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VOL. IV

SEPTEMBER, 1904

No. 5

THE
NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET



GREAT EVENTS IN
NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY

JOHN PENN,
BY THOMAS MERRITT PITTMAN.

—
JOSEPH HEWES,
BY WALTER SIKES.



PRICE, 10 CENTS

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THE NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET.

GREAT EVENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY.

VOL. IV.

The Lords Proprietors of the Province of Carolina.

Kemp P. Battle, LL.D.

The Battle of Ramsour's Mill.

Major William A. Graham.

Historic Homes in North Carolina—Quaker Meadows.

Judge A. C. Avery.

Rejection of the Federal Constitution in 1788, and its Subsequent Adoption.

Associate Justice Henry G. Connor.

North Carolina Signers of the National Declaration of Independence:

William Hooper, John Penn, Joseph Hewes.

Mrs. Spier Whitaker, Mr. T. M. Pittman, Dr. Walter Sikes.

Homes of North Carolina—The Hermitage, Vernon Hall.

Colonel William H. S. Burgwyn, Prof. Collier Cobb.

Expedition to Carthage in 1740.

Chief Justice Walter Clark.

The Earliest English Settlement in America.

Mr. W. J. Peele.

The Battle of Guilford Court House.

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The Highland Scotch Settlement in North Carolina.

Judge James C. MacRae.

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EDITORS:

MISS MARY HILLIARD HINTON.

MRS. E. E. MOFFITT.

THE

The article on William Hooper, one of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, by Mrs. Spier Whitaker, should have appeared in this number of the BOOKLET, but has necessarily been deferred for a future number.

RALEIGH

E. M. UZZELL & Co., PRINTERS AND BINDERS

1904

VOL. IV

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NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET

"CAROLINA! CAROLINA! HEAVEN'S BLESSINGS ATTEND HER!
WHILE WE LIVE WE WILL CHERISH, PROTECT AND DEFEND HER."

RALEIGH
E. M. UZZELL & Co., PRINTERS AND BINDERS
1904

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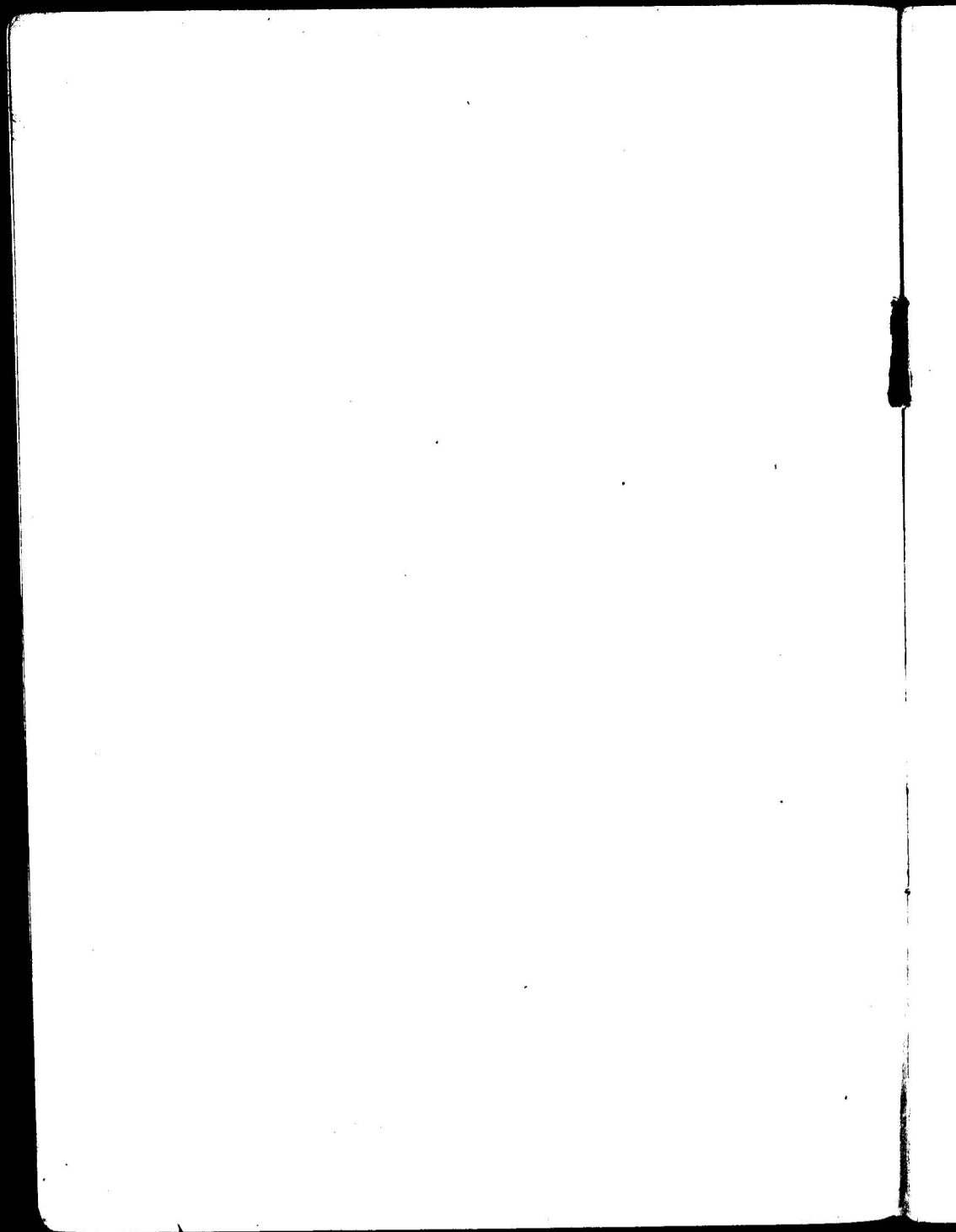
PREFACE.

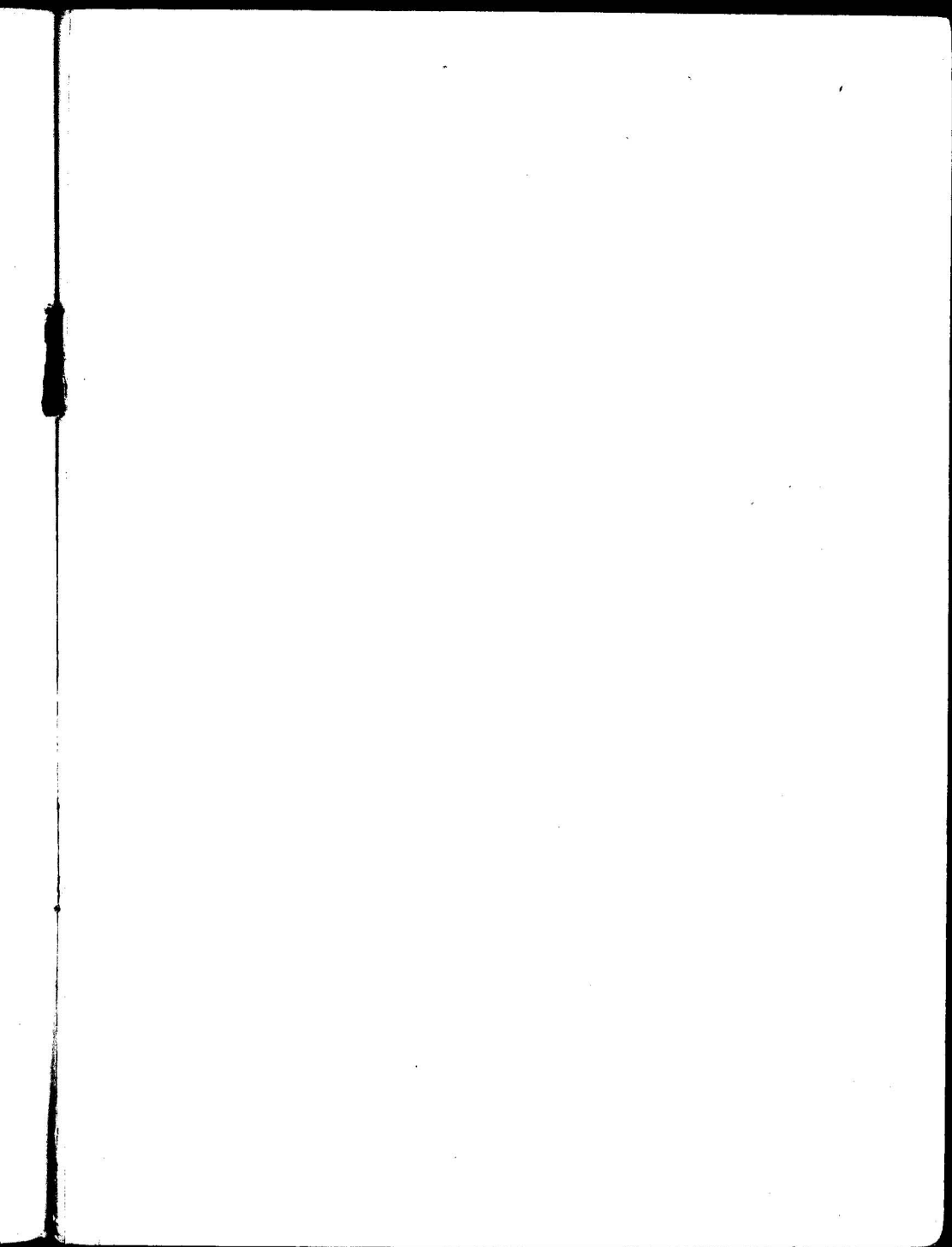
The object of the NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET is to erect a suitable memorial to the patriotic women who composed the "Edenton Tea Party."

These stout-hearted women are every way worthy of admiration. On October 25, 1774, seven months before the defiant farmers of Mecklenburg had been aroused to the point of signing their Declaration of Independence, nearly twenty months before the declaration made by the gentlemen composing the Vestry of St. Paul's Church, Edenton, nearly two years before Jefferson penned the immortal National Declaration, these daring women solemnly subscribed to a document affirming that they would use no article taxed by England. Their example fostered in the whole State a determination to die, or to be free.

In beginning this new series, the Daughters of the Revolution desire to express their most cordial thanks to the former competent and untiringly faithful Editors, and to ask for the new management the hearty support of all who are interested in the brave deeds, high thought, and lofty lives of the North Carolina of the olden days.

MRS. D. H. HILL.







JOHN PENN.

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JOHN PENN.

BY THOMAS MERRITT PITTMAN.

"There sounds not to the trump of fame
The echo of a nobler name."

American history is rich in examples of men who have overcome poverty and humble birth and wrought out for themselves enduring fame. Not many have accomplished the more difficult task of winning distinction, where high station and easy fortune were joined with associations indifferent to education and contemptuous of intellectual attainment. We enter the name of John Penn upon the roll of those who have achieved the higher honor.

He was born in Caroline County, Virginia, May 17, 1741.

His father, Moses Penn, was a gentleman of comfortable fortune, but so indifferent to intellectual culture, according to Lossing, that he provided his only son no other opportunity of acquiring an education than was afforded by two or three years' attendance upon a common country school. He died when his son was eighteen years of age, and is said to have left him the sole possessor of a competent though not large estate.

His mother was Catherine, daughter of John Taylor, one of the first Justices of Caroline County. James Taylor, who came from Carlisle, England, about 1635, was the first

of the family to settle in Virginia. The family was an important one and has contributed many able and useful men to the public service, including two Presidents of the United States—James Madison and Zachary Taylor. Hannis Taylor, a distinguished son of North Carolina, John R. McLean of Ohio and Mrs. Dewey, wife of Admiral Dewey, are among the distinguished members of the family at this time.

Those members of his mother's family with whom John Penn came into closest relations and who most influenced his course in life were his cousins, John Taylor of Caroline and Edmund Pendleton. The first, nine years his junior, is usually spoken of as his grandfather and sometimes as his son-in-law—an unusually wide range of kinship. The last may be true, since the family records show that he married a Penn, but more likely a sister or other relative than a daughter of John Penn. It is said in the family that the only daughter of John Penn married Colonel Taylor of Granville and died without issue. John Taylor of Caroline was born in 1750, graduated from William and Mary College, studied law under Chancellor Nathaniel Pendleton, served in the Revolution, was Senator from Virginia in 1792, 1803 and 1822, and was a writer of much note. One of his books won the heartiest commendation of Jefferson "as the most logical retraction of our governments to the original and true principles of the constitution creating them which has appeared since the adoption of that instrument." Edmund Pendleton probably contributed more than any other to the shaping of young Penn's career. He was born in

1721, and was a scholarly man and able lawyer, of conservative views upon political questions. Jefferson, whom he sometimes opposed, says: "He was the ablest man in debate I have ever met with. * * * Add to this that he was one of the most virtuous and benevolent of men, the kindest friend, the most amiable and pleasant of companions, which ensured a favorable reception to whatever came from him." He was a member of the Continental Congress in 1774 and 1775, President of the Virginia General Committee of Safety. He wrote the préamble and resolutions directing the Virginia delegates in Congress to propose to "declare the United Colonies free and independent States," was President of the Convention to consider the Federal Constitution, and President of the Virginia Court of Appeals. Upon the death of Moses Penn, he gave to his young kinsman, who resided near him in the same neighborhood, free use of his extensive library, an opportunity that was improved to such advantage that the defects of early education were largely overcome, and, without teacher or other aid than his own industry, young Penn studied law and was admitted to the bar of his native county when he reached the age of twenty-one years. But it may be inferred from a playful allusion of Mr. Iredell, "As Mr. Penn would say '*in nubibus*' (extremely uncertain)," that he was sometimes not entirely classical.

Of Mr. Penn as a lawyer, Lossing says: "His practice soon developed a native eloquence before inert and unsuspected, and by it, in connection with close application to busi-

ness, he rapidly soared to eminence. His eloquence was of that sweet persuasive kind which excites all the tender emotions of the soul, and possesses a controlling power at times irresistible."

Mr. Penn remained in Virginia but a few years. In 1774, while yet a young man of thirty-three years, he came to North Carolina and settled near Williamsboro in the northern part of Granville County, then the most important place in the county. Whatever may have been his attitude towards political questions prior to that time, his ardent nature quickly responded to the intense sentiment of patriotism that prevailed in his new home. He soon became as one to the "manner born," and a leader of the people in their great crisis. The year after locating in Granville he was sent by the inhabitants of that county to represent them in the Provincial (Revolutionary) Congress, which met at Hillsboro, August 20, 1775. Here he proved himself more than a pleasing speaker, and won the cordial recognition of the Congress. There were a hundred and eighty-four members, yet he was appointed on some fifteen or twenty committees, nearly all the more important ones, and his work was extraordinarily heavy. It will not be amiss to mention a few of these committees, with notes of their work:

(a). To confer with such inhabitants as had political or religious scruples about joining in the American cause, and secure their co-operation:

"The religious and political scruples of the Regulators were removed by a conference."—*Bancroft*.

(b). To form a temporary form of government:

“This was the most important committee yet appointed by popular authority in our annals.”—*E. A. Alderman*.

(c). To prepare a civil constitution:

Mr. Penn was not on this committee at first, but he and William Hooper were added. “Before the body, thus completed, was fought one of the most desperate party battles to be recorded in the civil history of the State.”—*Jones’ Defense*.

Government of the people, for the people and by the people was a new and startling thought in those long-ago days. Now any fairly good lawyer can write a whole constitution by himself, and would be glad of the job if a good fee went with it. Then a Constitutional Convention had never been heard of, and the very idea of independence itself was held in abeyance, while men wondered what sort of government should clothe it. In January, 1776, Mr. Wythe of Virginia sat in the chambers of John Adams and the two talked of independence. Mr. Wythe thought the greatest obstacle to declaring it was the difficulty of agreeing upon a form of government. Mr. Adams replied that each colony should form a government for itself, as a free and independent State. He was requested to put the views there expressed in writing, which, upon his compliance, were published anonymously by R. H. Lee, under the title “Thoughts on Government, in a Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend.” Later the delegates from North Carolina, by direction of the Provincial Congress, called on Mr. Adams for advice concerning a form of govern-

ment for this State. He furnished Mr. Penn, whom he calls "my honest and sincere friend," a letter similar to the pamphlet just mentioned. The conformity of the Constitution afterwards adopted to this letter in many particulars, shows the practical use to which it was put. The letter was afterwards given by Mr. Penn to his cousin, John Taylor of Caroline, who used it in his work on the Constitution, much to Mr. Adams' surprise, who, apparently ignorant of the relations between the two, could not account for Taylor's possession of his views.

(d). To review and consider statutes, etc., "and to prepare such bills to be passed into laws as might be consistent with the genius of a free people":

"The fruits of their labors are manifest in the laws passed in the years immediately succeeding, laws which have received repeated encomiums for the ability and skill and accuracy with which they are drawn."—*Preface to Revised Statutes*.

Other committees scarcely less important than those named required able and laborious service, but the space allotted to this paper must exclude them from mention at this time.

The impress of this stranger, so recently from another colony, upon the Congress was something wonderful. On September 8, 1775, less than a month from its assembling, it elected him to succeed Richard Caswell as delegate to the Continental Congress, with William Hooper and Joseph Hewes. In this connection it is stated in Jones' Defense that he was "a man of sterling integrity as a private citizen,

and well deserved the honor which was now conferred upon him." We learn from Dr. E. A. Alderman also that this "was the beginning of a close and tender friendship and sympathy between Hooper and Penn in all the trying duties of the hour."

The idea of the province at that time was to secure a redress of grievances, not a dissolution of political relations with the mother country. Indeed, the Provincial Congress declared: "As soon as the causes of our fears and apprehensions are removed, with joy will we return these powers to their regular channels; and such institutions, formed from mere necessity, shall end with that necessity that created them." But the trend of events was beyond their choosing. No accommodation with British authority was practicable. The end was inevitable, and Penn was one of the first to realize the true situation. He wrote Thomas Person, his friend and countyman, February 14, 1776: "Matters are drawing to a crisis. They seem determined to persevere, and are forming alliances against us. Must we not do something of the like nature? Can we hope to carry on a war without having trade or commerce somewhere? Can we even pay any taxes without it? Will [not?] our paper money depreciate if we go on emitting? These are serious things and require your consideration. The consequence of making alliances is, perhaps, a total separation with Britain, and without something of this sort we may not be able to procure what is necessary for our defense. My first wish is that America be free; the second, that we may be restored to peace and harmony

with Britain upon just and proper terms." Person was a member of the Council. By the advice of that body the Provincial Congress was convened on April 4th. On the 7th Penn and the other delegates reached Halifax from Philadelphia. On the 8th a committee, which included Thomas Person, was appointed to take into consideration "the usurpations and violences attempted and committed by the King and Parliament of Britain against America, and the further measures to be taken for frustrating the same and for the better defense of the Province." This committee reported, and the Congress adopted a resolution which empowered the delegates to the Continental Congress to "concur with the delegates from the other colonies in declaring independence and forming foreign alliances." By virtue of this authority William Hooper, Joseph Hewes and John Penn, in behalf of North Carolina, joined in the execution of the Declaration of American Independence. Colonel W. L. Saunders says: "This was the first authoritative, explicit declaration, by more than a month, by any colony in favor of a full, final separation from Britain, and the first like expression on the vexed question of forming foreign alliances." It may be added that both resulted from Mr. Penn's initiative, as just shown. It is entirely possible that the influence of Penn may have reached across the border and moved his cousin, Edmund Pendleton, to follow and improve upon the example of North Carolina, and offer the Virginia resolution directing the delegates from that colony to propose a declaration of independence.

The significance of Mr. Penn's action does not fully appear to the casual view, but the following letter from John Adams to William Plummer throws new light upon the situation:

"You inquire, in your kind letter of the 19th, whether 'every member of Congress did, on the 4th of July, 1776, in fact cordially approve of the Declaration of Independence.'

"They who were then members all signed, and, as I could not see their hearts, it would be hard for me to say that they did not approve it; but as far as I could penetrate the intricate internal foldings of their souls, I then believed, and have not since altered my opinion, that there were several who signed with regret, and several others with many doubts and much lukewarmness. The measure had been upon the carpet for months, and obstinately opposed from day to day. Majorities were constantly against it. For many days the majority depended on Mr. Hewes of North Carolina. While a member one day was speaking and reading documents from all the colonies to prove that the public opinion, the general sense of all was in favor of the measure, when he came to North Carolina, and produced letters and public proceedings which demonstrated that the majority of that colony were in favor of it, Mr. Hewes, who had hitherto constantly voted against it, started suddenly upright, and lifting up both his hands to Heaven, as if he had been in a trance, cried out: 'It is done, and I will abide by it!' I would give more for a perfect painting of the terror and horror upon the faces of the old majority at that critical moment than for the best

piece of Raphael." But for the action of the North Carolina Congress it is extremely doubtful if Mr. Hewes could have been induced to support the measure. Mr. Hooper was detained at home; so upon a vote at that time North Carolina's vote must have been against the measure, and independence at least delayed.

It is not to be ignored that the first delegates to the Continental Congress—Hooper, Hewes and Caswell—were from the east, "and had not ceased to regard the Regulators * * as red-handed traitors," while Penn must be classed as a representative of the Regulator element. He was the friend of Person and was not cordially esteemed by Caswell, possibly because of that intimacy. Caswell in a letter to Burke characterizes Person as "more troublesome this Assembly, if possible, than formerly." Hooper, Hewes and the men of their party were for what we call the aristocracy, for want of a better name. They "were in favor of a splendid government, representing the property of the people, and thus giving by its own independence and splendor a high character of dignity to the State." They had not learned the truth that men constitute a State. Even Hooper, almost unapproachable in fineness of spirit, in splendor of intellect and loyal patriotism, lacked sympathy and faith in the people. In consequence, his life was incomplete and his power failed at a time when the State had much need of his learning and great ability. Penn and Person, with their party, stood for the people, and had constant accessions of strength with every trial of their faith and sympathy. Governor Caswell wrote

Mr. Burke: "Mr. Harnett * * * I am sure will give you his utmost assistance. Mr. Penn has engaged his to the Assembly, I am told. Very little conversation passed between him and myself on public matters." This cannot have been the fault of Penn, for it is of record that he made advances for the friendship of Caswell. One after another of the delegates to the Continental Congress found the burdens, expense and hardships of the office too heavy and retired. Mr. Penn soon became the senior member from North Carolina. Others became gloomy and discouraged. Penn, more trustful of the people, quietly, steadily, hopefully and uncomplainingly remained at his post and wrote home to Person: "For God's sake, my good sir, encourage our people; animate them to dare even to die for their country."

There can be no doubt that the position of a delegate to the Continental Congress was beset with great difficulties. Under much more favorable conditions the conflict would have been unequal. But situated as the colonies were, the outlook was appalling. A government and all its departments had to be created outright; a currency and credit established; an army organized—all in the face of an enemy ever ready for war. There were also domestic problems that embarrassed the national administration at every step. The Confederation was little more than a rope of sand, and the government had little power to enforce its policies. In North Carolina the militia were not even available to oppose the invasion of Georgia and South Carolina, by which the British would reach this State, until an act was passed by the Gen-

eral Assembly authorizing their employment without its borders. This is mentioned only to show how serious were the problems which perplexed and burdened our delegates in the Continental Congress. These delegates also abounded in labors wholly foreign to their legislative duties. These have been strikingly summarized in Dr. Alderman's address on Hooper: "They combined the functions of financial and purchasing agents, of commissary-generals, reporters of all great rumors or events, and, in general, bore the relation to the remote colony of ministers resident at a foreign court. * * * They kept the Council of Safety well informed as to the progress of affairs; they negotiated for clothing and supplies for our troops. In the course of only two months they expended five thousand pounds in purchasing horses and wagons, which they sent to Halifax loaded with every conceivable thing—from the English Constitution to the wagoner's rum—pamphlets, sermons, cannon, gunpowder, drums and pills. They scoured Philadelphia for salt pans and essays on salt-making; they haggled over the price of gray mares, and cursed the incompetency of slothful blacksmiths whose aid they sought."

Is it any wonder, then, that Hooper resigned and Hewes laid down his life in the struggle; that Harnett appealed to be relieved, and that nearly every man who passed through the trials of the position only reached home to lay down his life without even a view of the morning of old age? None of these difficulties moved John Penn. His courage and

hopefulness were invincible. But he died while yet a young man!

The delegates served almost without compensation. A salary of sixteen hundred pounds per annum was allowed for a time, but the depreciation of the currency was so great that the amount proved wholly inadequate, and it was determined to pay their expenses and defer the fixing of compensation to a future time. As illustrating the depreciation of the money, Iredell wrote in 1780: "They are giving the money at the printing-office in so public and careless a manner as to make it quite contemptible."

The scope of this paper does not permit a more detailed discussion of his Congressional career. It may be added that while he made no conspicuous public display, Mr. Penn's services were highly efficient and useful, and entirely acceptable to the people he represented. Another distinguished honor that fell to him during his congressional career may be barely mentioned: with John Williams and Cornelius Harnett, he ratified the Articles of Confederation in behalf of North Carolina.

In 1777 he was appointed Judge of the Court of Oyer and Terminer for the Hillsboro District. He questioned the legality of the Court and declined the appointment with what his associate in the appointment, J. Kitchin, called "inflexible obstinacy." But Samuel Johnston in like manner refused to exercise the same office in the Edenton District and notified Governor Caswell that the bar concurred in his opinion.

Upon the retirement of Governor Caswell, Abner Nash be-

came Governor. He complained to the Assembly that he derived no assistance from his Council, and suggested the creation of a Board of War. This was acceded to, and the constitutional prerogatives of the Governor were probably infringed by the powers granted. It was charged with the control of military affairs within the State, and was composed of Colonel Alexander Martin, John Penn and Oroondates Davis. It organized at Hillsboro in September, 1780. The other members had occasion to leave for their homes within two or three days after its organization, and Mr. Penn became practically the Board, and exercised its powers alone during the greater part of its existence. He conducted its affairs with great energy, decision, tact and efficiency. Finally he became ill and unable to exercise the office. In a little while thereafter there was a clash with the Governor, who had become sore over the invasion of his dignity and authority. He carried his complaint to the next Assembly, who discontinued the Board of War and elected a new Governor. There has been some disposition to belittle the Board of War and its operations, particularly by General Davie. But Governor Graham, who was familiar with the records, and whose fairness, diligence and ability to judge correctly are beyond question, views their work very differently. He says: "They undertook the work devolved on them in the most devoted spirit of patriotism, and with a proper sense of its magnitude, and executed its duties with fearlessness, ability and eminent public benefit."

While the Board sat at Hillsboro that village was the scene

of great activity and was crowded to its utmost capacity. Iredell wrote his wife that he and Colonel Williams had to ride out every evening two or three miles to Governor Burke's, and "must have been deprived of that resource if Governor Rutledge had not been so obliging as to stay in town and take half of Penn's bed, in order to accommodate us."

Mr. Penn did not thereafter re-enter public life with any great activity. In July, 1781, he was appointed a member of the Governor's Council, and was notified to attend a meeting at Williamsboro, near his home, Thomas Burke, his old colleague in the Continental Congress, being then Governor. He replied: "My ill-state of health * * * will perhaps prevent my undertaking to act in the office you mention. As I have always accepted every office I have been appointed to by my countrymen, and endeavored to discharge my duty previous to this appointment, I expect my friends will not blame me."

After the war he was appointed by Robert Morris Receiver of Taxes in North Carolina, but resigned after holding the office about a month. He was yet a young man, but his work was done. In September, 1787, at the age of forty-six years, he died at his home in Granville County and was buried near Island Creek, whence his dust was moved to Guilford Battleground a few years ago.

The halo with which time and sentiment have surrounded those who wrought our independence has largely veiled the real men from our view, but they were quite as human as the men of to-day. Mention has been made of the bitter political

differences among the patriots of the Revolution. These developed at an early period. The election of Penn to the Continental Congress was the beginning of democratic representation from North Carolina in that body. The real struggle came over the formation of the State Constitution. The aristocratic party were deeply chagrined and resentful of democratic dominance, and proved sadly inferior to their opponents in self-control. The most eminent of their leaders was Samuel Johnston, a man of great ability and character, whom the State delighted to honor. Intemperate language from such a man indicates something of the prevailing tone of party feeling. He wrote: "Every one who has the least pretence to be a gentleman is suspected and borne down *per ignobile vulgus*—a set of men without reading, experience or principle to govern them." Very naturally Mr. Johnston lost his place in the Governor's Council and his seat in the Provincial Congress; and in the Congressional election next ensuing, upon a contest between Mr. Penn and his old colleague, Mr. Hewes, the latter was defeated. Throughout these controversies Mr. Penn seems to have borne himself with such prudence and moderation as to avoid personal entanglements and command the respect of those who opposed him. Aside from Governor Caswell's petulance and Governor Davie's silly sneer, he was almost uniformly spoken of in respectful terms, even in the free and confidential correspondence of Johnston and Iredell.

It is unfortunate that so little is known of Penn as a man and in his personal relations. At the age of twenty-two years

he married Susan Lyme, by whom he had two children, Lucy, who married Colonel Taylor, of Granville, and died without issue, and William, who removed to Virginia. No mention is made of Mrs. Penn in his will written in 1784, nor in his correspondence. It may be that she died before his removal to North Carolina. Messrs. James G. Penn, of Danville, Virginia, and Frank R. Penn, of Reidsville, North Carolina, are among the descendants of William. A sister married ——— Hunt, of Granville County, and many descendants of that marriage yet live in Granville and Vance Counties, useful and honored citizens. That Mr. Penn was an orator is proof that he possessed warmth of feeling. The absence of controversy marks him an amiable and discreet man. His labors show him to have been a patriot, endowed with judgment, tact, industry and ability. That he was not devoid of social tastes is very clearly recognized by his colleagues in the Continental Congress. Mr. Burke wrote from Philadelphia: "The city is a scene of gaiety and dissipation, public assemblies every fortnight and private balls every night. In all such business as this we propose that Mr. Penn shall represent the whole State." One anecdote is preserved of his life in Philadelphia. He became involved in a personal difficulty with Mr. Laurens, President of the Congress, and a duel was arranged. They were fellow-boarders, and breakfasted together. They then started for the place of meeting on a vacant lot opposite the Masonic Hall on Chestnut street. "In crossing at Fifth street, where was then a deep slough, Mr. Penn kindly offered his hand to aid Mr. Laurens, then

much the older, who accepted it. He suggested to Mr. Laurens, who had challenged him, that it was a foolish affair, and it was made up on the spot."

His fidelity could not shield him from criticism. But as he made no complaints of hardships, so he made no effort to justify himself, but was content in saying to Governor Nash: "I have done, and still am willing to do, everything in my power for the interest of my country, as I prefer answering for my conduct after we have beaten the enemy." Others were more considerate of his reputation. Mr. Burke wrote Governor Caswell, declaring his own diligence, and said of Penn, "nor did perceive him in the least remiss." Harnett wrote the Governor, "his conduct as a delegate and a gentleman has been worthy and disinterested." The General Assembly on July 29, 1779, directed the Speaker of the House to transmit to him its resolution of thanks in part as follows: "The General Assembly of North Carolina, by the unanimous resolves of both houses, have agreed that the thanks of the State be presented to you for the many great and important services you have rendered your country as a delegate in the Continental Congress. The assiduity and zeal with which you have represented our affairs in that Supreme Council of the Continent, during a long and painful absence from your family, demand the respectful attention of your countrymen, whose minds are impressed with a sense of the most lively gratitude."

Neither the county nor the State which Mr. Penn represented with such fidelity and credit have erected any

memorial to his memory. But the Guilford Battle-ground Company, which is making a veritable Westminster Abbey for North Carolina, has been more mindful to render honor. Maj. J. M. Morehead, President of the Company, writes: "There is a handsome monument at Guilford Battle-ground, twenty feet in height, crowned with a statue of an orator holding within his hand a scroll—The Declaration—and bearing this inscription on a bronze tablet:

IN MEMORIAM.

WILLIAM HOOPER AND JOHN PENN, DELEGATES FROM NORTH CAROLINA,
1776, TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, AND SIGNERS OF THE
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. THEIR REMAINS WERE
RE-INTERRED HERE 1894. HEWES' GRAVE IS LOST.

HE WAS THE THIRD SIGNER.

* * * * *
TO JUDGE JETER C. PRITCHARD PRIMARILY THE STATE IS INDEBTED FOR
AN APPROPRIATION OUT OF WHICH THIS MONUMENT WAS ERECTED.

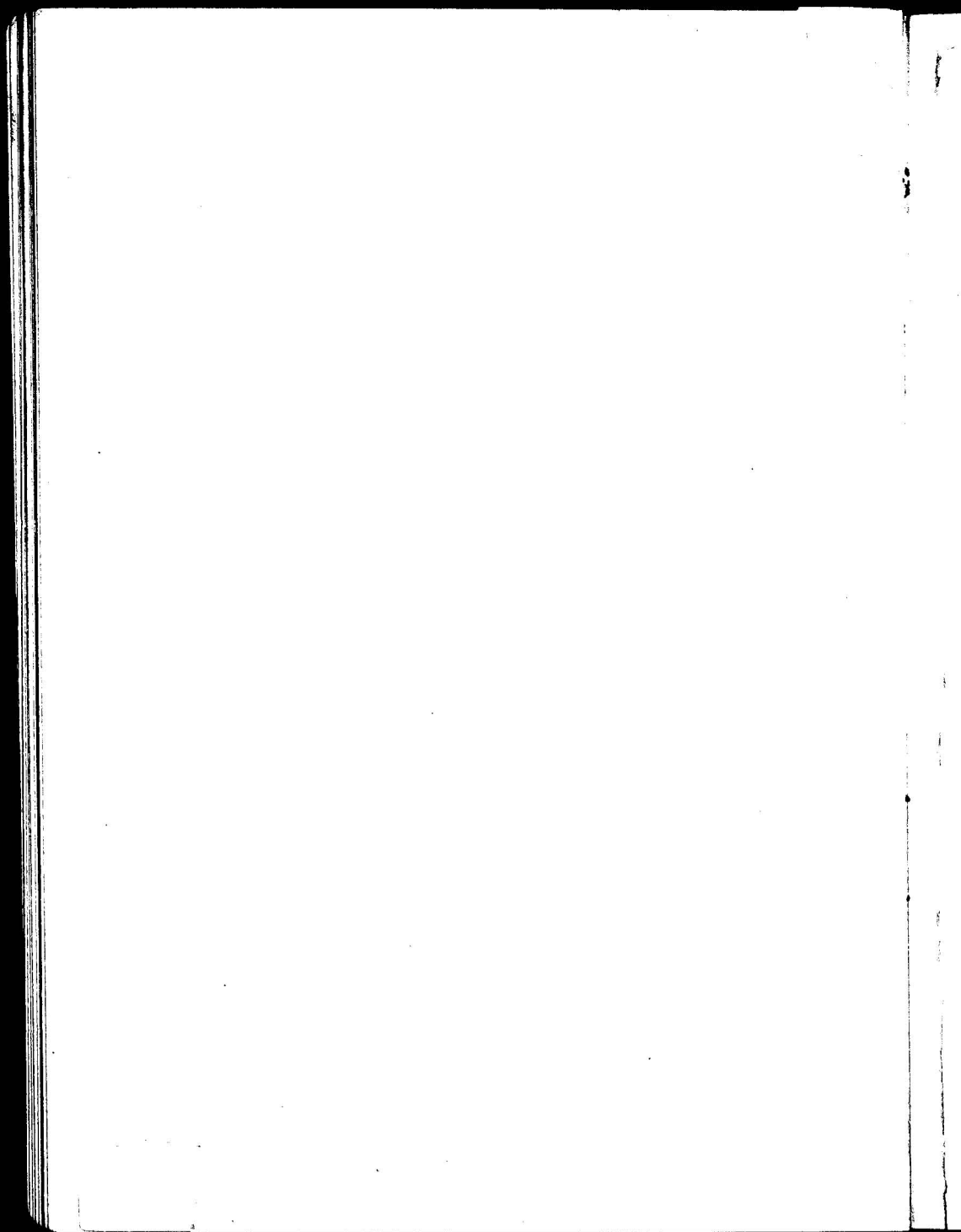
After all, the value of the man's life rests in its example of unselfish, devoted patriotism, its fidelity to principle, its loyalty to the great spirit of Democracy—in that he lived not for man but for mankind.

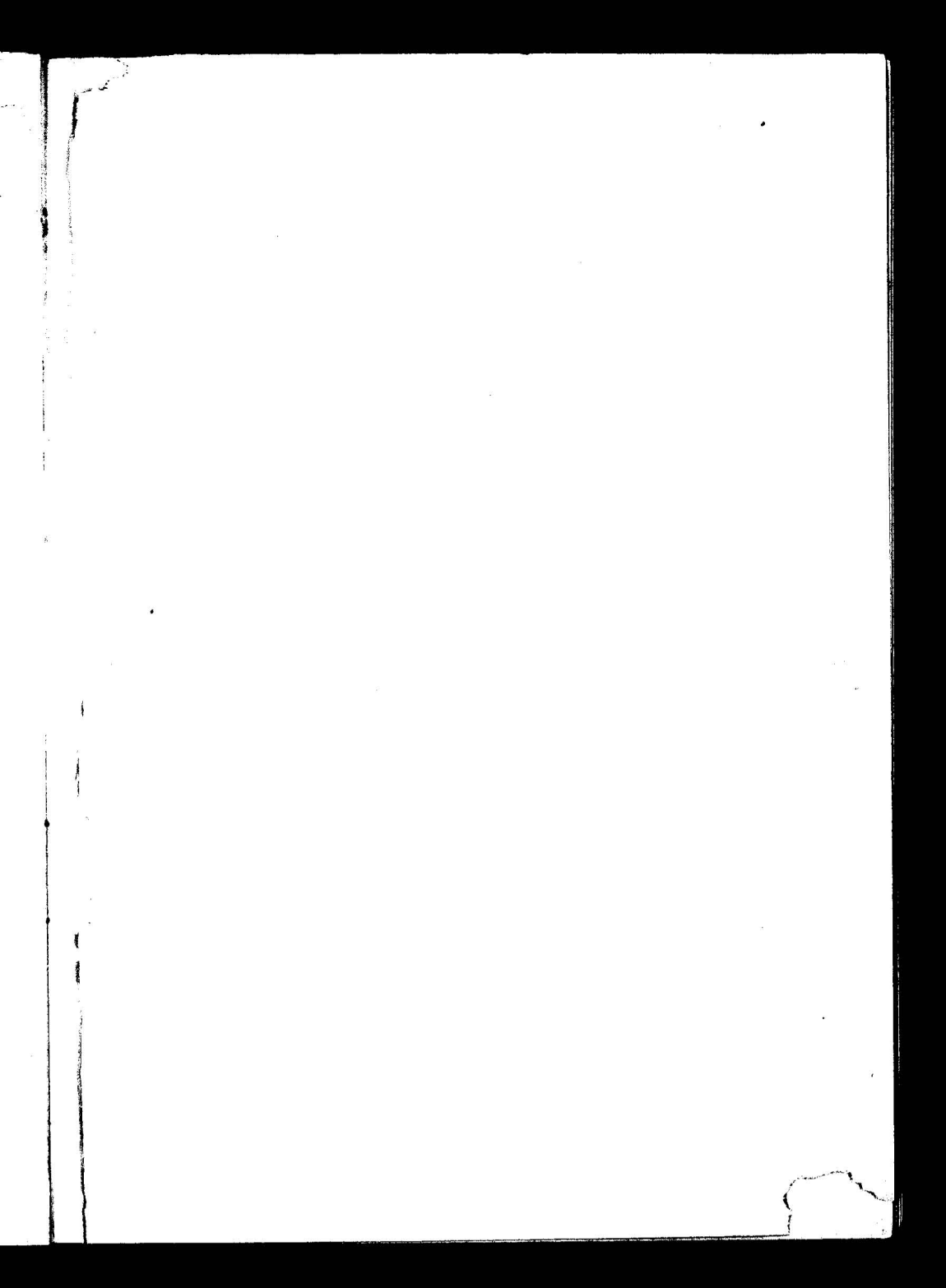
*"Vivit post funera ille, quem virtus non marmor in
æternum sacrat."*

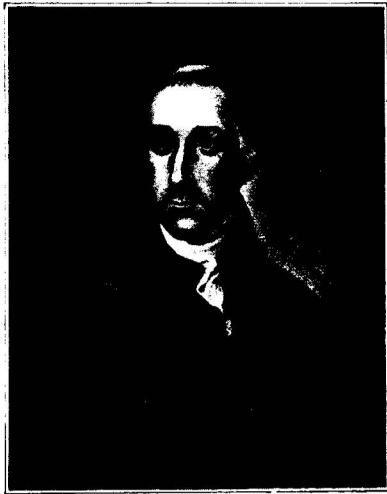
NOTE.—A curious instance of the failure of different branches of American families to keep track of each other was brought to light in the preparation of the foregoing paper.

Mr. J. P. Taylor, of Henderson, N. C., and Mr. J. G. Penn, of Danville, Va., have been copartners in business for seventeen years. In a recent conversation they first learned that they were kinsmen, one representing the male line of John Taylor, the other representing the female line through John Penn.

T. M. P.







JOSEPH HEWES.

JOSEPH HEWES.

BY WALTER SIKES, M. A., PH.D.,

(Professor of Political Science, Wake Forest College).

"Particularly cultivate the notice of Mr. Hewes," wrote Henry E. McCulloch to his relative, young James Iredell, as he was about to leave his home in England to take up his abode at Edenton, N. C., in September, 1768. Young Iredell came to Edenton and wrote to his father afterwards that "I must say there is a gentleman in this town who is a very particular favorite of mine. His name is Hewes. He is a merchant here, and our member for the town: the patron and the greatest honor of it. About six or seven years ago he was in a few days of being married to one of Mr. Johnston's sisters (elder than the two young ladies now living), who died rather suddenly; and this unhappy circumstance for a long time imbibed every satisfaction in life to him. He has continued ever since unmarried, which I believe he will do. His connection with Mr. Johnston's family is just such as if he had really been a brother-in-law, a circumstance that mutually does honor to them both." When young Iredell met this man, who was not yet forty, he became charmed with his society and his character.

Hewes' parents had fled from the Indian massacres in Connecticut in 1728 to New Jersey. While crossing the Housatonic river his mother was wounded in the neck by an Indian. The family came to Kingston, N. J., where Joseph was born

in 1730. Though his home was not far from Princeton, he never attended college. However, he received such education as the schools in his vicinity offered. His family were Quakers, and at an early age he was sent to a counting-house in the Quaker city of Philadelphia. At manhood he entered the mercantile and commercial business. Most of his time was spent in Philadelphia, though he was often drawn to New York on business.

In 1763 he decided to move to Edenton, where he entered into partnership with Robert Smith, an attorney. This firm owned its own wharf and sent its ships down to the sea. It is very probable that his sister, Mrs. Allan, came with him. His nephew, Nathaniel Allan, was certainly with him. This young nephew Hewes treated as his own son and very probably made him his heir. This young man became the father of Senator Allan of Ohio and grandfather of Allen G. Thurman.

Edenton was a town of four hundred inhabitants probably when Joseph Hewes came to live there. It was a society scarcely surpassed in culture by any in America. In the vicinity lived Colonel Richard Buncombe, Sir Nat. Dukinfield, Colonel John Harvey, Samuel Johnston, Dr. Cathcart, Thomas Jones, Charles Johnston and Stephen Cabarrus. Hewes was at once admitted into this charming circle.

Hewes was possessed of those charms that attract gentle folks. He was very companionable and social. Very frequently in James Iredell's diary for 1772-1774 such entries are found as "chatted with Hewes and others on his piazza";

“found Hewes at Horniblow’s tavern”; “Hewes and I spent the evening at Mrs. Blair’s”; “Dr. Cathcart, Mr. Johnston and I dined with Hewes”; “went to Hewes’ to call on Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Harnett on their return from the north,” and “they played cards all the evening at Mr. Hewes’.” These and similar records show that he was a delightful companion and was a center of social life.

His Quaker training Hewes threw aside easily. Some writers say that he quitted the Quakers only when they refused in 1776 to join heartily in the war for independence, and that his Quaker beliefs easily opened the door of prosperity and honor for him among the Quakers of the Albemarle section. This can hardly be true. In 1770 he was present at the services of the Church of England at Edenton and read the responses. He certainly attended that church long before the Revolution. Also in the same year he was “playing backgammon at Horniblow’s tavern.” These things were not done by good Quakers. Hewes’ associates—social and political—were not Quakers. He belonged to those conservatives whose leaders were Samuel Johnston and Thomas Jones.

Hewes’ popularity, wealth and influence caused him to be chosen to represent the town of Edenton in the General Assembly three years after his arrival. This position he held from 1766-1776 till he was called to a field of wider usefulness. In these Assemblies he was very active, and at one time he was on ten committees at least. This was an interesting period in the history of the colony. It was during this

period that the Regulator troubles arose, the court controversy, the taxation problems, and the other difficulties that prepared North Carolina for the revolution that was to be very soon.

Before the meeting of the Provincial Congress to appoint delegates to the Continental Congress, Hewes was a member of the Committee of Correspondence. This was a wise choice. As a merchant his ships were known in other ports. This brought him into contact with the greatest commercial centers of the other colonies. In this way he was not unknown to the Adamses of Massachusetts. Hewes was chosen to attend the first Provincial Congress at New Bern, August, 1774. At this Congress he read many letters that his committee had received. Hewes, together with Richard Caswell and William Hooper, was appointed to attend the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. This North Carolina Congress pledged itself to abide by the acts of their representatives.

Merchants are not revolutionists. They want a government that will assure them the enjoyment of their labors. Hewes was a merchant, but he pledged his people to commercial non-intercourse with Great Britain, though this meant personal loss to the firm of Hewes & Smith. This measure was goring his own ox, but he gave it his loyal support. Says he, in a letter written at the close of the Congress, and before leaving Philadelphia: "Our friends are under apprehension that the administration will endeavor to lay hold of as many delegates as possible, and have them carried

to England and tried as rebels; this induced Congress to enter into a resolve in such case to make a reprisal. I have no fears on that head, but should it be my lot, no man on earth could be better spared. Were I to suffer in the cause of American liberty, should I not be translated immediately to heaven as Enoch of old was?"

Hewes' health was always poor. To go to Philadelphia was not a pleasant journey, save that it permitted him to see his aged mother, who lived probably at the old home in New Jersey. Says Hewes, in a letter: "I had a very disagreeable time of it till I arrived here, since which I have had but little health or spirits." Hewes, Caswell and Hooper were not the only Carolinians present in Philadelphia at this meeting, for Hewes says he dined with Caswell and other Carolinians.

In December Hewes returned to Edenton and the next April found him and James Iredell in their gigs on their way to attend the General Assembly at New Bern, and also that second Provincial Congress which was to meet at the same time and place. Both bodies thanked their delegates for the faithful discharge of their duties. The aged, yet spirited, Harvey delivered the brief address for the bodies. This Provincial Congress re-elected Hewes, Caswell and Hooper.

Hewes and Caswell together proceeded at once to Philadelphia, where the Congress met on May 10. On Sunday evening they arrived in Petersburg, where they learned of the collision "between the Bostonians and the King's troops." Their passage through Virginia was attended with much pomp and military parade, "such as was due to general offi-

cers." They stopped a day in Baltimore, where "Colonel Washington, accompanied by the rest of the delegates, reviewed the troops."

Hewes was in Philadelphia, where, he said, the enthusiasm was great. He was very anxious for North Carolina to take an active part in affairs. He expressed himself as uneasy about the slowness of North Carolina. Though Hewes was sick and hardly able to write, he joined in an address to the people of North Carolina and wrote letters to his friends describing in detail the military preparations of Congress. Hewes was not an eager war man. Said he, in a letter to Samuel Johnston on July 8, 1775: "I consider myself now over head and ears in what the ministry call rebellion. I feel no compunction for the part I have taken nor for the number of our enemies lately slain at the battle of Bunker's Hill. I wish to be in the camp before Boston, tho' I fear I shall not be able to get there 'till next campaign." He prevailed upon Philadelphia clergymen to write letters to the "Presbyterians, Lutherans and Calvinists" in North Carolina.

Hewes was a member of the committee to fit out vessels for the beginning of the American navy. On this committee there was no more valuable member. There were not many merchants in Congress. Hewes' mercantile knowledge served Congress well. This is Hewes' chief contribution to the war of independence. He could not speak like Adams and Lee, nor write like Jefferson, but he knew where were the sinews of war. When not in Congress he was employed by it to fit

out vessels. The firm of Hewes & Smith was its agent in North Carolina. Some vessels Hewes fitted out by advancing the money for the Congress.

Hewes was back in North Carolina in August, 1775, and represented Edenton at the third Provincial Congress at Hillsboro, where he was placed on the committee to secure arms for the State, to prepare an address for the inhabitants, and a form of government. Here he was again elected to the Continental Congress along with Caswell and Hooper.

He returned to Philadelphia at once and prevailed upon Congress to send two ministers to the western part of North Carolina. Though he was very sick, he urged the early increase of the army and its equipment. Hewes fully expected to go into the army; in him there was nothing of the Tory spirit. Said he, on February 11, 1776: "If we mean to defend our liberties, our dearest rights and privileges against the power of Britain to the last extremity, we ought to bring ourselves to such a temper of mind as to stand unmoved at the bursting of an earthquake. Although the storm thickens, I feel myself quite composed. I have furnished myself with a good musket and bayonet, and when I can no longer be useful in council I hope I shall be willing to take the field. I think I had rather fall than be carried off by a lingering illness. An obstinate ague and fever, or rather an intermittent fever, persecutes me continually. I have no way to remove it unless I retire from Congress and from public business; this I am determined not to do till North Carolina

sends another delegate, provided I am able to crawl to the Congress chamber."

Hewes was elected to represent Edenton in the fourth Provincial Congress at Halifax in April, 1776, but did not leave Philadelphia. It was more important that he should remain there. He wrote that he was anxious to know the kind of constitution they had adopted, but more anxious to know how they were preparing to defend their country. In the Continental Congress he was on the committee to prepare the articles of the confederation also.

Hewes spent the year 1776 in Philadelphia. He did not visit North Carolina at all. Hooper and Penn probably did. Hewes was alone at the time the great debate was in progress on the wisdom of declaring independence. Says he, in a letter dated Philadelphia, July 8, 1776: "What has become of my friend Hooper? I expected to have seen him ere now. My friend Penn came time enough to give his vote for independence. I send you the Declaration of Independence enclosed. I had the weight of North Carolina on my shoulders within a day or two of three months. The service was too severe. I have sat some days from six in the morning till five or sometimes six in the afternoon, without eating or drinking. Some of my friends thought I should not be able to keep soul and body together to this time. Duty, inclination and self-preservation call on me now to make a little excursion into the country to see my mother. This is a duty which I have not allowed myself time to perform during the almost nine months I have been here."

Here is a picture of devotion to duty not surpassed in the annals of any country.

The months during which he labored so dutifully, and alone bore the burden of North Carolina on his shoulders, were the days when the great question of independence was discussed. In this discussion there was no inspiration. There was gathered together a band of brave men trying prayerfully to do the right. Clouds and uncertainty were thick about them. The measure had been discussed for months, but the majorities were constantly against it. John Adams, in a letter written March 28, 1813, says Mr. Hewes determined the vote for independence. "For many days the majority depended on Mr. Hewes of North Carolina. While a member one day was speaking, and reading documents from all the colonies, to prove that public opinion, the general sense of all, was in favor of the measure, when he came to North Carolina and produced letters and public proceedings which demonstrated that the majority in that colony were in favor of it, Mr. Hewes, who had hitherto constantly voted against it, started suddenly upright, and lifting both hands to heaven as if he had been in a trance, cried out: 'It is done! and I will abide by it.' I would give more for a perfect painting of the terror and horror upon the face of the old majority at that critical moment than for the best piece of Raphael. The question, however, was eluded by an immediate motion for adjournment."

In the fall Hewes returned to North Carolina in time to attend the Provincial Congress at Halifax in November,

1776. His admiring friends in Edenton again chose him to represent them as they had been doing for ten years. Here he took part in the making of the State Constitution, being on the committee. However, he was doubtless more interested in the preparation to defend the independence for which he had just voted. Hewes was again active on the important committees. This Provincial Congress made and adopted the first Constitution for North Carolina. What Hewes thought of it is not known, but many of his friends in Edenton did not like it. Samuel Johnston was open in his disapproval.

After the close of the Provincial Congress at Halifax, Hewes returned to Edenton, with his health injured by overwork in the Continental Congress. He had expected to return to Philadelphia in February, but the rheumatism would not permit him. He was not idle. He was in the secret committee of Congress for purchasing equipment. He and Morris were the merchant members of Congress, and had much of this work to do. April found him at home but expecting at any time to start north.

The first General Assembly under the new State Constitution met at New Bern in April, 1777. Hewes, for the first time in ten years, was not chosen to represent Edenton. John Green was the member in his place. This new republican Assembly contained many new men. There had been a clash in the making of this new Constitution. Samuel Johnston had led the conservatives and been defeated, while Willie Jones had led the radicals to victory. There was bitter-

ness and strife. Johnston, and doubtless his followers, were partial to Hewes and Hooper, but they cared little for Penn. When the time came to elect representatives to the Continental Congress, Hooper, though no competitor appeared against him, lost a great many votes. He obtained seventy-six out of ninety. Hooper refused to accept. Hewes failed of election, securing only forty out of ninety. Samuel Johnston said: "Hewes was supplanted of his seat in Congress by the most insidious arts and glaring falsehoods." James Iredell said that the reason alleged for his defeat was that he had been at home so long and also that he was holding two offices under one government, being a member of Congress and also a member of its most important committee.

After Hooper's resignation, Hewes' friends felt that he could be elected unanimously, but thought also that it would be an indignity. Only Penn was returned and his majority was reduced. Whatever may have been the cause of this defeat, it looks like an example of a republic's ingratitude.

Nevertheless, this Assembly was willing to employ Hewes, and asked him to fit out two vessels—the "Pennsylvania Farmer" and "King Taminy," but he declined because he was already the agent of the Continental Congress.

During the remainder of 1778 he remained in Edenton, making at least one trip to Boston on business. In 1778 he was still interested in purchases for the conduct of the war. His health was in the meantime much improved. Hewes was probably returned to the Assembly by his old constitu-

ents of Edenton in 1778. Here he was, as usual, a member of many committees.

When this Assembly was called upon to elect delegates to the Continental Congress, Hewes was again chosen. James Iredell wrote his wife, who was an ardent admirer of Hewes, and looked upon him as a brother, since the death of her sister, Miss Johnston: "Hewes will be down soon * * * nothing now detains him but his goodness in settling accounts he has no business with, and which no other man is equal to."

On his return to Philadelphia in 1779 he worked hard, but his health was fast failing. He was never strong, and the trying times of 1776 had taxed his strength to the utmost. He sent his resignation to the General Assembly, which met in October at Halifax, but in November he died in Philadelphia at the post of duty, aged fifty. James Iredell wrote his wife: "The loss of such a man will long be severely felt, and his friends must ever remember him with the keenest sensibility." Hooper wrote to Iredell: "The death of Hewes still preys upon my feelings. I know and had probed the secret recesses of his soul and found it devoid of guilt and replete with benignity." His funeral was attended by Congress, the Pennsylvania Assembly, the Minister of France, and many citizens, while Congress resolved to wear crape for him.

Such was Joseph Hewes, the merchant member of Congress, an early Secretary of the Navy, a friend loved and trusted, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

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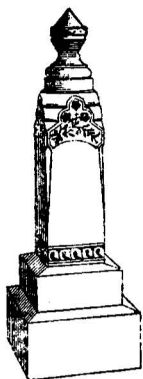
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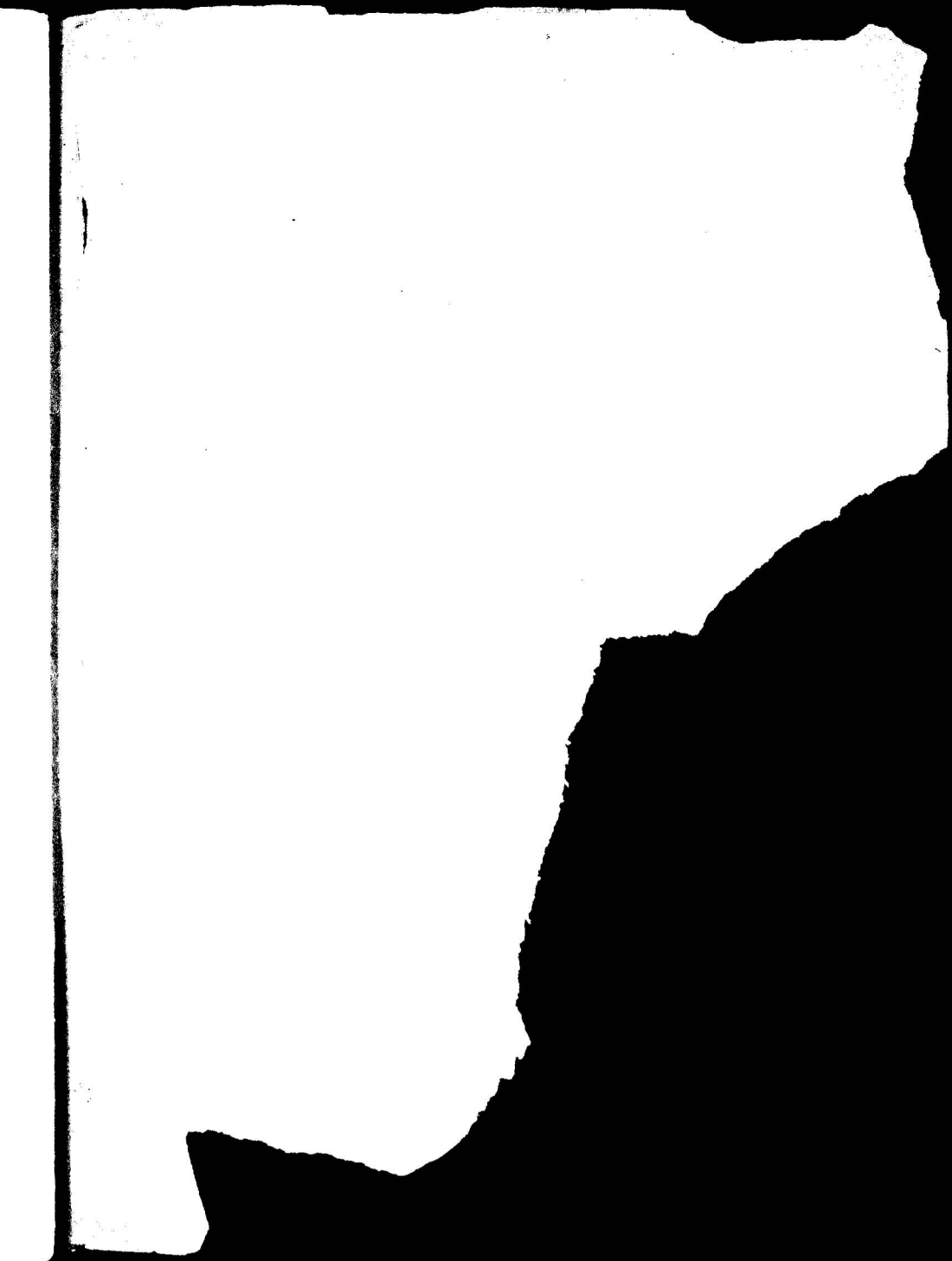
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