. Some of his descendants own it.

Mrs. J.J. Nichols possesses some home made drawings by Thomas Stewart Balley bogie, Ireland, 1770. The work was done with pen and ink and consists of circles partly painted, men, women, a man playing on a violin; also some tunes, among them are French, York, London, Dundee. Instead of notes, letters are used on the staff, sharps and flats are used.

Also a five dollar note on the "Planters Bank" Winnsboro, S.C. The central picture is a mounted man, superintending some cotton pickers. If it was ever dated and signed, they have been effaced.

John C. Johnston has his grandfather's (James Barkley) watch. It has a gold case and was manufactured by Robert Roskell, Liverpool, England and is numbered 25,878. Instead of figures or numbers on the dial plate to denote the hours, the name James Barkley is used. J is for one o'clock.

A, for two, etc., and it is without a second hand. It was purchased about 1810 and still keeps good time. The purchase price was three hundred (\$300) dollars. He also possesses his grandfather's shot gun. The locks, originally flint and steel, were changed to percussion by the late W.D. Benson. It is well preserved and with some repairs would again be ready for use. This gun was probably made in London, England, and purchased there about 1810.

In his young manhood Jerry Gaither was given to peaches which grew on an island near Charleston. His friend informed him that they were the lemon peaches and requested him to eat the peaches and plant the seed and it was done. While this was probably some 80 years ago, some of his descendants still have lemon peach trees in bearing.

Jerry Gaither bought a pair of andirons some years before his death in 1844. They have been used winter after winter until now. They are in possession of his grandson, R. H. Ford. *Robert Hervey?*  
*24 in 1870*

About 1840 a traveling mechanic, Tann, came into this section. He built a few "bee palaces." They were shaped much as a house, about eight feet long, four feet wide, and about six feet high. On each side were eight drawers and each drawer was the home of a colony of bees. As much as fifty pounds of comb honey has been taken from a drawer. The workmanship was first class and their appearance was pleasant to the eye. The price paid was \$30 each. Not one of them has been seen since Sherman passed by.

J.A. Nichols has a pocket silver pen holder which was given him by one of Sherman's men. It is very wonderful that it was given to a white child while they loved the "Niggers" so.

A young lady on leaving the boarding school was given a stick of



candy for her oldest child. That candy was shown to the oldest child when about forty years old, but not given to him.

William T. Scott still has the canteen which he used in the army. It was taken from the body of a yankee who had been killed in the battle. The name, S.G. Scruggs, and the number of a Michigan regiment was scratched on the side. As all this had disappeared, Mr. S. remembers only the name and the State. Private Shehen, Co. A. 5th Regiment, S.C. I., took it from the corpse on the battle field and used it until he was killed. It was taken from his body and sold. Serit. Wesley Plyler was the purchaser. He was killed wearing it. It was again put up to the highest bidder. Lieut. Ben Dunlap then became the owner. After thinking of the number of men who had lost their lives with it on them he gave it to William T. Scott. All these belonged to the same company. Wm. T. Scott wore it during the remainder of the war. He was wounded once while wearing it. In another battle a yankee bullet went between this canteen and his frying pan, both of which were hanging by his side. It was considerably indented. He carried it to a neighbor's in 1865 and brought it home full of cider which sickened him. Since then it has never been used. It still has the cloth strap on it he used in the war.

D.B. Lumpkin has a Spencer rifle which once belonged to Frank F. Howzer one of Sherman's men. Howzer was in the squad which engaged in a skirmish with some Confederates at Stroud's mill. He was wounded and seeing that the Confederates were getting the best of it, threw his gun into Stroud's mill pond and began to retreat. He was overtaken by the Confederates near Mrs. Sibley's and forced to march along with them. Arriving at Turkey branch, he died on the bank and was buried there later by some of the neighbors. Before his capture he told a negro man where he could

get a gun. The negro got it and gave it to W.D. Benson, at whose death D.B. Lumpkin came into possession of it. He had a blood curdling experience with this gun in 1889.

J.L. Ford owns a Sharp's rifle which has some history connected with it. John K. Chambers, Chester county, and <sup>R.C.</sup> Crown, Lancaster county, Hampton's scouts, rode into Wadesboro, N.C., in February 1865, and met with a lone yankee trooper. He was ordered to surrender. He caught this rifle in his hand as if to deliver it; instead he put the muzzle to Chamber's breast and pulled the trigger, the cap exploded but the gun missed fire. As quick as thought he raised the gun and hit Chambers a terrific blow on the head, when he was shot dead by Brown. Chambers took the dead yankee's gun. In the charge upon Kilpatrick's camp, J.L. Ford captured a very fine army pistol. For this pistol Chambers gave the Sharp's rifle and three hundred dollars. J.L. Ford says he has ever since regretted that trade. He used this gun in the battle of Bentonville, the last one fought east of the Mississippi River, and in the daily skirmishes during the last week of hostilities. It was used on the last night of picket duty in Johnson's army. Coming into camp on the night of April the 17th and learning that the army would certainly surrender the next day, he and a few kindred spirits shouldered their guns, mounted their steeds, and left the camp expecting to join Kirby Smith's command beyond the Mississippi and still further battle for his country.

#### ART. XIV

##### LONGEVITY AT ROCKY MOUNT.

The following is a list of the persons of this vicinity who have died since the war and their age;

J.F. Arledge, 73; Mrs. J.F. Arledge, 60; S.T. Arledge, 82; Miss Matt:

Arledge, 58; Mrs. James Barkley, 82; Miss Polly Benson, 94; Miss Betsy Benson, 76; W.D. Benson, 67; Mrs. Katy Bishop, 67; J.L. Brown, 82; Mrs. J. L Brown, 74; Mrs. Betsy Brannon, 84; Mrs. Wm. Brannon, 50; Robert Ford, 70; Mrs. Robert Ford, 77; A.A.N. Ford, 43; Strother Ford, 72; U.J. Gayder 30; Mrs. Esther Grafton, 94; John Gladden, 30; Mrs. W.E. Hall, 70; Mansel Hollis, 80; Mrs. Mansel Hollis, 67; B.T. Hollis, 24; Mrs. Nancy Jackson, 76; James G. Johnston, 79; T.B. Lumpkin, 82; Mrs. T.B. Lumpkin, 73; Berry Montgomery, 91; Mrs. Berry Montgomery, 80; A.J. Nichols, 72; Mrs. A.J. Nichols, 77; William Nichols, 91; Miss Annie Nichols, 72; R.S. Nichols, 72; J.T. Nichols, 82; Dr. I.S. Scott, 67; Mrs. I.S. Scott 71; Mrs. W.C. Scott, 70; Mrs. W.S. Sibley, 65; Mts. Lucy Williams, 79.

The number of deaths from infancy to 20 years of age is 0.

From 20 years of age to 30 years of age 1.

From 30 years of age to 40 years of age 2.

From 40 years of age to 50 years of age 2.

From 50 years of age to 60 years of age 1.

From 60 years of age to 70 years of age 7.

From 70 years of age to 80 years of age 17.

From 80 years of age to 90 years of age 8.

Above 90, 4.

In making the list above no note is taken of the death of infants or of temporary residents. A few of each occurred. The number of deaths is 42, their average age is 70 to 84. Can any other section of Fairfield duplicate this average for a period of thirty-nine years?

#### FINIS

The work is now finished and our self imposed task has been complete to sift the false from the true, to verify the date of an unrecored in

incident is a very difficult duty. Under the circumstances we have done our best, and nothing is written which we do not believe. When we behold the ruins of the old military establishment at the falls and see the bottom of the old canal not only dry, but grown up in briars, bushes, and trees, the old town at Rock Mount scarcely a memory, the rock ribbed and gully washed hills well matted with wire grass yielding out small returns for well directed and hard labor, the well concerted schemes of the farmer to procure supplies during the spring and summer and scratch his head and indulge in the blues because his bills cannot be met when due, well might we exclaim:

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen

The saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"

#### MOUNT DEARBORN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT

This is the name given to what is now in ruins at the Catawba Falls. An older generation always spoke of it as the "Stablishment." Concerning its origin and intention, Dr. J.H. Carlisle, Wofford College, wrote an interesting letter to the News and Courier some years ago, which is produced in full below:

In 1802 John Drayton, then Governor of South Carolina, published a small work now rather scarce, entitled: "A View of South Carolina as Regards Her Natural and Civil Concerns." In the first chapter under one of the heads, "Cascades," he thus describes the Catawba Falls at the southeastern corner of Chester county: "For quantity of water and grandeur of appearances perhaps the Catawba Falls are the most interesting of any in the State. They are situated a little above the Rocky Mount, and the approach to them is over the hills which line the sides of the river. On either side the rocks are piled up in a wall many feet high, and the hills rising above them in sharp conical summits nod over the rapture below. Now the Catawba is arrested in

its course, and from a width of one hundred and eighty yards this river is forced by the hills and rocks on either side to shoot down 'the gulch' in a channel sixty yards wide. Collecting its waters impetuous and noisy it thunders down tumbling over mossy rocks and foaming from shore to shore, wheeling its large whirlpools and glancing from rock to rock with maddening fury, not ceasing its troubled waves until it has leaped over twenty falls in the distance of two and half miles, and precipitated from its height to a depth of ninety feet. Here below Rocky Mount it begins to subside and spread over a channel three hundred and eighteen (318) yards wide, but it is not composed. Four miles below rocks are scattered in its way, at times irritating its waters and provoking the rapidity of the stream.

Dr. David Ransay (1808) and Robert Mills (1826) give similar description of these falls which are connected with an almost forgotten page of history.

A committee of the house of representatives of the third congress, to which so much of the President's speech as relates to arms and military stores magazines, and arsenals was referred, made the following report March 5, 1794.

They offered the following resolution: Resolved, That the President of the United States be authorized to direct two arsenals and magazines to be erected in proper situations to accommodate the Southern and Middle States and that a sum not exceeding fifty-nine thousand (\$59,000) dollars be provided for that purpose.

Dec. 12, 1795, Timothy Pickering, Secretary of War, reported on the measures which had been pursued to obtain proper sites for arsenals. He says: "It having been determined to erect one arsenal on the Potomac and another in South Carolina, the latter in a situation to and from which water trans-

portation would be afforded, and the former in the vicinity of iron works, the necessary orders were given in the year 1794 for the exploring of both countries. The engineer employed for the purpose in South Carolina made a report which was received early in the last summer. He had explored that part of the country to which his attention had been called by the Executive. He also examined another, the latter independent of its being in a more healthful situation was deemed by him to possess some other advantages over the former."

This engineer alluded to was most probably Col. John Christian Senf, engineer to the State, who at that time was digging the Santee Canal (1792-1800). The second place referred to was Rocky Mount, the first place is not known.

Feb. 2, 1802, Thomas Jefferson, President, sent in a short message in which he says: "Besides the permanent magazines established at Springfield, West Point, and Harper's Ferry it is a thought that one should be established in some point convenient for the States of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia; such a point will probably be found near the borders of the Carolinas, and some small provision by the Legislature preparatoru to the establishment will be necessary for the present year."

In January, 1803, "Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin," was selected to assist, Co. Senf in choosing the site for the arsenal at Rocky Mount. Whitney was at that time pressing his claim before the North Carolina Legislature for expenses from Raleigh to Rocky Mount and for professional services while there. He received the moderate fee of fifty dollars. Col. Senf, with the rank of "Superintendent of the arsenal at Rocky Mount," received sixty dollars for making a plan of the arsenal at Rocky Mount and report thereon, including his traveling expenses.

During the years 1803-04 the total amount expended at Rocky Mount was fourteen thousand, four hundred and forty (\$14,400) dollars, being four times amount spent on the arsenal and magazine at West Point during these years. Of this sum three thousand, one hundred and thirtyeight (\$3,138) dollars were for the purchase (through Gen. Thomas Sumter) of a tract of land in South Carolina for an arsenal.

Gen. Henry Dearborn, Secretary of War to Jefferson, laid the corner stone of the main building, Robert Mills (Statistics of South Carolina) states this fact but does not give the exact date, which must have been in 1803. The place was known as Mount Dearborn for many years.

In 1806 a committee of congress reported on a system of great canals along the Atlantic coast. "In our State," they say, "the Santee and Catawba is said to be occasionally navigable for more than three hundred miles, as high as Morganton, N.C. Two companies have been incorporated by that State and the State of South Carolina for the purpose of improving its navigation. The lower falls are above Camden and not far from the United States arsenal at Mount Rock." (If a later Congress at any time has made appropriations confusing geography and name, it is only history repeating itself, probably.

In 1809 the Catawba and Wateree Company asked Congress for help. A committee of congress reported "that the canals would be of vast importance and utility to the inhabitants of North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, and the armory and arsenal of the United States would be considerably benefitted; yet in view of the present condition of finances, and the critical situation of our country in relation to foreign government, it would be unadvisable to apply any public money."

In the Journal of Bishop Francis Asbury (1809), he speaks of preaching near William Heaths on Fishing Creek, "when, to my surprise, a number of

United States Officers came up. I invited them in. These gentlemen are attached to the establishment at Rocky Mount."

In the annals of congress under date of Dec. 26, 1815, the committee on military affairs reported a bill establishing three additional military academies: One within the District of Columbia, one at Mount Dearborn in South Carolina, and one in the vicinity of Newport, Kentucky. The bill was read twice and committed.

A few days later in committee of the whole Mr. Campbell (probably a misprint, meaning Col. J. Chappell of South Carolina) proposed to change the location of the southern academy from Mount Dearborn to Columbia on account of the superior advantages of that place over Mount Dearborn and the eligibility of its situation for such institution. The house refused by a large majority. Mr. Pickens of North Carolina was in favor of a more upland site than either of those mentioned and gave a decided preference of the two to Mount Dearborn over Columbia. He proposed a point in Buncombe county. Asheville was soon put in nomination against Mount Dearborn, but was negatived by a large vote. The committee after a long debate in which Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Clay, speaker of the house, (both advocating three academies) agreed to strike out three and insert one. A year later, Feb. 1817, the whole matter was indefinitely postponed.

These references show that for several years an arsenal and magazines (in one place armory is used) were kept up near Rocky Mount. In the original paper ordering the section of a place, estimates were given for the following buildings." A brick building three stories high, one hundred and seventy-five feet long, would contain twenty thousand muskets, artillery and carriages in proportion, together with all the light appendages thereof, and arched brick magazine capable of holding two thousand and five hundred barrels of powder, brick barracks and workshop for one hundred armorers and



for necessary guard." It does not appear how far this plan was carried out.

Mills writing in 1826, sometime after the enterprise was abandoned, says: "The United States Establishment near Rocky Mount commands attention also, though now abandoned and in ruins. This circumstance only tends to make it more interesting to the traveler. The buildings erected here were handsome and extensive. The magazine (a conical building, had entirely tumbled down. The arsenal is a substantial building erected close to the canal constructed by the State, and is the only building of the whole that promises to be really useful. The barracks surround the square fronted the officers' quarters, a large brick edifice, the whole erected on a promontory projecting into the river. Nature furnished few spots more variously romantic than this, a noble river rendered more interesting by the rocks which impede its course, the surrounding hills covered with woods and towering above it, all induce a wish that the project of a military establishment here had succeeded, and this fairy spot had been the abode of refined society."

The references and quotations in this article have all been verified, so this short sketch of the "Rocky Mount Establishment" is believed to be correct. It is incomplete as it is prepared with out access to sources which would give other items as well as the time and cause of abandonment.

The local tradition is that Rocky Mount came within one vote of being the West Point of the United States. This may not be so, still those so inclined may speculate as to the effect on our history if a "great national military academy" with all the attendant patronage and influence had been established on the banks of the Catawba like that on the Hudson.

In the Grimkeville, which the printer of Mills Statistics gives as one name of Rocky Mount, some readers may not see the design to honor the name of Grimke by callin the place Grimkeville. Unfortunatley several attempts

to perpetuate names truly worthy have been failures, as Grimkeville, Draytonville, Pinckneyville, Chatham (original of Cheraw), Granby, etc.

B.J. Lossing in 1849 visited Rocky Mount with pen and pencil in hand. He gives several sketches and rather full accounts of the revolution army incidents connected with the place. He says: "Here yet remains the foundation of a projected United States Military Establishment to be called Mount Dearborn, which was abandoned."

Since Lossing's visit another army crossed the Catawaba at that historic point.

Before the late war a cotton factory stood on the banks of the canal owned by Mr. Daniel McCullough, the spot still bearing the name of Mount Dearborn. Mr. McCullough is yet living, one of a group of half dozen men, all over eighty years of age, near Rocky Mount. They might give some interesting items from their recollections about the establishment.

(Since this letter was first published, Mr. McCullough and the remainder of the group have passed away.)

Robert Mills has a paragraph that should not be overlooked: Here Rocky Mount repose the ashes of one whose memory should be cherished by all Carolinians for his devotion to their cause in the Revolution and his subsequent efforts to serve them in his professional capacity. Col Senf, the engineer of both the Catawba Company and of the Santee canal. He sleeps in what was his garden at Rocky Mount, but no obituary stone records his name. A few trees which he planted in a spot that he cut on the fashion of a falling garden shade his grave. Col Senf was a military engineer of considerable talent.

The great works of this German engineer in our states are but little known. The bed of the Santee canal is dry, and the very ruins of his arsenal and magazine on Mount Dearborn have perished. If the proposed railroad

from Camden to Rocky Mount is built, the silence of the hills around his grave will be disturbed by the scream of the engine, a power little dreamed of in his day. Let a station, at least a locomotive, hear his name. Let a stone be placed under those trees to mark the spot where he rests away from home and kindred, the foreigner who helped as in our day of weakness and trial.

May the old Mount never again echo the sound of hostile guns or the tread of a hostile army.