

THE

BROAD AXE AND THE FORGE

OR

A NARRATIVE OF UNITY CHURCH NEIGHBORHOOD.

From Colonial Times Until the Close of the
Confederate War.

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The Broad Axe and the Forge

The object of this sketch is to acquaint the hearer with a territory rendered illustrious by men who have attained eminence in many important positions in life, and to preserve, as it were, in an urn, the ashes of the dead deserving of remembrance. Whatever incidents are related will be illustrative of the environments, struggles and aspirations of this community. In a realm of so many conspicuous families and strong individualisms a history of each is impracticable, and a mere mention must suffice. This paper is entitled, "The Broad Axe and the Forge," because the one was the commencement, the other the culmination, of powerful industries and a remarkable civilization.

The scene of the narrative embraces Lincoln, and the circumjacent portions of Mecklenburg, Iredell, Catawba and Gaston Counties. Unity Church exerted a potent influence on the character formation of the people, and will figure largely in the recital. The church structure is a frame building, after the pattern of hundreds of others in the South, and is situated about a mile west of Beattie's Ford. The graveyard is enclosed by conventional rock walls, and like other such spots, contains many upright and recumbent memorial stones.

No extraordinary fertility of soil can be attributed, nor does any surprising beauty of the landscape command attention. Memories alone make the country sacred and historic; and associations people every road and locality with those who have stood as dauntless sentries at their posts. It is a wonderland wherein has been

exhibited progress, culture and masterful force. A community not imitative, but creative and constructive. A people of superb personal energy who found primitive conditions and converted them into the highest development; who settled upon a commonplace region, and transformed it into living, pulsing activities. It is one of those areas in North Carolina, dominated by the sturdy Scotch-Irish strain; where the thistle and the shamrock were planted toward the close of the eighteenth century; where they thrive and flourished and unaided produced results marvelous for the place and the time. The Scotch gumption and the Irish ardor finely blended, was the patrimony of this section.

Major John Davidson, who came to Mecklenburg from Pennsylvania, was the original developer of the resources, and his efforts made the country famous in commercial centres. In the early days of the republic, nearly every man was of necessity his own carpenter, and his wife was generally his tailor. Major Davidson was a practical blacksmith, but he was well educated, and combined in his person, the conjoined forces of thought power and horse power. From the ore beds that extend for fifteen miles in Lincoln and Catawba, he gathered several bushels of the crude material and smelted it in his shop. And, like Gifford, the great Scotch shoemaker, figuring out his problems on leather with blunted awl, so our hero (Davidson) with his simple hammer and anvil, was beating into shape the most important enterprises this portion of the Carolinas has ever known. Out of the native ore, he made a broad-axe, which is the prime instrument of clearance and building in all undeveloped countries. (The axe is held by Capt. Alex. Brevard, a great grandson, as an heir-loom.) With such home-made tools were builded the log

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huts of the early settlers. Paths were blazed through trackless forests, and horses and wagons traversed them until they widened into highways, and became leading arteries of trade in this part of the South.

Having investigated the quality and abundance of the iron to be found, Major Davidson associated himself in business with General Peter Forney, who owned a considerable interest in the ore beds, and the two founded and successfully operated Vesuvian furnace and Mt. Tirzah forge. Forney retired after a few years from the partnership and erected Mt. Welcome forge, now the site of the Morrison Cotton Mills, and a furnace on Leeper's Creek, above the forge. General Joseph Graham and Capt. Alexander Brevard, sons-in-law of Major Davidson, were placed respectively in charge of Vesuvian and Mt. Tirzah, when Davidson returned to Mecklenburg, and built on the Catawba a brick homestead, which was burned a few years ago. Major Davidson was a strikingly handsome man, and the late Governor W. A. Graham, a grandson, was said to have resembled him in appearance and dignity of carriage.

The first church at Unity was a log building, but an additional plot of ground was in 1801 deeded to "James Conner, Alex, Brevard, John Reid and Joseph Graham, trustees," for the erection of a larger one.

The seats were elevated at the doors and graduated to the pulpit, which being very high, was covered with a hood. On either side of the pulpit, and facing the congregation, were two pews, also hooded. One was occupied by Capt. John Reid and the other by Capt. Alex.

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Brevard and their families. The site upon which the present church stands, was donated in 1833, by Robert H. Burton, in a deed, to "John D. Graham, D. M. Forney and John Knox, trustees."

The first regular minister was Henry N. Pharr, familiarly called the "High Priest" on account of his size. He was succeeded by Patrick Sparrow afterwards, the first professor of languages at Davidson College. Mr. Sparrow's father was a potter at Vesuvius, and General Joseph Graham, observing the boy's aptitude, interested others with himself in giving him an education. A shoemaker said he could not aid with money, but he would pray for the lad and keep him in shoes. When he was selected as pastor of the church, an old negro servant of General Graham expressed her surprise at this rise of fortune, by exclaiming that the boy who had often eaten ask cakes with her children, had become her master's preacher. In addition to his pastoral duties, he conducted a large school at Triangle. He also originated the custom of annual camp-meetings at Unity. The following extract from a letter by a lady who was a girl at the time, thus portrays the method of conducting these gatherings: "We had camp-meetings, and my grand-parents and mother had a tent. Bread was baked, and chickens, provisions and bedding taken with us, while a servant brought fresh vegetables each day from home. Friends were entertained, and we huddled up some way, for Preacher Frontis, the Frenchman, and his wife, had a room to themselves. There was no shouting-only old Mrs. Sparrow, Dr. Sparrow's mother, threw up her hands and screamed: Thank God! The elders had agreed to take out any one who shouted, but said she had that right, for she

was so proud of her son and his sermons. The arbor was sheltered with green boughs, and there were services morning, noon and night. It was very pleasant and we all enjoyed these occasions."

Rev. James Adams, who married Eliza, daughter of Robert H. Burton, succeeded Patrick Sparrow. During his pastorate a serious dissension, though trivial in its origin, was with difficulty averted. Elders John Knox and Henry Barclay presented Elders Robert Johnston and John Hayes before the session of the church for permitting dancing in their homes. This infraction of a rule against the amusement doubtless embarrassed Mr. Adams, and he resigned rather than be the cause of a schism in the congregation. A call was then extended to, and accepted by, Rev. Frederick Nash of Hillsboro.

Rev. Dr. Jas. McRee supplied Unity at various intervals, whenever there happened to be a vacancy. During one of his last church services, the late Col. Wm. Johnston heard him proclaim that he was then delivering the same sermon that he had preached at Unity 52 years before. He was pastor of Steel Creek for 20 years, and of Centre Church for 30 years. Dr. McRee was a polished orator and a man of unquestioned piety, but was regarded as too lenient for the time in which he lived. Rev. Thos. Espy, father of the first Mrs. Z. B. Vance, was the reverse in nearly all his views, and was uncompromisingly bitter against dancing and such frivolities. Mr. Espy often visited Unity and died at Beattie's Ford. Dr. McRee's fastidiousness in dress and predilection for distinguished characters somewhat detracted

from his popularity with the plain people. At the farm house, three miles west of Charlotte, on the Beattie's Ford road, now owned by Dr. Paul Barringer, Dr. McRee and his brothers entertained Lord Cornwallis and his staff. This act of courtesy to a celebrated, but hated English general, intensified the prejudice against Dr. McRee.

Parents of Unity congregation were imbued with the belief that this life was a terrible God's fact, the soul being an emanation from Deity, and they were held responsible for its return. There was something almost hierarchical about the average elder. His very presence on Sunday was awe-inspiring and solemn and in marked contrast with the gentle faces of the women under the old-fashioned bonnets.

Family government of past decades would be considered harsh to-day. The intensely practical mind of that period was convinced that firmness was evolved by the hardening process and that staple timbers were produced only by severe exposure. Sons of leading families, working on Saturday with the field hands, after having attended school the other working days of the week, was not an unusual spectacle in the neighborhood. Early rising was customary in nearly every household, and a stranger who was awakened earlier than he relished, declared he would have killed the cock had it not been too dark to catch him. There was a homely idea that small boys glided into wickedness, as easily as pigs slipped through fences into forbidden fields. Therefore it was important to stop even the smallest entrances into temptation. Youthful philosophy, then as now, failed to grasp the reason why so many fruits were enjoined here,

while only one was held inviolate in Eden. To older heads, however, inward conscience whispered that it was wiser to push virtue to austerity than that innocence should be lost in unbridled license.

Sunday was a time when the boy had to marshal all his intellectual faculties for an attack upon effectual calling. Whatever was holy was associated in his mind with the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments and the catechism, and cast a colossal shadow upon his Sabbath life. There was a hush upon the plantation, and a solemnity that made the day oppressive to children, for there were no Sunday schools to furnish exciting rivalry or break the long monotony of being good. A cold dinner and a plentiful supply of the Gospel was the regulation Sunday fare. Playing marbles, wading branches or swimming streams was considered sinful, but the diversion of watching the horses as they pranced and gloried in their pasturage freedom was permissible.

The people were far from endorsing the religion that belongs to the priesthood, yet an anchorite could not have practiced much stricter denial than the rule prescribed for the youth up to a certain age. Parental law was fashioned after the patriarchial idea of obedience, and the relations between father and son were strained until the youth began to assume the bone and sinew of responsible manhood.

More importance was attached to manliness than to mannerism. And as integrity

was regarded as the essence of character, uprightness counted for more with them than wealth. Probably the most thoughtless, but the most galling discipline children had to bear, was when waiting at the table whilst company finished dining. Their keen appetites, their impatience and the indignity of being denied the first table, and having to sit down to the broken victuals of their superiors, caused many socialistic and incendiary thoughts to revolve in the restless little minds. The old people were rigid in requiring a strict moral observance among all members of society; yet when a brother erred seriously or fell, we find in them as we do in the noblest parts of the Hebrew types, the Cherubim hovering around the Mercy Seat.

Rev. Dr. R. H. Morrison, who was the first president of Davidson College, resigned that position on account of his health, and succeeded Frederick Nash as pastor of Unity. Under his administration at Davidson, an attempt was made to graft an industrial feature upon the college curriculum, but neither time nor condition was favorable. The task for each student was three hours' work a day upon the college farm, and he was to be given credit for the labor upon his board bill. The large boys were assigned to the heavier duties of plowing and splitting rails. The medium sized were detailed to carry on the hoeing and lighter work, while the smaller were required to do chores and carry water. This latter division was subjected to corporal punishment for idleness. Thos. Robinson, the college steward, was the manager and overseer, and it was his duty to blow the horn for the coming and going of the "field hands", direct the work and report

disobedience. The experiment was not successful, for the wagons and farm implements were too often disabled and concealed by the rebellious spirits; and to encompass the defeat of the measure, there was a strike, not for higher wages, but for shorter hours, and as a protest against "bossism in labor." And the walking delegates, many in number, from Salisbury and South Carolina, left on foot, for their homes through the country. This was shortly after Dr. Williamson's inauguration as president, and he soon made the discovery that the college boy was a failure as a farm hand, and the experiment was abandoned.

When Dr. Morrison took charge of Unity, he caused a discontinuance of the camp meetings as contrary to the usage of the Presbyterian Church. For more than 40 years he divided his labors between Unity, Castanea and Macpelah churches and held the large flocks together with singular unanimity, although the congregations were composed of many different classes of society, and embraced other denominations who had no convenient houses of worship of their own. He was a man of strong convictions, as was evidenced by his refusal to grant or sell right of way through his property to the Carolina Central Railroad, because he feared drinking resorts might spring up along the line, and thereby endanger the moral safety of the neighborhood. Such an apprehension far outweighed any prospective pecuniary enhancement of his lands. Dr. S. X. Johnston, one of his elders and a large real estate owner, took a similar

view, and the track was located over a different route. Those to whom Dr. Morrison ministered, found it difficult which most to admire in their preacher, his earnest eloquence or his exemplary life. He turned his back upon the allurements of the world, and like the needle facing the north, pointed with certain index to the pole-star of immutable truth.

The alphabet of a child's education was begun in the "old field" or neighborhood schools. The average school house was built of hewn logs, chinked and daubed with mud. A small window was cut near the master's desk, and a long row of single panes of glass shed light over the writing desks of the pupils. The seats were plain, wooden benches, generally without backs, and one large fire place furnished the warmth for the room. The pay of the teacher was meagre, but, in addition, he was given his board by rotating among the patrons of the school. What was lacking in the quality of instruction, was made up in quantity, for books were called shortly after sunrise and continued with the intermission of an hour for dinner and two short recesses, until nearly sunset. The dunce's block was the boy's pillory, and doubtless many fine characters were dwarfed by the stupidity of pedagogues who were too obtuse to discern individual temperament, capacity and disposition.

A fixed rule was applicable to every boy, and many teachers would, after the manner of teamsters governing horses, correct one pupil for an exhibition of spirit and punish another for the lack of it. So instead of a timid child looking into a sympathetic face, he

frequently beheld an uplifted rod, and what seemed to his frightened imagination, the corrugated scowl of an avenging furry. It has been truthfully said that the pine shingle was the only school board, and the teacher's idea of duty, consisted too often in birching and bullying a trembling boy. When studying spelling lessons, the class conned aloud the letters and pronunciation, much like negro children singing over their work in tobacco factories today.

The first classical school was conducted at Triangle by Patrick and Thomas Sparrow. A Northerner named Dewey, also taught a short time. Robt. G. Allison, of Statesville, a noted teacher, prepared a large number of boys for college, and prepared them well. Afterwards, Peter S. Ney, whom his pupils firmly believed to have been the (veritable) Marshall Ney, taught at Catawba Springs, then a popular and fashionable summer resort, a few miles distant. The young men received their collegiate courses at Princeton, Chapel Hill, Columbia, and Davidson, and many who had not such advantages, were self-educated in the best of schools - experience.

Margaret J. Brevard, widow of Franklin Brevard, was left a large estate which she managed with consummate skill. She lived in Iredell County, three miles from Beattie's Ford, and had a daughter whom she wished to educate; but as Salem was the nearest seminary for girls, she employed Miss Burgess, of Philadelphia, as governess and teacher. The following

girls connected with the most prominent families of this section, were invited to attend the school:

Rebecca Brevard, widow of Robert I. McDowell, Eliza Shipp, wife of Judge W. P. Bynum, Harriet Johnston, wife of W. T. Shipp, Louise Phifer, first wife of Robert Young, Sarah Young, widow of Harvey White, Lizzie Alexander, wife of Dr. Jas. Gilmer, Sarah Springs, wife of James Davidson, and afterwards widow of Major Zenus Grier, Sarah Virginia Burton, widow of Robert Young, Isabella Morrison, widow of General D. H. Hill, Harriet Morrison, wife of James P. Irwin, Cynthia Wilson, wife of Joseph Wade Hampton, Annabella Wilson, wife of John Logan, Carolina Sigmon, Mrs. Gabriel, Martha Houston, Mrs. Shuford, Zilpah Graham, Mrs. Knox, and many others who married men of note and who are associated with the best history of the State. On Sundays the girls attended service at Unity, crossing the Catawba River, and their appearance as they came riding in road wagons seated on planks and split bottom chairs must have created a lively sensation among the spectators at the church.

From 1830 to 1840 Unity was at the fullness of her splendor. The late Judge Shipp counted more than forty carriages that came regularly to the church, making no mention of gigs and smaller conveyances. Barouches swung on C springs, with folding steps that closed with the doors, were the vehicles of the wealthy and fashionable. The society, considering the time and surroundings, was not only brilliant, but it was a great moral leader and led the van of progress in this portion of the Carolinas for more than three quarters

of a century. The furnaces were then in full blast, and the forges taxed to their utmost with orders. These enterprises controlled by the elder Forneys, Brevards and Grahams, drew wagon trade from all contiguous counties, and such important commercial towns as Cheraw, Camden and Columbia. The Auditor's books will show that Lincoln in those days was the largest tax-paying county in the State.

This was the period at which the dynamic energy of business was at the flood tide, nor did the refluent force become noticeably apparent until the completion of the North Carolina Railroad, when it was demonstrated that the charcoal output could not compete with the limitless coal mines of Pennsylvania. Most of the older Brevards and Grahams then ceased operations on a large scale. A. F. & E. J. Brevard sold their works at Maiden, in 1852, to Wm. Williams, Robt. A. Brevard continued to conduct Mt. Tirzah; Matt Smith, Vesuvius; Bartlett Shipp and Franklin Reinhardt, Rehobeth, and Jonas Derr, the Forney Works. They furnished home supplies, and during the war turned over a good deal of iron to the Confederate government. The ore is among the most valuable known, and much of it can be converted into steel with little manipulation. The iron, which is of rare durability, was used in the construction of the Confederate iron clads, which proved such formidable opponents at the battle of Mobile Bay.

No rural population in this country could boast of finer residences, both brick and frame. Every well conducted household had

among its effects a spinning wheel, a flax wheel, a reel and loom. The bedsteads were massive and high, suggestive of storing underneath trundle beds when emptied of their occupants. As is usual in the country, when parties were given, guests remained all night, and were necessarily crowded upon pallets and beds, the ladies being assigned one part of the house, the gentlemen the other, and this intimate association conduced to the formation of lasting friendships and the strongest ties. Weddings were made occasions of interest, for the old people had a home-bred saying, that families like bees, should be encouraged to swarm.

The typical gentleman of the older generation had a native dignity that forbade undue levity or familiarity. He wore a stock and a high collar, a watch fob, and often a wig, articles not now commonly in use. He was taciturn, sometimes testy, not always tactful, but trustworthy and truthful. His face was generally clean shaven, nose prominent, eyes deep set, lineaments stern, expression benignant. Sincerity and strength were visible, but the features were devoid of cunning, devoid of fear. He loved not the flagon to excess, but occasionally took a morning dram to ward off the rising vapors and unsunned chills. An eminent lawyer once objected to him as a juryman in a desperate case, because he was certain to be on the side of the law. Solid he moved upon the earth, and no firmer footed man has ever walked in all the decades of American history.

The singular eulogy was inscribed upon the tomb of the Roman matron that "she kept the house and spun wool". This was recorded as a

shining virtue in demoralized times, when but few gave attention to household duties. But the matron of Unity did more. She read as she knitted and constantly improved and cultivated her mind. Wherever dwelt sickness or suffering, or duty called, unattended she would mount her horse and go; and benevolence lighted up a noble face that made her presence as welcome upon the sanded floors of the lowly as in the imposing homes of the rich.

It was hardly possible for any congregation to observe a profounder reverence than that of Unity. Only once is it remembered that the solemnity was broken and the sermon brought to a sudden close. John Knox, the precentor, had risen to line out a hymn, when a hornet, without provocation, stung him upon the nose. With the stoicism of his great Scotch prototype he gave no wincing of pain, but gently brushed the aggressive insect from his face. His hair, however, was red, and the afflicted member began to take on the same hue and swell out of all proportion, there was an excitement bordering on irreverence. To hide their mirth, mothers twisted the ears of tittering offspring, austere elders shook the pews with suppressed laughter, and the minister considerably pronounced the benediction.

Generals Peter Forney, Jos. Graham and Capt. Alex. Brevard, all Revolutionary soldiers, were the forefront pioneers, and operated all the iron manufactories in eastern Lincoln. Each member had a large family, and a refined and attractive society was formed in the neighborhood. These gentlemen brought from New York a stylish tailor

named Geo. Kerr, a Scotchman, who lived with his wife at Triangle. Mrs. Kerr had an ungovernable temper, and when communion Sunday came, she would plead with every one around not to make her angry, for she regarded it an unpardonable sin to swear upon such a holy day.

Maj. Daniel Forney, son of Peter Forney, and a member of Congress from that district, married Harriet, a daughter of Alexander Brevard; Nancy, one of Mr. Forney's daughters, married Dr. Wm. Johnston, and there were born unto them Gov. Joseph, Capt. Jas. F., Gen. Robt. D. and Dr. Wm. Johnston, of Alabama, and Bartlett Johnston, of Baltimore. Another daughter married Barlett Shipp, of the same locality, and their children were Wm. M., afterwards Judge Shipp, Eliza, wife of Judge W. P. Bynum, and Susan, who married Capt. V. Q. Johnston. The youngest daughter of Gen. Forney was wedded to Dr. Cyrus L. Hunter, historian and naturalist. Mrs. J. H. Sharpe, of Norfolk, is the only one of their children surviving.

Gen. Joseph Graham married Isabella, daughter of Maj. John Davidson. Their eldest daughter married Dr. Witherspoon, of Alabama. Violet married Dr. Winslow Alexander, and was the mother of Hon. S. B. and Miss Sophia Alexander, and Mrs. Julia Smith and Mrs. G. W. Graham, of Charlotte. James, the eldest son, never married, but for many years was member of Congress from the mountain district. John D. married Elizabeth, daughter of Capt. Chas. Conner, and had a large family. His second wife was Jane Johnston, daughter of Robert Johnston. Franklin married Miss Harris, who was the mother of the late Mrs. Wm. Johnston, of this city. Wm. A., who became Governor, United States Senator and Secretary of the Navy,

was the youngest son. His purity is the pride of the State, and his statesmanship the heritage of the nation. When offered the mission to Spain he declined the honor from prudential reasons, knowing that absence abroad would cause the loss of his practice at home. His brother, James, perceiving his capabilities, urged him, but in vain, to accept the office, and unselfishly volunteered to make ample provision for the support of his young family. Most of the older Grahams and Brevards are buried at Machpelah.

Capt. Alexander Brevard married Rebecca, a daughter of Major John Davidson. Their eldest daughter, Eloise, a celebrated beauty, married Wm. Edward Hayne, of Charleston. Colonel Ephraim was a bachelor, and died possessed of a large estate. Franklin married Margaret Conner, who was the mother of Mrs. Rebecca McDowell, of this city. Robert A. married Harriet, daughter of Gen. Ephraim Davidson, and they were the parents of Capt. Alex. Brevard, of Lincoln. Joseph married Miss Hopkins, of Columbia. Theodore moved South and was elected judge in Florida. His second wife was Caroline Mays, and was the mother of Dr. R. J. Brevard, of this city. Harriet married D. M. Forney, and Mary, Prof. Brumby, of Columbia.

Wm. Edward Hayne, when a boy 9 years of age, carried a petition signed by every woman in Charleston, and on bended knee, asked Lord Rawdon for the

pardon of his father, Isaac Hayne, who was under sentence of death, for hostilities against the British. The petition was denied and Hayne was executed. The Charleston Haynes generally spent the summers with their Brevard relatives in Lincoln, and one of the workmen at Mt. Tirzah having always been taught to dread the gallows, but being unconscious that patriotism could make the most odious execution honorable, was astonished at the evident pride of the Haynes in the fate of their ancestor.

A letter in the writer's possession, recalls the desperate duel between Isaac W. Hayne and Col. Alston, in South Carolina, many years ago. Hayne consulted his uncle, Theodore W. Brevard, as to the proper steps in the controversy. As his antagonist was a noted duelist, he was urged to name five paces as the distance, and fire the moment the word was given. The grim advice was heeded. Hayne was slightly hurt and Alston severely wounded; but as he lay bleeding, had the praiseworthy manliness to assume the responsibility that Hayne had sought in every honorable way to avoid the duel.

Another strong link in this chain of connections was the Conner family. Three brothers, Charles, James and Henry, came from Antrim, Ireland, and kept store at the red house east of Beattie's Ford, on the Salisbury road. Before joining his brothers there, Charles was owner of a vessel that plied between Norfolk and Liverpool. He married Anna Epes, of Virginia, and had two children, Henry W., and Elizabeth. Capt. James Conner received his title for active service in the Revolutionary war. He married

Lilly Wilson, and they had two children. Henry Workman, his son, moved to Charleston and became very prominent. He was the father of the late General James Conner, the late Mrs. Staudenmayer, and Mrs. C. Chapman, of Charleston, and of H. W. Conner, of New Orleans. His daughter, Margaret, of who previous mention has been made, married Franklin Brevard. Henry, the youngest of the brothers, located on a farm in Lincoln, and had a large family. His sons moved to Alabama. James—one of them—is living at an advanced age at Bladen Springs. Harriet—one of his daughters—married Dr. S. X. Johnston, and was the mother of Mrs. Emma Woodcock, of this city.

Major Henry W., son of Charles Conner, derived his title from volunteering under General Graham in the campaign against the Creek Indians, and lived and died at Beattie's Ford. He married Mrs. Coleman, daughter of Governor Hawkins, and Mrs. J. M. Ivy, of Rock Hill, is the only one of their children living. His second wife was Mary Burton, who survives him and is residing at the old homestead. He represented his district for 23 years in Congress, and though he never made a speech at the national capital no opposing candidate could overcome his wonderful popularity with the voters. On one occasion, two Whig farmers who had a business engagement, found the Congressman sitting upon his porch in shirt sleeves mending harness with an awl.

His cordial manner and urgent invitation to dinner, made his quondam opposers his warmest friends; and when it was asserted on the hustings that Conner was an aristocrat and owner of 100 negroes, the incident of the harness was effectively cited to prove that he was a plain man and a champion of the people.

Major Conner was a Methodist, and owning a large two story cabin at Rock Springs, dispensed open hospitality during the annual camp meetings. Being an ardent Democrat, he was visited at his home before his marriage by John C. Calhoun, then at the acme of his fame. The expectation to see the great South Carolinian was intense, and the event was one of extraordinary moment to Beattie's Ford. Conner's mother, who had then married a third husband, Thomas Byers, was a woman of unbending dignity and very punctilious about society requirements, but the servants were awkward in their starched aprons, and Mr. Byers was said to have celebrated the occasion with too much conviviality. Notwithstanding these slight criticisms, the visit was a red letter day in the early history of this neighborhood, and was not forgotten by Mr. Calhoun.

Another potent influence in this section was the Burton family. Robert and Alfred Burton came from Granville County and settled at Beattie's Ford with their families. They were both learned lawyers, and each had a large practice. Robert had four sons, only one of whom, Henry W., of Lincolnton, is living. One daughter married Michael Hoke, and was the mother

of General Robert F. Hoke, of Raleigh, and grandmother of Hoke and Burton Smith, of Atlanta. Alfred Burton had four sons, all of whom are dead. Three daughters survive, Mrs. Elizabeth Hoyle and Mrs. S. V. Young, of Charlotte, and Mrs. Mary Conner, of Lincolnton.

One of the first grandfather clocks brought to Beattie's Ford, was ordered from Boston by Alfred Burton, and as it arrived before the completion of the dwelling, a place was cut in the kitchen ceiling for its upright accommodation. The base of the clock resting on the lower floor and the face protruding into the upper, it was necessary to go into the second story when the time-piece needed winding. It is said by the old people that the Burtons were the first families of the neighborhood that used silver forks, two-tine steel being the implements in vogue in most of the other households. The silver tableware doubtless came from Boston with the clock. As two-prong steel forks were precarious food conductors, the gentleman of the old school resorted to knives as more reliable conveyances. The Alfred Burton homestead is beautifully located and commands a fine view of the Catawba. It has been occupied since its erection by members of the family until a few months ago, when the death of Miss Fannie Burton caused Mrs. Hoyle, her sister, to move away. So neatly and methodically was the house arranged that Mrs. S. V. Young, one of the sisters, has related that she could

have gone in the dark and placed her hand on certain books she remembered in childhood. Neither the piano, nor family portraits, have been moved, save to be dusted, and all the articles of furniture occupy the same positions allotted to them more than sixty years ago.

Beattie's Ford being situated at the convergence of three heavily traveled highways, was not only a popular trading point, but was a most attractive society centre. It was the home of the Burtons and Conners and frequented by their extensive connections. John H. Wheeler, the genial historian who merchandised there, had an accomplished wife, a daughter of Tully, the Philadelphia artist who painted Victoria in her coronation robes. The residence of Robert I. McDowell, in Iredell, a favorite resort of the Davidson professors and the Charleston Conners, was only three miles distant. It was also the postoffice of John D. Graham, Dr. W. B. McLean and Warren Moore, and at various periods in its history, such men as Sidney Simonton, Robert H. Burton, Jr., Thos. H. Brem, H. C. Hamilton, W. B. Withers, Houston brothers, J. F. Goodson, J. M. Ivy. Culp & Conner did a general merchandise business there and attended Unity.

The practitioners of medicine in the Unity congregation were Joel Houston, Wm. Johnston, W. B. McLean, S. X. Johnston, Sidney Harris, Sidney Conner, Krider, and in more recent years the brilliant E. A. Brevard, who died near Newton, in his thirty-second year, and R. A. McLean, now living.

When Robert Johnston asked Capt. John Reid

for the hand of his daughter in marriage, the parent, in consenting, said: "You make the money and Mary will save it"; and well was the prediction verified, for she made a model wife and mother. The couple had seven sons and five daughters, who grew up, married and became honorable and influential citizens. Two of the sons, Rufus M. and Colonel William, who died in Charlotte, achieved more than ordinary distinction. Mrs. J. B. Rankin, of this city, is the only survivor of the twelve children who attained manhood and womanhood. The family of John R. Johnston, one of the sons, resides near the old homestead. John Hayes, a brother-in-law of Robert Johnston, who lived a short distance away, also had a large and interesting family. Dr. Wm. J. Hayes, a surviving son, lives here.

James Anderson, who bought the Forney homestead, married a sister of Robert and Alfred Burton. His son, Robert, married a daughter of the celebrated Dr. Thornwell, and was himself a talented Presbyterian minister.

The Nixons, Luckeys, Burches, Rankins, Ryburns, Abernathys, Cherrys, Littles, Kings and other were integral and valuable factors in the composition of the Unity congregation.

Cottage Home, the Morrison homestead, now occupied by Major J. G. Morrison, will always hold a place in local and general history, for it was there that J. P. Irwin,

General D. H. Hill, General Rufus Barringer, General Stonewall Jackson, Judge A. C. Avery and Colonel John E. Brown, respectively, married Harriet, Isabella, Eugenia, Anna, Susan and Laura, all daughters of Rev. R. H. Morrison, D.D., who was pastor of Unity for over 40 years.

The early settlers of this community knew something of the hardships and privations of the Revolutionary War, but there was a long interregnum of peace to their descendants. When, however, the war between the States was declared, the Beattie's Ford Riflemen was organized, known afterwards as Company K, Twenty-third Regiment North Carolina Troops. Below is a partial list of the members:

Thos. Asbury, Mark Ballard, Monroe Ballard, Clem Blythe, Wm. Burch, Jas. Burch, Henry Conner, John Caldwell, George Dellinger, Henry Fulenwider, Monroe Gabriel, Albert Gabriel, Chas. Gattis, Frank Goodson, Albert Goodson, Alfred Hoyle, Wm. Hunter, Stanhope Hunter, Andrew Hall, Thos. Hall, Green Hager, Sidney Hager, Robert Hager, Henry Howard, James F. Johnston, Wm. Johnston, R. D. Johnston, James H. Johnston, Adolphus King, James King, Jacob Killian, John Killian, Wm. Lockman, Levi Lockman, Eli Lockman, Alfred Little, James Little, Sr., Hugh Little, Robert Little, Jr., Conner Little, Wash Little, Jacob Lineberger, Jacob Long, Isaac Lynch, James Moore, Wm. Munday, Mark Munday, Josiah Munday, James McCaul, Joseph Nance, Mark Nance, Ham Proctor, Pink Rendleman, John Regan, Wm. Ruddock, Erastus Rogers, Daniel Reinhardt, Thos. Shelton, Spencer Shelton, Albert Shelton, Samuel L. Thompson,

John Thompson, Wm. Torrence, Needham Wingate, John Washam, John White, Ansolem Withers.

There were in all eighty-two men, and the following officers were elected by the company:

A. H. Houston, Captain; W. P. Bynum, first lieutenant; R. D. Johnston, second lieutenant; R. B. B. Houston, third lieutenant.

W. P. Bynum (now Judge Bynum) was the only married man in the company. At Garysburg, June, 1861, this company was disbanded and Bynum was promoted to lieutenant-colonel. Upon its re-organization with 60 men, R. D. Johnston was elected captain, Wm. Johnston, first lieutenant; J. F. Goodson, second lieutenant, and Willie Hunter, third lieutenant. The morning after the battle of Seven Pines, only Lieutenant Daniel Reinhardt, Geo. Dellinger, and T. H. Proctor reported for duty. The ranks has been fearfully decimated. The flower of the company were killed, but those who were not hopelessly crippled soon returned to duty. T. H. Proctor, of Denver, Lincoln county, furnished this list, and the following extract is made from his letter: "One more thing I wish to mention that took place during the battle at Sharpsburg. On the evening when the Confederate ranks were getting weak and thin, General D. H. Hill came walking along the line, Lieutenant Reinhardt had fallen. He stopped and said to George Dellinger, 'Let me

show you how to shoot a Yankee,' and taking Dellinger's musket, took deliberate aim and fired. Then handing the gun back, said: 'Always aim about the middle,' and then walked down the line. General Hill sometimes visited the Company when General R. D. Johnston was the captain, and was somewhat acquainted with us."

It might not be inappropriate in this connection to add that Lincoln county produced three of the most daring generals of the Confederacy - S. D. Ramseur, Robert F. Hoke and Robert D. Johnston. Hoke's mother came from Unity, and Johnston was born and raised there.

When Voltaire was asked to criticise the fables of La Fontaine, the great satirist expressed his inability, because the book was a collection of masterpieces. It is not asserted that the individuals herein enumerated are superior to criticism, but nearly all mentioned in this narrative have finished their life work and lapsed into the domain of the dead, and the abilities, integrity and acquirements of many lifted them upon an eminence where they passed under searching light without the shadow of wrong doing, or the accusation of folly. Their attainments in their various spheres bear the same general stamp, and it is sterling. The stream of influence which they formed, has divided like the Nile, into many rivers, but has enriched many lands. Start with the earnest pioneer hewing the logs with his home-made broad axe, watch his commanding figure in the lurid glare of the furnace, note his activity in the hammer-swinging industries of the forge,

and follow him in battle, or wherever danger beckoned or duty called; take him for good and for evil; balance his greatness and his littleness; compare him with the general standard of humanity and of the men of his time; and as a specimen of true manhood and lofty nobility of tendencies, he cannot be overmatched or outclassed in any American community.

Centre Church is the burial place of the Brevards and Osbornes of Iredell.

Gov. Burton, one of our early Governors, is buried at Unity. He was taken sick and died at the Knox Tavern, near Mt. Mourne, while en route to visit his relatives at Beattie's Ford.



