SARTIN, RUBY PEARL. Caswell County: The First Century, 1777-1877. (1972) Directed by: Dr. Richard Bardolph. Pp. 122.

The purpose of this paper is to trace the historical development of Caswell County during its first century, from its establishment in 1777 to 1877. The act creating the county, important aspects of early Indian life, first settlements, and the growth of town and village life have been considered.

The unique aspect of the development of Caswell County centered around the growth of a tobacco culture. As a result of the improved methods of curing tobacco, it became one of the wealthiest and most prominent of North Carolina's counties. The life style that developed typified the antebellum South. As the study progressed, it suggested the hypothesis that tobacco, which paradoxically brought this prominence to Caswell at the end of the first century, was also the chief cause for its later decline.

The prevailing viewpoints of the citizens of Caswell could be roughly assessed by the types of representatives chosen by the people, and because the writings and speeches of Bartlett Yancey, Bedford Brown, Calvin Graves, and Romulus Saunders reflected the spirit of Caswell, they were examined in the course of this study. These men personified the growth of the county during the Antebellum Era and provide an insight into the region's mentality.

The decline of Caswell's greatness was as rapid as its ascent. A county which had strong unionist support and

was only mildly secessionist in 1850, had by 1860 become a seedbed for secessionist sentiment because of the fear that Northern legislation would change the local way of life.

Reconstruction in Caswell was one of the most violent episodes in the state. The Ku Klux Klan activities, including the murder of "Chicken" Stephens, prompted Governor Holden to take drastic steps which brought on the Kirk-Holden War, one of the darkest moments in Caswell's history.

This paper has investigated the development of the Klan's activities and has attempted to establish the facts in the Stephens murder by examining the sworn statement of Captain John Lea, the leader and organizer of the Caswell Klan. This statement was not made public until 1935, sixty-five years after the incident had been closed.

The examination of family papers, Bibles, diaries, Bartlett Yancey's 1810 account of the county, and numerous articles written by Caswellians, affords new insights into the history of the county. Also the indelible mark left on the history of Caswell County by Charles Napoleon Bonaparte Evans and the Milton Chronicle cannot be overlooked. This account will provide a survey of the major topics and events, and the important statesmen in Caswell's history. A county with such great promise and prominence during the first one hundred years was allowed to sink into oblivion as it died from its own creation, flue-cured tobacco.

CASWELL COUNTY: THE FIRST CENTURY, 1777-1877

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

CASWELL COUNTY: FOUNDING, EARLY DEVELOPMENT, AND THE REVOLUTION

The Founding

On December 8, 1776, a bill for the establishment of a new county between Hillsborough and the Virginia line, by erecting the northern part of Orange County into a distinct county by the name of Caswell, was read in the House of Representatives of the North Carolina General Assembly.[1]

On December 24, 1776, an amended bill creating the county passed both houses.[2] The official act read as follows:

> Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and by the Authority of the same, That from and after the First Day of June next, the Inhabitants of the County of Orange lying to the North of a Point Twelve Miles due North of Hillsborough, and bounded as follows, to-wit, Beginning at the aforesaid Point, running thence due East to Granville County Line, thence South along Guilford County Line to a Point due West of the Beginning, thence due East to the Beginning, be erected into a distinct County, by the Name of Caswell County.[3]

The measure also called for the first court to be held at the home of Thomas Douglas to begin administration

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[1] Walter Clark, ed., The State Records of North Carolina (Winston: M. I. and J. C. Stewart, 1895), XXIV, 112.

[2] Ibid., p. 255.

[3] Ibid., p. 24.

of county affairs and to select the location for a courthouse, prison, and stocks.

Caswell County is situated in the northwest portion of North Carolina and forms a compact square bounded by Virginia on the north, Person County on the east, Alamance and Orange Counties on the south, and Rockingham County on the west. It helps to form the core of the Piedmont.[4]

In 1665, King Charles of England had given all of what is now North Carolina and South Carolina (named for him) to eight of his noblemen. Caswell County was originally part of the land grant belonging to Edward Hyde, first Earl of Clarenden.[5] In 1729 King George asked the Lords Proprietors to return their land to him, paying each 2500 pounds ($12,000) per share. This amounted to less than $100,000 for the entire state of North Carolina.[6] John Carteret, Earl of Granville, however, refused to sell his one-eighth share back to the Crown. In 1746, the area called Granville was cut off from Edgecomb County for his share. In 1753 out of a portion of the areas of Bladen, Granville, and Johnston Counties, a new county called

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[4] John H. Wheeler, Historical Sketches of North Carolina 1584-1851 (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1964), p. 78. Hereafter cited, Wheeler, Historical Sketches.

[5] W. P. Q. Writers Project, How They Began, the Story of North Carolina Counties, Towns, and other Place Names (New York: Harian Publications, 1941), p. 8. Hereafter cited, Writers Project.

[6] Clarence L. Pemberton, "Old Caswell," Fair Catalogue of Caswell County Fair Association, 1941, p. 3. Hereafter cited, Pemberton, "Old Caswell."

Orange was established and Caswell County, in 1777, was taken from the northern half of Orange. Even though Granville had given up political rights to this area in 1742, he, rather than the king, still collected the quit rents for the northern half of North Carolina. This practice ended with the Revolution.[7] Thus the early Caswell citizens owed allegiance first to their proprietor, and then to their king.

Person County was formed from Caswell in 1791, the act becoming effective on February 1, 1792. This area was named in honor of General Thomas Person, a Revolutionary patriot. It provided:

> . . . That from and after the first day of February next, the county of Caswell shall be equally divided by a line already run, beginning on the Virginia line, and running from thence south to the line of Orange County. That all that part of said county lying west of the line aforesaid, including the four western districts, shall continue and remain a distinct county by the name of Caswell; and that all that part lying east of said line including the four eastern districts, shall be erected into another distinct county by the name of Person.[8]

This act of 1791 also called for the Caswell County Court to meet at the home of Joseph Smith to act on the measure to erect a courthouse near the new center of the

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[7] "History of Yanceyville and Caswell County, Replete with Drama," Durham Morning Herald, March 28, 1948, pp. 1,3.

[8] David L. Corbitt, The Formation of North Carolina Counties 1663-1943 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950), p. 195.

county. The village of Leasburg served as the county seat until the government was moved to Caswell County Courthouse (Yanceyville) in 1791.[9]

Created during a period of increased patriotic fervor, the county was named for Richard Caswell, first governor of the newly independent state of North Carolina. He was born in Cecil County, Maryland, on August 3, 1729.[10] He held no academic degree but was regarded as a man of great natural capacity. This ability enabled him to bring a letter of recommendation from the governor of Maryland to Governor Johnston who employed him as Deputy Surveyor for the colony at the age of nineteen and later as clerk of Superior Court for Orange County. With the completion of his law studies and admission to the bar, Caswell entered public life as a member of the Colonial Assembly from Johnston County, 1754-1771.[11]

He became a colonel in the militia and had his first military experience under Governor Tryon against the Regulators at the Battle of Alamance, on May 16, 1771. In 1774, he became a member of the Continental Congress until his resignation three years later to become treasurer of the southern district of the state. On February 27, 1776,

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[9] Ibid., p. 59.

[10] Beth G. Crabtree, North Carolina Governors: 1585-1968. Brief Sketches (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1968), p. 46.

[11] W. J. Sadler, "Governors of North Carolina," The State, III (August 17, 1935), 6.

he commanded the troops which defeated General MacDonald's Scots Highlanders at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, the first important battle of the Revolution.

The Provincial Congress meeting at Halifax in April of 1776, cited Caswell's bravery: "Resolved, that the thanks of this Congress be given to Colonel Richard Caswell, and the brave officers and soldiers under his command for the very essential service by them rendered this country at the Battle of Moore's Creek."[12] The same April, he was appointed Brigadier General and in November elected to the Provincial Congress meeting at Halifax. He became president of this body and helped adopt the state constitution. Upon North Carolina's organization for statehood, Congress elected him governor from 1776 to 1778. In 1782, he was chosen speaker of the state senate and served as Comptroller General for North Carolina until 1785 when once again he was elected governor.[13] In 1787, Caswell was selected as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, and two years later he was again elected speaker for the state senate, his last political activity. He was stricken by paralysis while presiding over the senate and died on November 10, 1789.[14]

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[12] Robert D. W. Connor, Revolutionary Leaders of North Carolina (Greensboro: North Carolina College for Women, 1923), pp. 80, 89, 93. Hereafter cited, Connor, Revolutionary Leaders.

[13] Sadler, p. 6. [14] Crabtree, pp. 46-47.

Caswell was mourned throughout the state, praised and eulogized in death. One admirer said of him: "As a statesman, his patriotism was unquestioned, his discernment was quick, and his judgement sound; as a soldier, his courage was undaunted, his vigilance untiring, his success triumphant."[15] Another observed that: "In his career he resembled the father of his country; if Virginia be proud of her Washington, North Carolina may be of her Caswell."[16]

Caswell was more variously honored during his life and death than any other citizen of the era. The memory of this distinguished servant and patriot has been preserved by the county which bears his name.

To facilitate the administration of Caswell County, the General Assembly passed a series of laws to regulate the formation of administrative policies. Meeting at New Bern on May 9, 1777, the legislature appointed James Saunders, William Moore, Thomas Harrison, John Atkinson, and John Payne as commissioners to collect taxes and let out contracts for construction of public buildings in Caswell. The County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions was also

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[15] Wheeler, Historical Sketches, p. 89.

[16] John H. Wheeler, Reminiscences and Memoirs of North Carolina and Eminent North Carolinians (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1966), p. 105. Hereafter cited, Wheeler, Reminiscences and Memoirs.

created to meet on the third Monday in March, June, September, and December.[17]

Between 1777 and 1783, since no definite construction had been undertaken by the commissioners, the General Assembly meeting in Hillsborough on April 18, 1783, once again made provisions for Caswell's seat of government:

> . . . and whereas there is no courthouse, prison, or stocks erected in the said county of Caswell, be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, that James Saunders, Archibald Murphey, and Abraham Fulkison, be and are hereby appointed commissioners for building a courthouse, prison, and stocks, on the place by law appointed in the said County of Caswell, for the use of the said county and for the purpose of contracting and agreeing with proper persons to complete and finish the same, as they shall deem sufficient.[18]

The funds to provide for the buildings were to be collected by the sheriff for three years at the rate of one shilling on every one hundred pounds on all taxable property and a poll tax of one shilling on every person not having one hundred pounds.[19]

These instructions given, and before the funds could be raised, the county seat had been moved from Leasburg to its present site at Caswell County Courthouse at what is now Yanceyville. Although Caswell's first courthouse had been constructed in Leasburg, new plans were made for public buildings in the new county seat.

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[17] Clark, pp. 524-525.

[18] Ibid., p. 524. [19] Ibid.

Settlement and the Growth of Town and Village Life

Part of Caswell County was in the inland sea area of the Valley of the Dan. After this water had receded, large deposits of sandstone remained, forming an area for primitive Indian homes. Around 1670 the Indian tribes of Sissipahaw, Eno, and Saura were located on the Dan River. Most of these had moved on by the time of European settlement.[20] Most prominent of this group and last to occupy Caswell were the Saura. They are believed to be a part of the Sioux Nation, although the name is possibly a derivation from the Cherokee language. In 1540, they were found in Georgia and on the border of North and South Carolina by DeSoto. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, two or three hundred of the tribe located along the Dan River. In 1710, after being defeated by the Senecas, the Sauras moved to South Carolina. Following a severe smallpox epidemic, the survivors joined with the Catawba Tribe and lost their identity.[21] By the middle of the eighteenth century only traces of earlier Indian occupancy could still be seen in Caswell County by cleared fields, paths, and archeological remains.

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[20] Ruth Blackwelder, The Age of Orange: Political and Intellectual Leadership in North Carolina, 1752-1861 (Charlotte: William Loftin, 1961), p. 2.

[21] Ronald W. Williams, Madison, North Carolina (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1970), p. 11.

The Colonial Records indicate land grants in northern Orange County (later Caswell) as early as 1748 with Scotch-Irish, Germans, and English settling along the Dan River, Hogan, and Country Line Creeks by 1751.[22] Caswell's first recorded settlement occurred between 1750 and 1755, when about ten families came from Orange County and Culpeper, Virginia.[23] According to Bartlett Yancey, who around 1810, recorded events and attempted to preserve the history of the county:

> This county was first settled about the year 1750; from that time, until 1754 or 5, there were about eight or ten families in that part of the county, now known by the name Caswell: a family by the name of Reynolds, and two others by the name of Delone and Barkston were among the first settlers, the Lea's Graves' Peterson's, and Kimbro's came to this county about 1753, 54, and 55, respectively.[24]

Most of the inhabitants were of English, Irish, Scots, French, and German extraction. Their reasons for coming to the area were chiefly economic as they were looking for fertile land which the low land of the Dan River and numerous creeks could provide. The inhabitants were classified into two groups, old families and new families. The former (often called progressive conservatives) who

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[22] William L. Saunders, ed., The Colonial Records of North Carolina (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1887), IV, 21.

[23] Corbitt, p. 168.

[24] A. R. Newsome, ed., "Twelve North Carolina Counties in 1810-11," North Carolina Historical Review, V (October, 1928), 422. This is Bartlett Yancey's account of the county written in 1810.

settled before 1800 were:[25] Aldridge, Anderson, Badgett, Barker, Blackwell, Brandon, Brown, Carter, Cobb, Corbett, Daniel, Fitch, Fitzgerald, Fuqua, Gatewood, Garland, Kimbro, King, Lea, Lewis, Malloy, Malone, Massey, Moore, Murphey, McDaniel, Neal, Newman, Page, Pointer, Poteat, Richardson, Roan, Rudd, Sartin, Satterfield, Scott, Simpson, Slade, Sledge, Smith, Stamps, Stanfield, Thacker, Thomas, Vanhook, Vernon, Walker, Watkins, Watlington, Wilkerson, Williamson, Wilson, White, Womack, and Yancey. While the old families were mostly farmers and planters, the new families: Coles, Abels, Steeds, McSwains, Basons, Upchurches, Hams, Plumbees, Holts, and Stephens did much to promote business and settlement around the towns.[26] In 1786, a special state census ranked Caswell as the second largest county with 9,839 inhabitants. Only Halifax surpassed her.[27]

The relatively wild condition of Caswell County at the time of its founding is perhaps suggested by the fact that in 1778, a year after its creation, a tax was levied

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[25] The old families were called progressive conservatives because they were progressive in building churches, schools, homes, and businesses but conservative in their political views. As a whole this group usually opposed voting funds for internal improvements and failed to support anything which increase the county debt.

[26] Clarence L. Pemberton, "Beauty Spots Preserved in this Land of Tobacco," Greensboro Daily News, August 20, 1939, p. 8. Hereafter cited, Pemberson, "Beauty Spots Preserved."

[27] Bill Sharpe, "Power and Glory of Old Caswell," The State, XXXI (November 23, 1963), 16.

to pay a bounty on the scalps of wolves, wildcats, panthers, bears, crows, and squirrels.[28]

The earliest settled village, leasburg, served as county seat from 1777 to 1791. The first settlement in Leasburg was recorded around 1750, and according to legend the town developed around a large oak grove attributed to an acorn brought from England by the Leas.[29] Named for William Lea, part owner of the original site with his brother James, Leasburg was incorporated in 1788. Since the settlement already existed when Caswell was separated from Orange, Leasburg was made the county seat and referred to as the Courthouse. Meeting in Fayetteville on November 3, 1788, the General Assembly passed an act to establish the town already laid off at the courthouse in Caswell County: ". . . whereas one hundred acres of land adjacent to and whereon Caswell Courthouse now stands, has been laid off into a town constituted and named the town of Leasburg in honor of William Lea."[30] To establish the town, William Lea and Nicholas Delone sold off one hundred acres in sixty-two lots. Thomas Neely, Lloyd VanHook, Gabriel Lea, Samuel Johnson, and John McFarlin were

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[28] Ibid., p. 24.

[29] Blackwell P. Robinson, ed., The North Carolina Guide (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955), p. 426.

[30] Clark, pp. 992-93.

appointed trustees for the town.[31] When Person County was cut off, however, it greatly impeded Leasburg's efforts to expand.

Leasburg was also the home of Solomon Lea, a grandson of the pioneer James Lea, a Methodist minister, and founder of Somerville Female Institute. He helped found Greensboro College and served as its first president.[32] Leasburg was considered as the site for the college but lack of railroad connections compelled the abandonment of this proposal. In addition to promoting education, the Lea home was the center for the weekly meeting of a Literary Society. Leasburg was also the locus of the fashionable Leasburg Academy for boys.[33]

The period just prior to the Civil War was indeed Leasburg's heyday, with its horse racetrack, tobacco factories, large homes, and it served as the local trade center. Leasburg flourished until towns with railroads drew business away.

The other incorporated town during Caswell's first century was Milton. It was founded in 1728 and surveyed

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[31] E. P. Holmes, "Landmarks Mellowed By Time Reveal Caswell's Historic Past," Greensboro Daily News, July 5, 1953, p. 5.

[32] Ella Thompson, "A History of the Leasburg Community," The Courier-Times, August 3, 1970, pp. 2, 3. Hereafter cited, Thompson, "A History of Leasburg."

[33] Ella Thompson, "A History of the Leasburg Community with Personal Recollections," Caswell Messenger, August 6, 1970, p. 6. Hereafter cited, Thompson, "Personal Recollections."

by the same surveyor who laid out the city of Baltimore and who now (as in Baltimore) followed the plan of establishing nuclei of one-mile squares.[34] Milton, incorporated in 1796, was named for Robert Milton, a Virginia settler on the Dan River, and Thomas Milton, owner of a mill where all area grains were ground, and which served as a community meeting place.[35]

Originally called Mill Town, its colonial records were burned by Cornwallis during his pursuit of General Greene, who crossed the Dan River at Lewis' Ferry below Milton. Milton was also the tobacco, corn, and trade center for products brought up the river by flat boats. In 1844, Archibald Murphey reported that main street lots were selling for a hundred dollars per foot.[36]

In 1846, the citizens of Milton faced a crisis in decision-making. They refused to let the Richmond-Danville Railroad run through the town since they feared it would frighten horses, lure slaves from their labor, and bring aliens into their smug aristocratic town. As a result, the Dan River Cotton Mill located upstream in what was to become the city of Danville. Milton kept its aristocratic pride, but lost out economically as a result of this, especially during the period of industrial growth after the Civil War.

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[34]Carl Gouch, "Milton," The State, XIV (June 29, 1946), 19.

[35]Writer's Project, p. 49. [36]Robinson, p. 18.

Before 1860, the town had three tobacco factories, several auction warehouses, the first cotton mill of the section, silversmiths, fashion designers, cabinet-makers, male and female academies, and the Yellow Tavern, which enjoyed the reputation of having been visited by George Washington.[37]

The chief cabinetmaker for Milton and the entire area was Tom Day, a West Indian. Being sensitive about his color and declining to sit in the slave gallery of the Presbyterian Church, Day made solid walnut pews and presented them to the congregation in exchange for the privilege of being allowed to sit downstairs.[38] These pews may be seen in the Milton church today.

Milton was the home of several newspapers, including John H. Perkin's (Perkins's ?) Milton Intelligence published from 1818 to 1821, Benjamin Cory's Milton Gazette and Roanoke Advertiser started in 1822 and purchased in 1826 by John Campbell, who ceased publication in 1828. Malbon Kenyon began the Milton Gazette in 1830 and published until 1831. In 1831 Nathaniel J. Palmer began the Milton Spectator, which he published until 1841, and then sold to Charles Napoleon Bonaparte Evans.[39] This was the beginning

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[37] Ibid. [38] Ibid., p. 427.

[39] Durward T. Stokes, "Charles Napoleon Bonaparte Evans and the Milton Chronicle," North Carolina Historical Review, XLVI (July, 1969), 240.

of a new era in newspaper publishing for North Carolina and Caswell County. Evans' new paper, called the Milton Chronicle lasted from 1841 to 1883. Sixty-five known issues still survive.

Evans, the son of James E. and Jane Shirley Evans, was born in Norfolk County, Virginia on October 18, 1812.[40] He left home at an early age and worked on various newspapers. If Evans ever doubted his venture, he did not let his reading public know of his qualms. He launched his first issue on August 3, 1841 with a clear statement of purpose: "To make the Chronicle an interesting family newspaper, a welcome guest in every house. It will be devoted to morality (alas, that morality should need the aid of the press in this enlightened age), literature, politics, agriculture, the news of the day, both at home and abroad, and amusements."[41]

From his writings it is obvious that Evans was a devout Whig, and he often inflicted his political views on his readers. He was as equally devoted to Caswell County and especially to his town of Milton. In the pages of his paper much history of Milton and Caswell County unfolds.

Between 1810 and 1850, Milton had grown from a small village to a town of twelve hundred people.[42] In 1850,

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., pp. 239, 241.

[42] Charles Evans, "The County of Caswell," Milton Chronicle, June 6, 1850, pp. 3-4. (The surviving issues are on microfilm in the Gunn Memorial Library, Yanceyville, N. C.)

the largest tobacco factories in North Carolina were located here.[43] It was the commercial and social center of antebellum living in the grand style of white-columned houses, brick streets, latest fashions, house slaves, and the seat of aristocratic pride for Caswell County.

Although Leasburg and Milton were the only two incorporated towns in Caswell County, there were numerous villages with interesting histories. Blanche was settled in 1750 and named for Miss Blanche Moore, a niece of D. G. Watkins who owned the land on which the village was established.[44] Gatewood, settled in 1850, was named for J. M. Gatewood, a local resident.[45] Hightowers was named for Daniel Hightower, a Virginian who settled there in 1794.[46] Prospect Hill was a name given to a site on the Warren Plantation because of its elevated view. Purley was named, so far as can be determined, either for Purley Manor, a baronial estate in Leicestershire, England, from which early settlers came, or for Miss Purley Cobb, a local resident.[47]

Pelham, settled in 1736, was named for John Pelham, a Civil War hero. John Pelham was born on September 14, 1838, the son of Dr. Arkinson Pelham and Martha

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[43] Archibald Henderson, ed., North Carolina: The Old North State and the New (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1941), II, 354.

[44] Writers Project, p. 21.

[45] Ibid., p. 35.

[46] Ibid., p. 39.

[47] Ibid., p. 55.

McGebee Pelham, on a plantation in Calhoun County, Alabama. He received an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point in July of 1856. He completed all of the Academy's course except the last ten days, because he withdrew on the day after the assault on Fort Sumter. He was one of the last Southern cadets to leave. During the war, Pelham rode with General Joseph E. Johnson and Jeb Stuart. He was extremely bashful but because of his fairhaired, blue-eyed good looks, he was sometimes called "the Gallant Pelham," "Galahad of Artillerymen," and "Boy Major." He won honor and fame and was decorated by General Robert E. Lee before he was killed in action on March 17, 1863, at the Battle of Kelly's Ford, Virginia.[48] Pelham is not known to have ever visited the area which bears his name.

Semora has an unusual tale as to its name. Hugh McAden wrote to his brother in Texas asking for suggestions for the name of a railroad station to be located in the area near his farm. His brother wrote back the word Senora, the name of his new baby girl. However, because of his poor handwriting, the word was mistaken for Semora and it was this name that was painted on the railroad station.[49]

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[48] Russell Reynolds, "Bashful Southern Soldier, Colorful Civil War Hero," Greensboro Daily News, September 18, 1949, p. 8.

[49] "Caswell County," The State, X (November 28, 1942), 2.

In 1791, a courthouse was constructed in central Caswell. The town was built around a square with a square plot of green in the middle. Thus the new county seat was born and designated as the Caswell County Court House until 1810, when the name was changed to Yanceyville, in honor of James Yancey.[50] It is not certain for whom this town is named. Some claim that it was Bartlett Yancey, but surviving documents strongly suggest that the town was named for Bartlett's older, wealthy planter brother, James.[51] The original courthouse, built in 1791, burned and was replaced in 1861 by the present one on the same spot. The construction was begun in 1859 under the supervision of R. M. Roan who used slave labor hired at twenty-five cents a day from various planters in the county. All bricks used were made on Sheriff James Yancey Gatewood's farm. The building, completed at the cost of $28,000 in 1861, left three architects in bankruptcy. The courtroom was left unfinished at the time because the members of the court could not agree on a plan. After several designs were submitted, they decided on a plan by a Frenchman traveling through the country. Records lost in a fire in 1952 included the latter's name which is now lost to history.[52] The building, known

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[50] Ibid., pp. 1-3.

[51] Sharpe, "Power and Glory of Old Caswell," p. 17.

[52] Mrs. Arthur Smith, "Famous Structure May Be Viewed by Public Today," Greensboro Daily News, December 7, 1952, p. 11.

for its beauty especially its circular staircases, has played an important part in the history of Caswell as the center of violence which touched off the Ku Klux Klan activity and led to the sending of troops into the county during Reconstruction.

Yanceyville belonged almost exclusively to Captain John Graves and his sons. The town was the center of the usual tobacco industry for the area but it also had a unique manufacturing development. Around 1853, Lazarus Fels moved to Yanceyville from Milton to enter partnership with Thomas Hatchett. Lazarus Fels was born at Sambach in the Palatinate, near Kaiserslautern in 1815 as a German subject of the King of Bavaria. In 1842, Lazarus married Susannah Freiberg, a local girl with a substantial dowry. Some six years after the marriage Fels, by then a merchant, was issued a passport for immigration to the United States. Dated June 19, 1848, the passport stated: "He is accompanied by his wife Susannah Freiberg, twenty-eight years old, and his three children, Abraham five, Bertha three, and 'Babette' [Barbara] Fels one year old. He will travel via Rotterdam to New York in North America to visit relatives there."[53] Arriving in Philadelphia in August of 1848, Lazarus left his wife and children with relatives while he

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[53] Arthur P. Dudden, Joseph Fels and the Single Tax Movement (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1971), p. 6.

and his son, Abraham, searched southward for a home. By the time he returned home some eleven months later, Lazarus had become a peddler of household wares throughout Virginia and North Carolina and had selected Halifax Court House, Virginia for his family settlement. There a second son, Joseph Fels, was born on December 16, 1853.[54]

Moving first to Danville, Virginia, then to Milton and Yanceyville, respectively, he became owner of a general store. There Lazarus renounced his Bavarian citizenship to become a United States citizen on June 26, 1855. During the Civil War, he served as postmaster of Yanceyville for the Confederate States of America while becoming a successful businessman. Fels began to accumulate real estate and speculate in tobacco, pigs, cotton, and barrel-making. Also during this time the Fels household expanded by the addition of three children, Maurice, Samuel, and Rosena, who were brought up in the ancient family tradition of Judaism.[55]

Fels, in January of 1866, chose one of the worst periods to enter a new business in Caswell because of the widespread losses resulting from the Civil War. Thomas Hatchett was to erect a distillery while Fels operated the business. Fels was to use Hatchett's grain for the liquor-making business in return for feeding Hatchett's

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[54] Ibid., p. 7.

[55] Ibid., pp. 7-10.

hogs some of the surplus mash by-product. A disease resulted in the death of the hogs, however, and Fels was accused by Hatchett of killing his hogs, and ordered him to pay for the dead animals. Fels, unsure of what to do with such a large number of dead carcasses, but never lacking in ingenuity, decided to render the lard into soap. The sale of this soap proved to be excellent for a short period of time.[56]

Leaving Caswell, Lazarus Fels attempted soap manufacturing in Baltimore with his sons, Abraham and Joseph. That business collapsed in 1870. In October of 1873, the enterprising father and sons once again tried soap-making in Philadelphia, founding the Fels and Company. This new firm was different from the other undertakings in that it was run almost exclusively by Joseph, the better businessman of the trio. These beginnings for the successful Fels-Naptha Soap Company were based on the valuable lessons salvaged from the Yanceyville fiasco.[57] Bartlett Yancey, in his 1810 account, describes Caswell as:

> . . . a very healthy part of the country; the common diseases of the inhabitants are nervous and billious fever. The amusements of the polite part of society consists of balls, tea parties, and visiting parties. Those of an inferior class consists of Saturday night frolicks, now becoming almost obsolete; shooting matches and horse racing, afford amusement to the better

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[56] Bill Sharpe, "Anecdote and Incident," The State, XXXI (November 23, 1963), 19. Hereafter cited, Sharpe, "Anecdote and Incident."

[57] Dudden, p. 14.

> sort of men and now and then may be seen a party with an old rusty pack of cards, amusing for whisky. The only sporting club in the county is the Jockey Club of the Caswell turf.[58]

Caswell's towns and villages provided a variety of life styles, amusements, and tall tales.

Caswell in the Revolution

As the Dan River bends southward from Virginia, it flows across about ten miles of northern Caswell County. The county is traversed northeasterly by a number of parallel tributaries of the Dan. These creeks or streams named in order of their location from west to east are: Hogan, Moon, Rattlesnake, Country Line, and Hyco.[59] These waterways and back country roads were scenes of troop movements during the Revolution. There were no extraordinary occurrences or formal battles fought in this county during the Revolution, but there were numerous skirmishes with Tories, some of whom were killed.[60]

As General Greene approached Guilford Court House, Cornwallis was so close on his heels that Greene made a mad dash to cross the Dan River in order to give his troops an opportunity to rest. These troop movements resulted in skirmishes between the rear guard of General Greene and the advance guard of Cornwallis in Caswell County. On the

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[58] Newsome, p. 428. [59] Ibid., p. 413.

[60] Ibid., p. 422.

afternoon of February 14, 1781, as Greene crossed the Dan River at Boyd's Ferry, the British troops appeared on the opposite bank.[61] Instead of this becoming the scene for British-American confrontation in North Carolina, Cornwallis' men traveled to Hillsborough before he and Greene both moved on to meet at Guilford Court House.

During his short stay in Caswell County, it is reported that Cornwallis' men dug up the grave of the Reverend Hugh McAden. McAden, Presbyterian minister of the Red House Church, had openly opposed the British policies in America. The story goes that Cornwallis was coming to capture McAden, but the latter's death a week earlier prevented this. Instead, Cornwallis camped at Red House Church, burned many of McAden's papers, church records, and a portion of the church, as well as disturbing McAden's grave.[62] Cornwallis again traveled through northern Caswell County after the Battle of Guilford Court House on his way to Yorktown.

Caswell's participation in the Revolutionary War effort came mostly in the form of men and supplies for the local militia. On May 1, 1778, Caswell County was ordered to provide for the war effort forty-eight hats, 198 yards of linen, ninety-six yards of woolen or double woven cotton cloth, ninety-six pairs of shoes, and ninety-six pairs of

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[61] Hugh F. Rankin, North Carolina in the American Revolution (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1959), p. 51.

[62] Saunders, V, 1198.

stockings. It was the task of Colonel William Moore, county clerk, to assemble and deliver these supplies to Hillsborough.[63] This same Colonel Moore was ordered on September 21, 1780 by General Butler to return articles he had taken from a wagon belonging to the state. The articles in question were pots, kettles, and a bar iron.[64] No court record of this action has been found as to whether Moore was totally honest in his dealings with the state or if some misunderstanding occurred. Caswell also supplied meal and ten heads of beef to General Greene's troops as he passed through the area.

Since Caswell was newly formed from Orange County, her participation is seen through the Lighthorse Regiment of the Hillsborough District. On March 5, 1779, Caswell was ordered to supply one captain, one ensign, and forty-three privates. Caswell's officers in this regiment were Major Absolom Tatum, Captain Jeremiah Williams, Lieutenant David Mitchell, and John Rhodes, Cornet.[65]

Other noted Caswell soldiers in the Continental Army were John Graves, William Hickerson Rice, and Starling Gunn. Rice is reported to have misunderstood his orders at Guilford Court House. When finding himself alone charging the enemy, Rice retreated far behind the lines. Gunn, who fought under Washington, is said to have fired

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[63] Clark, XII, 639. [64] Ibid., XIV, 384.

[65] Ibid., pp. 20, 264.

the first cannon at Yorktown and was present during Cornwallis' surrender.[66]

A small mutiny did occur in Caswell during the Revolution in the company of Caswell Riflemen camped on Moon Creek. When their Captain, Smith Harris, reported the news of the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey, and told the troops that their services would not be needed or wanted by the northern colonies, these troops rebelled. On June 28, 1778, this rising resulted in several officers breaking swords and one soldier crippled. The rebellion was finally suppressed when the troops were sent on furlough until fall.[67]

Caswell also took part in the affairs of the state and nation during the Revolution. Its delegates to the North Carolina Constitutional Convention meeting in Hillsborough on July 25, 1788 were Robert Dickens, George Roberts, John Womack, John Graves, and James Boswell.[68] To the North Carolina Convention, meeting November 3, 1789 in Fayetteville, Caswell sent John Womack, Robert Dickens, John Graves, Robert Payne, and Robert Bowman. These delegates were present when North Carolina ratified the United States Constitution.[69]

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[66] Pemberton, "Beauty Spots Preserved," p. 8.

[67] Clark, XIX, 957.

[68] Ibid., XXII, 2.

[69] Ibid., p. 36.

Although Caswell was a new county, formed just after the Revolution started, she did her part in supporting the war. Caswell citizens were as concerned and patriotic as any to be found in the state. After the Revolution Caswell took part in forming state policies and sending to state and national governments officials who proved worthy of their responsibilities. From these beginnings Caswell would produce outstanding statesmen and leaders.

CHAPTER II

ANTEBELLUM CASWELL

Education, Religion

From 1750 to 1775, not more than one-third of the inhabitants of Caswell County could read and hardly half that number could write. Between 1775 and 1780, about half of the inhabitants received the common English education of reading, writing, and ciphering from Robert H. Childers.[1]

After 1800, great improvements were made especially with the creation of various academies. As the plantation owners and citizens of Yanceyville and Leasburg became concerned with the intellectual development of their youth, various plans for academies were made public during the winter of 1801.

In 1802, the General Assembly of North Carolina enacted the following law to create Caswell Academy:

> Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That Thomas Donoho, Solomon Graves, Jesse Carter, Alexander Murphey, David Mitchell, Richard Simpson, Marmaduke Williams, Michael Montgomery, John M'Aden, James Yancey, and Henry Atkinson, Esquires shall be, and they are hereby declared to be a

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[1] Charles S. Coon, The Beginnings of Public Education In North Carolina 1790-1840 (Raleigh: Edward & Broughton Printing Co., 1908), I, 64. Hereafter cited, Coon, Beginnings of Public Education.

> body politic and corporate, to be known and distinguished by the name of "The Trustees of the Caswell Academy" and by that name shall have perpetual succession and that they the Trustees, and their successors by the name aforesaid, or a majority of them, shall be able and capable in law, to take, demand, receive, and possess all monies, goods and chattels that shall be given for the use of the said Academy, and the same apply according to the will of the donors and by gifts, purchase or devise, to take, have, receive, possess, and enjoy and retain to them and their successors forever, any lands, rents, tenements, and hereditaments of what kind or nature soever, in special trust and confidence, that the same or the profits thereof, be applied to and for the use and purpose of establishing and endowing said academy.[2]

Depending on small tuition and aid from donations by the trustees, the school subscribed around $600 in 1802. During the first two years the teachers were the Reverend Hugh Shaw and Bartlett Yancey, and the enrollment stood between fifty-five and sixty-five students per year. Between 1805 and 1808, the school prospered little. In 1808, John W. Caldwell became its director and increased its emphasis on literature, morality, and religion. He had been educated by his father, Dr. David Caldwell of Guilford. In 1810, the enrollment was a mere thirty-five students. After the appointment of Caldwell, the school began to model its plan of education after that of the University with a view to transferring the boys to Chapel Hill to complete the rudiments of their education. Board

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[2] Charles L. Coon, ed., North Carolina Schools and Academies (Raleigh: Edward & Broughton Printing Co., 1915), p. 18. Hereafter cited, Coon, North Carolina Schools and Academies.

was provided in area homes for forty or forty-five dollars per year and many efforts were made to induce parents to send their students.[3]

Notices of the school published in the Raleigh Register each year gave tuition rates and announcements of examinations and other exercises. On November 22, 1802, the following notice appeared in the paper:

> There will be opened in the County of Caswell, near the Courthouse, on the first day of January next, an Academy, known by the Name of the Caswell Academy, for the Reception of Students, to be taught the different Branches of Literature; to wit, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, the Latin and Greek Languages, Geography, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Astronomy, etc., etc., under the direction of the Rev. Hugh Shaw. The Terms for teaching the Latin and Greek Languages, together with the Sciences, will be 14 dollars per Annum; Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, 7 dollars per Annum. Boarding may be procured convenient to the said Academy in good Houses, at the low price of 331/3 dollars per Annum.[4]

In 1805, Sanders Donoho was appointed director. In January of 1805, James Bowles was employed to teach writing, English grammar, the Latin and Greek languages, arithmetic, geography, trigonometry, natural and moral philosophy, with astronomy.[5] The academy survived until just before the Civil War.

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[3] Cecil Jones, "Caswell Has Big Place In History," Greensboro Daily News, December 7, 1952, p. 1.

[4] Coon, North Carolina Schools and Academies, p. 18.

[5] Ibid., p. 19.

In 1804, the following act passed the General Assembly for the establishment of Hico (Hyco) Academy:

> Whereas, a number of the citizens of this and the adjacent counties, are desirous of establishing an academy for the promotion of learning in the lower end of the county aforesaid, and having liberally subscribed for the purpose of carrying the same into effect, and trustees being appointed, they therefore are desirous of receiving the sanction of the Legislature by an act to incorporate them. Therefore, be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that John Ogilby, John M'Aden, Thomas J. Moore, Samuel Smith, James Rainey, Swepson Sims, and Herndon Haralson, Esquires, shall be and they are hereby declared to be a body politic and corporate, to be known and distinguished by the name of "The Trustees of the Hico Academy," and by that name shall have perpetual succession; and that they the trustees, and their successors by the name aforesaid, or a majority of them, shall be able and capable in law to take, demand, receive, and possess all monies, goods and chattels that shall be given for the use of the said Academy, and the same apply according to the will of the donors; and by gift, purchase or devise, to take, have, receive, possess enjoy and retain to them and their successors forever, any lands, rents, tenements, and hereditaments of what kind or nature soever, in special trust and confidence, that the same or the profits thereof be applied to and for the use and purposes of establishing and endowing the said Academy, and all purchases by them made of real and personal estate in their names as trustees aforesaid, and all contracts entered into by them as aforesaid, are hereby declared to be as good and valid to all intents and purposes, as if they had been heretofore a body politic and corporate.[6]

The Reverend Hugh Shaw, after leaving Caswell Academy, and the Reverend Thomas Cottrell were employed as the first teachers with responsibility for forty students in the first year. In 1810 the Academy burned and a lottery was held to raise money to replace the old structure

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[6] Ibid., pp. 21-27.

with a new brick building.[7] Serving as trustees at this time were Dr. John McAden, Samuel Smith, James Rainey, Herndon Haralson, Colonel George Lea, Edmund Dixon, and Thomas Bouldin.[8]

In 1812, Abel Graham was appointed principal teacher. In the following year, science and Greek classics were added to the curriculum with the employment of L. Holbrootz. In 1818, John H. Hinton was made director. He had been educated at the University and had also taught there. In 1820, Mablon Kenyon was employed. Educated in the North, he held a Master's degree with teaching experience in public and private academies. Dabney Rainey was employed as his assistant. Kenyon's job was to offer students work intended to prepare them for entrance into the University.[9]

The tuition rates for Hico Academy were as follows: English education eight to ten dollars per session, with Latin and Greek or mathematics, fifteen dollars per session. Board was available in the community at seven dollars per month.[10]

On October 1, 1818 Springfield Academy was opened under the direction of William C. Love from the University of North Carolina. He was described as: "a young gentleman

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[7] Coon, Beginnings of Public Education, p. 65.

[8] Coon, North Carolina Schools and Academies, p. 24.

[9] Ibid., pp. 24-27.

[10] Ibid.

who possesses handsome acquirements, and a good moral character, this, together with healthiness of the situation, will doubtless be an inducement to many gentlemen to send their sons."[11] Board for this school, depending on crop prospects, was forty-five dollars per year.[12]

On October 1, 1818, a female seminary called Miss Prendergast's School opened at Brice Collins' home. Course offerings were orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, needlework, drawing, painting, embroidery, geography, the use of maps, and scanning of poetry. Tuition was set at ten dollars per year. The instructor was Rachel Prendergast.[13]

In January, 1819, the Milton Female Academy was established under the direction of the Reverend Abner W. Clopton with tutoresses from Philadelphia and New York. Parents were assured of proper conduct, religious exercises, and that their daughters would be "debarred from all scenes of profane merriment, and revelling."[14]

In November of 1824, John H. Pickard opened a school near Brown's store to teach the rudiments of English, Latin, and Greek, but the institution did not attain an adequate enrollment.[15] Ten months later, a Miss Ballantine opened a seminary for young ladies at the home of General

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[11] Ibid., p. 29.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., pp. 29-30

[14] Ibid., pp. 30-31.

[15] Ibid., p. 31.

A. Graves near Rockingham Springs. Attention was given to "morals and manners, and a regular system of scientific and ornamental branches necessary to complete female education."[16] Board was provided at Mrs. Lea's for thirty-five per session. Class cost was for one, ten dollars; two, twelve dollars and a half; three or four, fifteen dollars.[17] On January 2, 1826, Mrs. Stith opened a seminary for young ladies near the store of Q. Anderson. Tuition was sixteen dollars and she also provided board for fifty dollars per year.[18]

Preceding the Civil War the Solomon Lea School, which flourished in Leasburg, had been established by the Reverend Solomon Lea, a Methodist minister, and his wife. In the late 1850's, Somerville Female Institute was described, doubtless with some exaggeration, as one of the best educational institutions of the country and drew students from North and South. Board and room with laundry ran to forty-two dollars and a half for a session of twenty-one weeks. Spring sessions began on the first Wednesday of June, and Fall sessions ran from the second Wednesday of July to the first Wednesday in December.[19]

The courses offered at this school were those then considered fundamental to a liberal education. Groundwork

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[16] Ibid. [17] Ibid. [18] Ibid., p. 32.

[19] Thompson, "A History of Leasburg," pp. 2-3.

in the three R's was followed by a three-year scientific and classical course consisting of piano music, singing, drawing, painting, wax work, leatherwork, and fine embroidery. The Latin course included readings by Virgil, Sallust, Cicero, and Horace. The sciences included physiology, geography, chemistry, astronomy, mental and moral philosophy, botany, and minerology.[20]

Lea, in his curriculum, claimed to be offering young women courses which many female academies did not yet supply. A girl's education at this school could presumably equal that of the preparation given to males before entering the University. The prominence of this academy was due to the prominence of its founder.

Lea's fondness for physics and astronomy caused him to name his school for the distinguished contemporary woman astronomer and physicist, Mrs. Mary Somerville of Scotland.[21]

The Leasburg Classical School for boys opened in 1835 under the direction of William H. Owens. Housed in a brick building, it was a preparatory school offering courses in sciences, literature, and languages.[22] Although Leasburg was the chief educational center with the most outstanding schools, Milton, Yanceyville, and smaller villages offered education for those able to pay. Public education was as yet non-existent in Caswell at this time.

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Coon, North Carolina Schools and Academies, pp. 32-33.

From 1804 to 1810, Caswell sent to the University many students who had been educated at these academies. Those making an impressive record for themselves include: Saunders Donoho, Bartlett Yancey, Edward D. Jones, James W. Brown, Romulus Saunders, David Hart, and John W. Graves.[23]

Schools to instruct the public mind, and churches to guard morality helped make Caswell a good place to live in the early nineteenth century. The early settlers brought with them their religious beliefs from different countries, but the typical affiliation was with the Established Church of England before the Revolution.

In 1755, the Reverend Hugh McAden, the first Presbyterian pioneer missionary to North Carolina, settled in Caswell County. McAden was born in Pennsylvania of Northern Ireland stock. He had studied at Nassau Hall and had been instructed in theology by John Blair. Graduated in 1753 from the New Castle Presbytery, he was ordained to preach in 1757.[24]

As McAden traveled and preached throughout North Carolina, he kept a journal which has been preserved. His work is extremely important to the history of North Carolina and Caswell County. His visits to Caswell, recorded in the diary indicate the reasons he finally selected Caswell as his home. After preaching in Caswell during July and

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[23] Coon, Beginnings of Public Education, p. 66.

[24] Saunders, p. 1200.

August of 1755, McAden returned to Hanover. Finding this area bad for his health, he decided to locate in Caswell. He selected an area on the Hyco Creek because the people of this region "are sheep without a shepherd."[25] McAden served as pastor in Caswell from 1768 until his death in 1781. In 1768, he ordained David Caldwell as minister in the famous Red House Church. McAden, outspoken on most issues, was not reluctant to criticize the British in America. For these actions, it is believed Cornwallis, during his march through Caswell, came looking for McAden, but, as we have noted, only found his grave.[26] A fire started by the British soldiers destroyed many of McAden's papers, and with them much of the story of McAden was lost to history.

Some of the more prominent members of Red House Church were Romulus Saunders, Bedford Brown, John Kerr, Louis Poteat, Archibald Murphey, and William Holden. The latter attended this church and kept his membership there even after becoming governor. Even though part of the original structure was burned, four other buildings have been added to the original site. The stained glass windows of the original, the first in the colony, are still a part of the present edifice. Records of the church have been preserved back to 1820.[27]

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[25] Ibid., pp. 1200-1212.

[26] "History of Yanceyville and Caswell County," p. 3.

[27] Sharpe, "Anecdote and Incident," p. 19.

The first church in Leasburg was an Episcopal Church called Leas Chapel. The Leas, who were adherents of the Church of England, were converted to Methodism during Bishop Asbury's visit to the county around 1780.[28]

The Primitive Baptist faith was also strong in Caswell, the first congregation being formed at Lynches (Lynch's) Creek Church in 1799. However the Country Line Church formed in 1800 is considered the mother church, and Bush Arbor was formed around 1806.[29]

Various doctrinal splits occurred within this group, leading to the formation of Missionary Baptist churches in the area. The Ebenezer Baptist Church was divided when a man called John Osborn, coming from Baltimore to preach, advocated a more hardshell doctrine. Stephen Pleasant, a resident of Leasburg, took a decisive stand against Osborn's teachings, and the controversy led to the establishment of the Beulah Missionary Baptist Association around 1833.[30]

Another schism occurred when two Primitive Baptist elders, John Stadler and John Kerr, held a debate at the old Bush Arbor. The debate became so furious that at the end Kerr called on those who believed with him to march

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[28] William S. Dixon, "The Leasburg I Knew," Caswell Messenger, April 28, 1968, p. 4.

[29] Sharpe, "Anecdote and Incident," p. 19.

[30] C. Jones, p. 11.

out, thus forming the Missionary Baptist Church known as Kerr's Chapel.[31]

Bartlett Yancey reports in his account of the county that: "the great revival of religion around 1800 seems to have contributed much to the dissemination of morality, sound principles, and good order in society."[32] He also estimated that in 1810 there were four Baptist, four Presbyterian, and three or four Methodist Churches in the county.[33] From these early beginnings, disputes, and new organizations, most of the leading denominations were represented in the various communities.

Tobacco Culture

Caswell County became the home of bright leaf tobacco quite by chance. This accident changed the life style of yeoman farmers into that of planters. Caswell became one of the best examples of antebellum plantation life styles of any place in North Carolina or the South, except that tobacco, rather than cotton, was the staple production.

From the beginnings of Colonial America tobacco has been an important crop, often serving as the medium of exchange to purchase supplies and even used to procure a wife by paying her passage to the New World. Caswell

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[31] Sharpe, "Anecdote and Incident," p. 20.

[32] Newsome, p. 425. [33] Ibid., p. 428.

County, because of her rich fertile low lands along the Dan, known as cecil sandy loam soil, and numerous creeks, proved to be excellent for the growth of tobacco. That this crop was becoming increasingly important to Caswell's economy even before the event of 1852 is evidenced by the increased purchases of slaves made before flue cured tobacco became popular. This heightened emphasis on tobacco production changed the composition of Caswell's population. In the 1800 census of North Carolina counties, Caswell had 5,913 whites, 2,788 slaves, and 26 blacks.[34] In 1810 Caswell's population was 7,368 whites, 4,299 slaves, and 90 free.[35] This approximate doubling of slave population in less than ten years indicates the expanding need for the large hand labor supply so essential in the growing of tobacco. The results of this conversion from diversified farming to that of a single staple crop was evident in 1840, when three and one-half million pounds of tobacco was produced in Caswell.[36] In that year J. J. Gurney, a Quaker reformer, recorded that one million dollars was spent on the purchase of slaves.[37]

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[34] Coon, Beginnings of Public Education, p. 19.

[35] Sharpe, "Power and Glory of Old Caswell,"p. 24.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Guion G. Johnson, Ante-Bellum North Carolina, A Social History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), p. 473.

An accident caused tobacco-growing to become even more important, to the whole state of North Carolina and its neighbor Virginia, than it had been previously. Up to 1852, the tobacco raised was a dark, heavy leaf, cured in open air. In 1852, on the plantation of Eli and Elisha (Abisha ?) Slade, a slave called Stephen, left to tend the fires in the barn, soon fell asleep. Upon waking, he realized that the fires were too low. Afraid that his master would find out, he threw charcoal into the fire causing a sudden rise in temperature and a flameless, smokeless fire which produces a bright yellow leaf. Thus the method of flue curing of tobacco was inadvertently invented. The Slades were afraid that this gold colored tobacco would not sell. Instead, this curing brought forty cents a pound, instead of the prevailing price of ten cents.[38] Caswell had become the home of flue-cured bright leaf tobacco.

In 1857, Captain Slade raised 20,000 pounds of tobacco with only ten slaves. Growing the crop on thin land and manuring it with guano, he produced two hundred pounds per acre. The entire crop sold in Lynchburg, Virginia at the extraordinary price for that day of thirty-five dollars per hundred pounds.[39]

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[38] Sharpe, "Power and Glory of Old Caswell," p. 16.

[39] Johnson, p. 484.

The continued success of the Slades prompted neighbors to discover their secret. As Slade began to teach the technique, mansions began to replace yeoman's cottages and plantation life reigned in Caswell.

By 1856, tobacco had overshadowed all other forms of enterprise in Caswell.[40] By 1860, the slave population had continued to increase to 9,355 while the white population was declining from the 1850 peak of 8,399 to 6,587 in 1860.[41] This was due to westward migration of smaller farmers who were unable to compete with the larger planters.

Along with the growth of raw tobacco came the development of tobacco warehouses, manufacturing, and processing plants in the county, the largest centers being located in Yanceyville and Milton. The development of a tobacco culture, while it made Caswell a wealthy county during a period when the neighboring counties were not prospering, also retarded its economic and industrial growth in other respects. This tobacco culture reigned supreme until the Civil War and Reconstruction brought an end to the available labor supply. Tobacco is one factor why Caswell has remained a rural county even in the twentieth century and has not had the industrial growth of many of

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[40] Sharpe, "Power and Glory of Old Caswell," pp. 24-25.

[41] Nannie May Tilley, The Bright Tobacco Industry 1860-1929 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), p. 17.

the other counties of the state. With increased soil erosion, production fell, and Caswell's economy was clearly imperilled by the county's unhealthy dependence upon the fragrant leaf.

The County's Antebellum Leaders

"Few counties can present citizens whose services are entitled to more respect, and whose devotion to the welfare of the state was more sincere than Caswell."[42] This was written when Caswell played a large part in politics and fostered many notable men.

Antebellum Caswell County was much like the stereotyped southern era of plantations, slaves, public orators, and controversial politics. During this period Caswell County produced its greatest statesmen, who not only contributed to the county, but to the state and nation as well. This was the era when the names Calvin Graves, Romulus Saunders, Bartlett Yancey, Bedford Brown and Archibald Murphey wielded the political power and prestige which placed Caswell among North Carolina's most outstanding counties. It was the era when Caswell's favorite sons brought prominence, surpassed by no one of the twentieth century. Theirs was the zenith of Caswell's power.

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[42] Wheeler, Historical Sketches, p. 81.

Calvin Graves was born on his father's farm in Caswell County in January, 1804 to a distinguished family. His father, Azariah Graves had served as a member of the state senate from 1805 to 1811. His mother was the daughter of John Williams, a Lieutenant Colonel of the Hillsborough Minute Men, who at the end of the Revolutionary War became Caswell County's first lawyer. His grandfather, John Graves, served as a member of the North Carolina Assembly from 1788 to 1793.[43]

Graves received his primary education under the Reverend William Bingham of the locally famous Bingham Academy in Orange County. At the age of nineteen, he entered the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and remained for one year. The next year he read law under his brother-in-law, Judge Settle. His studies were finished under Judge Henderson of Granville County, a later Chief Justice for the state. In 1827, Graves was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-three.[44] Although he became a successful lawyer and was noted for possessing "cogency of arguement and clearness of statement," his fame came from his legislative efforts.[45]

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[43] Samuel A. Ashe, ed., Biographical History of North Carolina: From Colonial Times to the Present (Greensboro: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1905), II, 108.

[44] Wheeler, Reminiscences and Memoirs, p. 105.

[45] Ashe, p. 108.

In 1835, Graves was elected as a member of the convention to reform the North Carolina Constitution. Repeated contact with many able statesmen proved to be a good school for young Graves. At this convention his voting record was against changing the religious test for office-holding, and for the establishment of biennial sessions of the assembly and the election of governor for a two-year term. Because he came from a family which strongly supported Jefferson and Madison, Graves's political candidacy was within the Democratic Party when he won election to the House of Commons in 1840 and served as party leader during that term. Reelected in 1844, his party chose him as speaker of the house. In 1843, he became a trustee of the University. Graves's senate career started with his election in 1846, when he made a speech against Whig plans to redistrict the state. During this session Graves was elected Speaker Pro Tem when the Whig speaker Andrew Joyner fell ill. Returned by the citizens of Caswell to the senate in 1848, Graves became speaker of this most important session, destined to be his last.[46]

The 1848 session of the General Assembly had been considered one of the most important of antebellum legislatures since it enacted legislation for the construction of an asylum for the mentally ill, proposed internal

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[46] Ibid., p. 110.

improvements of over $2,000,000 for a railroad to connect the mountains to the seaboard, and promoted other reform bills as well.[47]

The railroad issue presented a challenge to Graves which resulted in his claim to fame as well as marking the end to his political career. He was faced with the decision of choosing for the state as a whole or for his local constituency on the question of governmental aid for railroads. A bill proposed by Senator William Ashe of New Hanover to provide for the construction of an East-West Railroad from Goldsboro through Raleigh on to Charlotte, to which the state would contribute $2,000,000 passed the House with promise of state aid to a plank railroad from Fayetteville to Salem. This bill faced much opposition in the senate. With the exception of Graves, the delegates from Caswell County opposed this measure because Caswell would receive service from a Danville-Charlotte Railroad proposal which could be constructed without state aid.[48] After much heated debate on the issue of using state funds for internal improvements, the senate vote ended in a tie, and the deciding vote lay with Speaker Graves. Graves rose and in a hushed room announced: "The clerk reports twenty-four votes in the affirmative and twenty-four in the negative, the

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[47] Wheeler, Reminiscences and Memoirs, p. 105.

[48] Ashe, p. 108.

speaker votes in the affirmative, the bill has passed the senate."[49]

Without adjourning, this session of the senate broke up in chaotic confusion. Graves lost his popularity and never regained it for he was not elected to any office in Caswell and never sat in the legislature again. Today his action would be judged necessary and proper because, for the benefit of the entire state, he overcame local opposition and party opinion to vote his convictions. This decisive vote put an end to Graves in Caswell County politics but helped put North Carolina on the road to prosperity. His action has been called: ". . . a greater display of political courage than [that of] any other man in the history of the state."[50] Graves did continue to work for internal improvements by helping raise funds for the railroad. At the end of his term, Graves resumed his law practice among hostile neighbors. He was married to Elizabeth, daughter of John C. Lea, a prominent citizen. He died on February 11, 1877 at the age of seventy-three. Scorned during his lifetime and neglected by historians, Graves has only in the twentieth century received praise and recognition for his fortitude. His display of political courage helped to eliminate one of the causes of sectionalism that was dividing the state.

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[49] Wheeler, Reminiscences and Memoirs, p. 109.

[50] R. C. Lawrence, "Speaker Calvin Graves," The State, IX (December 27, 1941), p. 9. Hereafter cited, Lawrence, "Speaker Calvin Graves."

Romulus Mitchell Saunders was born in Caswell County on March 3, 1791, the son of William Saunders, who had served under General Greene in the Revolutionary War, and Hannah Mitchell Saunders, who died shortly afterwards. He was educated at the Hyco and Caswell Academies and entered the University of North Carolina in 1809.[51] The Raleigh Star of March 29, 1810, lists Saunders' name among those persons expelled from the University.[52] However all other accounts record that he served two years there before studying law with the Honorable Hugh Lawson, a judge of the Supreme Court of Tennessee. Saunders was licensed to practice in that state in 1812.[53]

Saunders had a distinguished political career and often seemed to be in the middle of heated disputes, if not the cause of them. Upon returning to North Carolina from Tennessee, he, along with Bedford Brown, was elected to the House of Commons from 1815 to 1820. During this time he served as speaker of the house in 1819 and 1820. From 1821 to 1827, Saunders was a representative in Congress but he declined to run for reelection thereafter because of family problems. From 1828 to 1833, he served as

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[51] Ashe, III, 386.

[52] Reminiscences and Memoirs, p. 107.

[53] Wheeler, Historical Sketches, pp. 179-80.

Attorney General for North Carolina.[54] In 1833, he was appointed by President Andrew Jackson to serve on the French Spoliation Claims Commission to decide and allot the amounts due United States citizens by France as provided for in the Treaty of July 4, 1831.[55]

From 1835 to 1840, Saunders served as Circuit judge of the Superior Court. As judge, Saunders administered justice in his own style. He was not bound by technicalities, artificial rules, and precedents but used his own ideas of right and wrong. One example of this concerns a case in which the lawyer brought in State Supreme Court Records to read from them the opinion of Chief Justice Pearson. Saunders replied: "Mr. Strong, Chief Justice Pearson has no respect for my opinion, and Sir, I have no respect for his."[56] The prisoner was convicted. Even though Saunders was an autocratic judge, for the most part, he did try to insure justice in his court, often relaxing laws for the poor.

Saunders resigned from the court in 1840 to run as the Democratic candidate for governor against John M. Morehead in a most heated and long remembered campaign. Saunders, an effective and forceful public speaker, often

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[54] Ibid., p. 80; Ashe, pp. 387-88.

[55] Wheeler, Historical Sketches, p. 80.

[56] Joseph Cheshire, Nonnulla: Memoirs, Stories, Traditions, More or Less Authentic (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 119.

was careless and inaccurate in his use of the English language. When Morehead first met Saunders "on the stump" for debates, he was unable to compete with his political arguments. Morehead admitted that debating Saunders taught him the art of political persuasian.[57] However ardent Saunders was in this election, he suffered the same fate as his party. A Whig majority to put an end to Jacksonian-Van Buren politics on the national level helped Morehead defeat Saunders by 8,000 votes. Defeat did not stop Saunders, for he was elected to Congress in 1840 and 1842.[58]

The National Democratic Party was ridden by the ghost of Judge Saunders for many years thanks to his two-thirds rule by which a nominee must receive two-thirds of all the votes cast if he is to receive the presidential nomination. This rule became a permanent part of Democratic Party machinery when Saunders, as a delegate to the convention, moved its adoption. This aided the defeat of Van Buren partisans and helped send Polk on the road to victory. The story goes that Saunders passed the word for his supporters to be in their seats half an hour earlier the next morning for convention business. Having enough to constitute a quorum, the convention was called to order earlier. With the Saunders' Rule supporters in the majority, the two-thirds resolution was easily passed.[59]

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[57] Ibid. [58] Ashe, p. 390.

[59] Cheshire, pp. 115-16. The two-thirds rule had been introduced as early as 1832 at the convention and used again

From 1846 to 1850, Saunders served as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States to Spain and helped negotiate the sale of Cuba.[60] Saunders could not speak Spanish and had difficulty with correct English. His appointment brought criticism from a political foe, the Whig Judge Badger. When asked about the appointment, Badger replied: "Well Judge Saunders certainly does not speak English. Perhaps what he speaks is Spanish."[61]

In 1850, Saunders asked to be relieved of his ministership in Spain. Upon returning to North Carolina, he was elected to the House of Commons from Wake County and worked hard for internal improvements. From 1852 until his death on April 21, 1867, Saunders again served as judge of the Superior Court.[62]

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in the one of 1836. It did not become a standard part of Democratic Party rules until the passage of the Saunders Rule made a two-thirds majority of all voting delegates a permanent part of party nominating machinery. Even though it took Polk seven ballots before receiving the nomination, under this rule no other candidate came close in 1844. The rule was abolished in 1936.

[60] Wheeler, Historical Sketches, p. 80. Saunders had been appointed as Minister to Spain on February 25, 1846 by President Polk to negotiate the purchase of Cuba for $100,000,000. Saunders did not bring up the matter at first and spent a great deal of time in Paris, neglecting his duties as minister. After postponing the Cuban issue for two years, he approached Spanish officials in July of 1848 but was curtly refused.

[61] Cheshire, p. 117.

[62] Wheeler, Reminiscences and Memoirs, p. 107.

Judge Saunders had a decided taste for politics. He was always either in office or aspiring for a position. His nickname, "Old Roan," was apt, in that he ran as an individual and was unorthodox in his politics. His desire to be elected is reflected in the 1852-53 election:

> In 1852-53, the Democrats had a majority in the legislature but failed to elect a senator to succeed Judge Mangum. R. M. Saunders, as usual, was a candidate. He was one of our leading men but insatiable in his thirst for office. He was equally profound and adroit as a lawyer, greatly respected as a judge, and unsurpassed as a stump orator. His four years of acquaintance with the formal etiquette of the Spanish Court had failed to remove his native and inherent roughness of manners.[63]

The truth sometimes demands a faithful but not always a flattering picture of a person. Such is the case of Judge Saunders. His service contributed to the wealth, elevation, and honor of the state and nation, but his unsatisfied desire and love for politics have raised various doubts concerning his policies and principles. Although he could shake the courage of any of his political opponents, he let political ambition get the best of his talents.

Saunders was married to Rebecca Carter on December 22, 1812 and had three sons and four daughters. She died on May 26, 1823. His second marriage to Anna Heyes Johnson produced two sons and four daughters.[64]

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[63] John W. Moore, History of North Carolina (Raleigh: A. Williams & Co., 1880), II, 98.

[64] Ashe, p. 394.

Bartlett Yancey was born six miles south of Yanceyville on February 19, 1785.[65] Three Yancey brothers of Welsh ancestry settled in America: Henry and Richard in Virginia, and Louis in Granville County. The latter's son, Bartlett Yancey, Sr. settled in Orange County in 1760, in the part which later became Caswell. Here, he married Miss Nancy Graves, daughter of John Graves of a very prominent family. The Yancey ancestors were members of the Established Church of England, and contributed one of their number as a clergyman in that church.[66]

Bartlett, Sr. was a semi-invalid suffering from rheumatism. Although unable to do manual labor on his farm, he was able to support his family by teaching school until his death in October, 1784. Much credit is due Nancy Graves for she was left with the responsibility of rearing ten children; Bartlett, Jr., the youngest, was born posthumously.[67]

Bartlett was educated at private schools of the neighborhood and Hyco Academy in the county seat.[68] At the age of fifteen, he was assisting Mr. Shaw in teaching at the Academy. For two years he served as assistant teacher

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[65] C. Jones, p. 5. [66] Ashe, VII, 503-04.

[67] Ibid., p. 506.

[68] Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1961 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 306.

while taking advanced Latin and mathematics under Mr. Shaw in preparing to attain his dream, to attend the University. When Shaw resigned, Bartlett received a salary of $200 a year, as full teacher during 1802-1804, which he applied to his college studies at the University from 1804 to 1806. He did not receive a degree, and he completed only two years because of the lack of funds.[69]

The youthful Yancey fulfilled his dreams of attending the University over his mother's opposition. She reportedly said: "Bartlett, you must not go there! I have never known a young man to enter that institution who was ever of any account afterwards."[70] Aided by his older brother James, a member of the State Legislature, Bartlett arrived in Chapel Hill in 1804.[71] He made great application to his studies and when classes were recessed, he walked the distance home of about forty miles to help his mother on the farm. Her opposition to his education had been based on her refusal to let him use one of her horses for travel. During his second year at the University, Yancey met Judge Archibald D. Murphey whose influence turned him towards a career in law. After leaving the University, Yancey studied under Murphey and was licensed to practice law in 1807.[72]

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[69] George Anderson, Bartlett Yancey, James Sprunt Historical Publications, X, No. 2 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1911), 8-9.

[70] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[71] Ashe, p. 504.

[72] Anderson, p. 10.

Bartlett married his first cousin, Nancy Graves, on December 8, 1808. She survived him by many years, dying on April 8, 1855, at the age of sixty-eight.[73] Living in a small log cabin with an increasing family, Bartlett began practicing law in Yanceyville. He began his professional career poor and unknown, but because he was industrious, ambitious, and conscientious, the public soon recognized his ability. His first court attendance, in Rockingham County, proved to be unprofitable. In the next week, after working in Person County, he returned home with a roll of bills which was to be the start of his fortune. His popularity increased and he was soon able to build a model country house. His home became a social center of aristocratic Caswell, and some of the greatest men of the state and nation were entertained there. It was here that Nathaniel Macon, Thomas Ruffin, Archibald Murphey, and John C. Calhoun conferred with Yancey on contemporary governmental affairs.[74]

He began his political career in 1813 as a member of the United States Congress. So great was his popularity that only one vote was cast against him in Caswell in his election to his second term in Congress. He became fast friends with such Congressional stalwarts as Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Nathaniel Macon. Clay, the presiding officer of the House, frequently called Bartlett to fill his place thus recognizing the talent of this young orator.

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[73] Ashe, p. 506. [74] Anderson, p. 11.

A member of the Republican Party and a "War Hawk," Yancey on June 19, 1813, made his first speech to set forth his position for war with England. He served on the Committee of Claims and succeeded Stevenson Archer of Maryland as chairman. In 1817, Yancey resigned because his Congressional salary was inadequate to support his family. During the first term he received only six dollars a day, or $1,500 per annum.[75]

Hardly was he back in Caswell before the citizens elected him as his county's state senator in 1817. In the first year he was elected speaker, a position he would hold until 1827.[76] His "rare courtesy, thorough knowledge of parliamentary law and usages, quick perception of intricate questions, and his great love of fair play made him, perhaps, the most popular presiding officer that the state has known."[77] Judge Nash described Yancey by saying: "dignified in his appearance, he filled the chair with grace; prompt to decide, little time was lost in debating questions referred to the speaker; . . . all were satisfied, so entirely that from the period of his first election no effort was once made to disturb his possession of the chair."[78] In 1818 he declined Governor Branch's offer as judge of the Superior Court because of the poor salary.[79] He could maintain his

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[75] Ashe, p. 506.

[76] C. Jones, P. 5.

[77] Anderson, p. 13.

[78] Ibid., p. 19.

[79] Ashe, p. 507.

law practice while serving in the senate, an accommodation which the judgeship would not allow.

Although not now in national politics, Yancey kept in contact with his friends in Washington. In the meantime, he devoted himself to building up his state. To him is due the credit for the final establishment of the Supreme Court System. He secured reorganization of the state treasury department, he favored internal improvements, and public school education. On these programs he met opposition from his friend Macon, but Yancey fought for reform.[80] Yancey's support of public education indicates the influence of his former teacher, Archibald Murphey. His efforts to establish free public education prompted Calvin Wiley in 1829 to call Yancey "the immediate father of the common school."[81]

Although Caswell sentiment was with the East, Yancey above all attacked the system of representation in the General Assembly. He was prominent in two conventions held in Raleigh to protest the existing conditions, the first in 1822 and the second (over which he presided) in 1823. Although it would be twelve years before reform would take place, he was warmly complimented in 1833 when a new western county carved from Burke and Buncombe was named for him.

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[80] Anderson, p. 20.

[81] A Calendar of the Bartlett Yancey Papers (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1940), p. 7.

Yancey County honors him for his ideas of equal representation for the west.[82]

In 1826, President John Adams offered Yancey appointment as minister to Peru but he refused because he did not wish to leave his wife and seven children. In 1828, it was evident that Yancey would achieve election to the United States Senate to fill the vacancy left when John Branch resigned to enter Jackson's cabinet, but death denied him the position.[83]

In August, 1828, Yancey was attending court in Greensboro as attorney for the plaintiff in the breach of promise case of Sallie Linden V. Martin. The case lasted all week and the verdict was brought in on Saturday in favor of his client. Exhausted, Yancey decided to rest at his hotel before the journey to Caswell. With the windows open in hot August, Yancey slept several hours in a draft, waking with a severe chill. In spite of a friend's warnings, he was determined to make the trip of fifty miles home, arriving there at ten that night. His condition grew worse but his mind remained clear enough to permit him to dictate to his wife detailed directions about the future management of his estate. On Sunday, August 31, 1828, at the age of forty-three, Yancey died just as the state was beginning to appreciate his exceptional gifts.[84]

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[82] Anderson, pp. 20-21. [83] Ibid., p. 21.

[84] Ibid., p. 14.

As a lawyer, he had met few equals and no superiors, and was regarded as one of the leading statesmen of the day.[85] Judge Nash said on his death: "He entered the profession young, unknown, and poor . . . he soon built up for himself both a name and a fortune. We have all known him as a high minded honorable man and lawyer."[86]

To the people of Caswell County, Yancey had left a valuable primary source in his description and history of the county during his lifetime written in 1810. His remains rest on his homestead which one passes today as one enters Yanceyville on Highway 158. His beautiful antebellum home is closed except for an occasional family visit. If these walls could talk, they might tell a remarkable story of this energetic man's devotion to the state.

A century ago the name Bedford Brown was well known not only in his native North Carolina but in the South and the nation. Today he remains forgotten except by a few Caswellians interested in local history. He was born June 6, 1795, on the Brown plantation in Caswell County, the third of eight children.[87] His grandfather, John Edmunds Brown, had migrated to Virginia from England. During the Revolutionary War Bedford's father, Jethro Brown, took up

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[85] C. Jones, p. 5. [86] Ashe, p. 506.

[87] Brown Family Bible, Rose Hill, North Carolina. Preface.

residence in Caswell because of the good tobacco soil. There he married Lucy Williamson of a prominent Caswell family. Bedford was named for the original Brown homestead in Bedfordshire, England. Both of his parents were of English ancestry.[88]

Bedford attended the University of North Carolina from 1813 to 1814. In August of 1815 he was elected, along with Romulus M. Saunders, to represent Caswell in the state legislature. Entering politics at the age of twenty, Brown held this position for fourteen years.[89] On July 13, 1816, Brown married Mary Lumpkin Gleen from Petersburg, Virginia.[90] Bedford's father, a learned man, prosperous planter, and tavern keeper gave the young couple a wedding trip to England and Scotland. On their return, he gave Bedford the home place, Rose Hill, a thousand acres of land, and 100 slaves.[91]

Raised in the spirit of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, Brown was devoted to the Doctrine of States' Rights, a stand which would create a controversy within himself, as well as in the state, because of his desire to preserve the Union.[92] During his fourteen years in the House of Commons, Brown served on many committees and held the speakership. He was elected in 1829 to fill the place left

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[88] Houston G. Jones, Bedford Brown (Carrollton, Georgia: West Georgia College Press, 1955), p. 4.

[89] Ashe, I, pp. 181-85. [90] Brown Family Bible

[91] C. Jones, p. 5. [92] Ashe, p. 182.

vacant by Bartlett Yancey's death in the State Senate. He was reelected to this position in 1830 and served as Speaker of the Senate.[93] In 1829 Thomas Ruffin encouraged Brown to run for the United States Senate to fill the place left when John Branch became Secretary of the Navy for Jackson. Many public men sought this prize, among whom were William B. Mercer, Judge John R. Donnell, Montford Stokes, and S. P. Carson. On the fifteenth ballot Brown's name was entered. He won on the legislature's first voting by ninety-five votes, one more than necessary to win.[94] With this Brown began a highly creditable senatorial career.

During this session Brown's votes expressed his opposition to Henry Clay's American System and his support of Jackson's administration, except for the Force Bill. His position on the American System showed his stand on states' rights but he also disapproved of nullification and federal spending schemes. By the time of his resignation in 1840, Brown could be called a States' Rights Unionist. Because of his stand, he was often the referee in North-South sectional controversy. He was states' rights in his belief in the idea of Republicanism, as stated by Jefferson, but he supported the Union against nullification. He stood with Southern opposition to the Tariff of 1832 but disagreed

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[93] H. G. Jones, p. 7. [94] Ashe, pp. 182-83.

with the Gag Rule, by which abolitionist petitions were denied a hearing.[95]

On January 28, 1833, Brown, who had tried a policy of conciliation between South Carolina and the Union, criticized South Carolina's actions and insisted that the difficulties could be ended by compromise. In his speech Brown argued: "I take my stand . . . on the reserved rights of the states. I repudiate the Doctrine of Nullification. I repudiate the high tone doctrine of the Federal Government on the rights of the states and by exercising doubtful power that the state of South Carolina has been thrown into this position."[96]

As early as 1831, Brown predicted the split in the nation and subsequent bloodshed if a compromise was not worked out. His influence was evident in the Compromise Tariff of 1833 when nullification gave way to conciliation. However, Brown's prediction of sectional strife would come to pass in his lifetime with the coming of the Civil War.

Although his stand had alienated many Democrats, he was returned to the Senate in 1834.[97] His principles were not acceptable to the other Southern senators, because he voted to let abolitionists' petitions be debated in Congress. He voted against the admission of Texas as a slave state but

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[95] H. G. Jones, pp. 9-11. [96] Ibid., p. 13.

[97] Ibid., p. 17.

more vehement was his opposition to Calhoun's proposed reduction of the Tariff of 1837. Brown opposed the admission of Texas because he thought it would disturb the Compromise of 1833 and reopen debate on nullification.[98] Brown's conduct indicated his desire to preserve the Union.

On February 23, 1838, Brown delivered a speech which ran twenty-five columns in the Congressional Globe.[99] This was his answer to the panic of 1837, proposing a sub-treasury plan to take the money from his own class, the aristocrats. However, the Whigs who had gained power in North Carolina failed to support Brown's position. With this Brown and his senatorial colleague, Robert Strange, announced they would resign in 1840 before the general elections so that the people's choices as assemblymen could indicate their support by reelecting them.[100] Brown's last speech in Congress was delivered on May 7, 1840, when he defended his record for upholding Jackson's and Van Buren's administrations. He had upheld the federal policies to prevent the setting of section against section. He opposed extremists of both North and South but would leave his fate up to the people of North Carolina. The Whigs swept the state, however, in the election of 1840, and Brown's defeat was inevitable. During his fifty-five years of political activity, Brown never failed to carry a majority

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[98] Ibid., p. 21.

[99] Ibid., p. 22.

[100] Ashe, p. 184.

of Caswell County at the polls. He was returned to the state legislature in 1840.[101]

In 1842, Brown was defeated by William W. Haywood in an attempt to regain his Senate seat thanks to the actions of a fellow Caswell Democrat, Romulus Saunders, who also wanted the position. The heated debate between Calhoun and Van Buren supporters caused the party to refuse both men and select Haywood. Saunders supported Calhoun as ardently as Brown backed Van Buren. Disillusioned, Brown sold his home, left politics and removed to Missouri.[102]

The family settled at Fayette, Missouri, but Brown was unable to remain out of politics. In 1847, he moved to Virginia and purchased Waveland, an elegant plantation. Less than a four-hour train ride from Washington, Brown was able to remain in close contact with the government but was totally dissatisfied with the Polk administration. His chief criticism related to Polk's Mexican policy which he regarded as highly unconstitutional.[103] Returning to Caswell in 1855, in less than a year, he was chosen as a delegate to the National Democratic Convention in which he served as vice-president for the North Carolina delegation.[104]

In 1858, Caswell returned Brown to the state senate, where he served as chairman of the Committee on Banks and

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[101] H. G. Jones, p. 24.

[102] Wheeler, Historical Sketches, p. 81.

[103] H. G. Jones, p. 33.

[104] Ibid., p. 37.

Currency. On April 23, 1860, Brown was again serving as vice-president for North Carolina's delegation to the Democratic Convention meeting in Charleston.[105] Brown's influence and prominence in national politics is reflected in a letter dated June 11, 1860 from Martin Van Buren to Theodore Miller discussing Democratic prospects for the upcoming election.

> He is without exception, one of the best and truest specimens of the old Republican school, now left in the country. An old and constant friend of General Jackson and my own, one on whom as much as any other man, we relied for support of our respective administrations in the Senate of the United States. I at least would think the country fortunate to get such a man for the office of president or vice-president.[106]

Although Brown was considered by the convention as vice-presidential material, his opposition to Southern and Northern extremists made his selection impossible, even before the convention split.

In 1868, Brown was elected to the state senate for the seventh time. However, the senate, controlled by Radical Republicans, banned him and would not accept Johnson's pardon. They seated scalawag John "Chicken" Stephens instead.[107] Brown's life was devoted first to Caswell, then to his state, then to his nation. He died on December 5,

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[105] Ibid., pp. 37-38.

[106] William K. Boyd, ed., Selections From the Correspondence of Bedford Brown, Historical Papers of the Historical Society of Trinity College (Durham: College Historical Society, 1906), I, 20.

[107] H. G. Jones, p. 53.

1870, while involved in working for his county. He had just returned from a trip to end the occupation of the county by troops during the "Kirk-Holden War."[108]

Today his grave is marked by some of his wife's boxwoods at Rose Hill. No monument honors the man who gave fifty-five years of his life to North Carolina and fought so hard to prevent the devastations of war. For his loyalty to the Union, he has earned no fame and is forgotten by most North Carolinians, but he never failed to carry the support of Caswell, whatever his stand.

A list of important Caswellians is incomplete without the name of Archibald Murphey. Although Murphey's principal influence came after he had moved to Orange County, his activities are interwoven with Caswell's history. Archibald Murphey was born on the family plantation six miles from Milton, on Hyco Creek in 1777. His father was Colonel Archibald Murphey, a Revolutionary War veteran. His mother was Jane DeBow, whose family was one of the first which settled along Hyco Creek.[109]

Murphey studied at David Caldwell's Academy in Guilford County. He entered the University in 1796 and

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[108] R. C. Lawrence, "Bedford Brown of Caswell," The State, IX (June 14, 1941), 10, 30. Hereafter cited, Lawrence, "Bedford Brown."

[109] William H. Hoyt, ed., The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell & Co., 1914), I, 9-10.

graduated in 1799 with highest distinction and honors. From 1799 to 1781, he served on the faculty of the University of North Carolina. In 1802, after being admitted to the bar, Murphey moved to Hillsborough to begin law practice. He had married Jane Armistead Scott on November 5, 1801. From 1812 to 1818, he represented Orange County in the state senate, leaving the senate to become a judge of the Superior Court.[110]

While in the legislature, Murphey served as a commissioner to study inland navigation. His final report of this study reflects the detailed thoroughness of his work. Murphey during these years formed the lifelong goals he would strive to attain for North Carolina. Basically, Murphey had three objectives: to stop the flow of population away from North Carolina, to increase the wealth of the state, and to free North Carolina from economic dependence on Virginia and South Carolina. He formulated detailed plans for each of his goals especially in the areas of education and internal improvements. From his 1816 report on conditions in the state, Murphey reported: "The true foundation of national prosperity and national glory must be laid in a liberal system of internal improvements and public education; in a system which shall give force to the faculties of the mind, and establish over the beast

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[110] Robert D. W. Connor, Ante-Bellum Builders of North Carolina (Greensboro: North Carolina College for Women, 1923), pp. 35-36.

(ignorance) the empire of a sound morality."[111] He continued to work for his program long after being out of public office.

However, Murphey's plans were too bold and comprehensive for his day. The same lack of public knowledge which Murphey found in his travels through North Carolina, he had to cope with in the legislature.

Murphey's plans for education were the richest legacy that he could have left the state. Not until many years after his death did North Carolina follow his advice. It was his misfortune to have been born a century before his time. His policies, rejected in the nineteenth century, have been readily accepted by the twentieth. Murphey had been born too late to be a part of the Revolution and building of a Federal union, but he wanted to create his own revolution and build a greater North Carolina.

Murphey's ambitions were unrealized and his labors unappreciated. His idealism often led him to financially back his plans, and this continuously kept him in poverty. Murphey resigned from the Superior Court after three years to reopen his law practice in order to recover his financial losses. Ill health prevented this. Murphey was even arrested for debt. He died a broken man on February 1, 1832, his plan rejected.[112] Today he has found a modest place in

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[111] Ibid., p. 40

[112] Ashe, IV, 346.

history and is considered one of the fathers of public education in North Carolina

A generation after Murphey, Bartlett Yancey, once Murphey's pupil, drafted a bill modeled on Murphey's 1817 report on education which created the first public school in 1839.[113] Caswell County rewarded Murphey's efforts by naming a school for him.

The first half of the nineteenth century found Caswell County leading the state through the contributions of her public servants, distinguished sons of whom Caswell may be proud.

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[113] R. C. Lawrence, "Murphey Turned Prophet," The State, XII (May 5, 1945), 21-22.

CHAPTER III

CIVIL WAR, RECONSTRUCTION, AND OBLIVION

The Civil War Comes to Caswell

For three decades prior to the Civil War, Caswell County was the center of wealth and culture for northern North Carolina. The tobacco business had proved to be lucrative and Caswell had achieved notable prominence with her outstanding statesmen. As the controversies raged over secession, Caswell was only mildly secessionist, preferring not to take steps which would disturb the prevailing style of living. This mode, however, they would fight to preserve.

The thinking of the citizenry of Caswell is reflected throughout its history by the type of men chosen to represent the county. The same term which can be used to describe Bedford Brown, states' rights unionist, can also be used to describe Caswell in 1850. While the people acted to preserve the Union and to avoid debates on slavery, most of all they wished to avert physical strife. The temperament of the area is illustrated in remarks made by Brown, while visiting in Washington, in a letter to his brother William Brown back home in Caswell. In the March 4, 1850 letter, Brown's closing remarks indicate his belief that extremists

of both sides had brought on the crisis. Although he had earlier criticized Calhoun's disunion proposals, he went on to say:

> . . . the patriotic party and people of the South while they ought and must stand ready to resist abolition in the District or the passage of the proviso by Congress have another duty to perform and that is to guard against the extreme movements of the disunionists of the South. . . . If Congress abolishes slavery and passes the proviso the Southern states ought to resist it by withdrawing from the union. But the admission of California is no ground for disunion.[1]

Brown's opinion echoed that of Caswell; avoid any issue that could cause disunion, but in the last extremity, support the state if it chose to withdraw. Meanwhile Brown would experience an inner turmoil, and Caswell would resist anything which threatened to shake the status quo. The changing position of Caswell County from 1850 to 1860 is evident in the writings of Charles Evans in the Milton Chronicle, a widely read paper for its time. As the tension mounted between North and South, Evans commented, in an issue dated April 4, 1850, on the Compromise of 1850: "the whole excitement that has prevailed on this subject [abolition] had been fomented by Locofoco politicians for base party purposes . . . they will be disappointed in this hope. The Union will stand. . . . The people mean that it shall be so. . . ."[2]

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[1] Letters from Bedford Brown to William Brown, March 4, 1850, Bedford Brown Papers (Durham: Duke Historical Society, 1906), pp. 66-92.

[2] Stokes, p. 257.

Along with the majority of Caswell citizens, Evans accepted the Compromise of 1850. By 1855, his concern over the trend in national affairs once again revealed the current thinking in Caswell:

> We are often asked the question, What will we do, if the Northern Americans in the next Congress oppose the South on the Slavery question, or show that upon this question Southern Americans cannot trust them. We have no hesitation in declaring that under a state of things like this we would run up a Southern flag bearing the inscription of a Southern party, or the South against the North.[3]

In 1861 Evans supported the Confederacy. Blaming the Republican Party, the high tariff, and the oppression of the North, he wrote:

> A terrible moment is at hand. . . . It is time to stop watching and waiting and act. . . . Our love for the old Union is deep rooted, and hard to unfix, and it is not without a heavy heart, that we throw a rod upon our country's grave and raise a cry for secession. . . . Withdrawal, and that as soon as possible, is the only alternative left to us.[4]

The old Whig had become an aggrieved Democrat. Evans then threw his support behind the Confederacy, often reporting with obvious approval the activities of the Milton Blues and Leasburg Grays, both of which later became part of the Third North Carolina Volunteers.[5] The Leasburg Grays were supported by their home village throughout the war. The flag made for the unit by Miss Willie Lea (a seventeen-year

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., pp. 257-58.

[5] Ibid., p. 258.

old belle who evidently knew nothing about stars) had six-pointed stars, a distinguishing feature for this unit throughout the war.[6]

The first attempts to call a state convention to consider secession was voted down in North Carolina in February, 1861. With the firing on Fort Sumter and Virginia's secession, Bedford Brown was again in Raleigh to represent Caswell in a special session of the General Assembly meeting on May 20, 1861.[7] Also representing Caswell during the first year of the war was John Azariah Graves, but he resigned on May 23, 1861 to be replaced by James Edwards Williamson.[8]

John A. Graves was born in 1822, the son of Captain William and Annie Lea Graves. He had served as a member of the state senate in 1854. Upon resigning from office, he helped raise the first company of volunteers in Caswell and became its captain. This group was active with the First Regiment of North Carolina Volunteers at Bethel, Manassas, Chancellorsville, and Richmond. Taken prisoner at Gettysburg, Graves died February, 1864 at Johnson's Island, a Northern prison.[9]

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[6] Thompson, "A History of Leasburg," p. 36.

[7] John H. McCormick, Personnel of the Convention of 1861, James Sprunt Historical Monographs (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1900), pp. 5-7.

[8] Ibid., p. 39.

[9] Ibid.

James Williamson was born September 19, 1799 in Caswell and spent much of his youth in Georgia. He began a successful practice of medicine at the age of twenty-six and practiced for forty years in his native Caswell. He served as President of the Board of Trustees of Greensboro Female College, Trustee of Trinity College, and Director of the Board of Domestic Missions for the Southern Methodist Episcopal Church. A conservative in politics, he opposed secession. Once the South left the Union he became a spirited supporter of the cause. His tenure as successor to John Graves began on June 19, 1861. He died in Caswell on January 23, 1867.[10]

During the war Caswell supported the war effort with food, tobacco, clothing, and troops. Companies A, C, and D of the North Carolina Thirteenth Regiment were comprised almost entirely of Caswell soldiers.[11] Behind the lines, the devastation and demoralization of war along with emancipation of slaves eroded Caswell's wealth and prestige, never to be regained.

Violent Reconstruction

Reconstruction days in Caswell, as in so many other places, were marked by scenes of violence, corruption, and

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[10] Ibid., p. 89.

[11] John W. Moore, Roster of North Carolina Troops In the War Between the States (Raleigh: Ashe and Gatling, 1882), I, 471.

horror for its citizens. Centered around the county courthouse in Yanceyville, various Ku Klux Klan activities took place in opposition to the work of the Union League.[12]

The Ku Klux Klan, a secret society of white men, developed in Tennessee around 1867. Although the Klan worked to punish Negroes who were seeking social and political equality, in Caswell County, it was determined to weaken and destroy the influence of the Republican Party. To stop the Republicans, who were using recently enfranchised Negroes as a means of staying in power, the Klan was willing to resort to almost any method, legal or illegal.[13]

The Klan activities in Caswell focused on John Walter ("Chicken") Stephens. Stephens was born in Guilford County on October 14, 1834 to Letitia and Absalom Stephens,

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[12] The Union League, one of the groups which helped comprise Republican Party supporters, was begun in Philadelphia during the war for patriotic purposes to further the Union cause. After 1867 it developed in the South as an oath-bound secret society to counter the activities of the Klan. Unlike the Klan, its members could admit membership and were bound by oath to support only union men for public office, but meeting places and times were not disclosed. The head of the League in North Carolina, Governor Holden, set as its function to acquire and keep the Negro vote Republican. See: Allen W. Trelease, Reconstruction, The Great Experiment (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 111. Hereafter cited, Trelease, Reconstruction.

[13] Richard L. Zuber, North Carolina During Reconstruction (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1969), p. 25.

a farmer and tailor. The Stephens family moved to Rockingham County where Absalom died, leaving his six-year old son little chance for a bright future. Young John Stephens worked as a harness-maker but evidently derived much of his money from dubious business deals.[14]

After selling his mother's home in Rockingham, Stephens absconded in 1866 to Caswell County with the money, leaving his wife and family behind. His widowed mother, subject to epileptic seizures, managed to follow him to Yanceyville. On June 30, 1869, she was found with her throat slit. Stephens announced that she had fallen against the broken edge of a chamber pot, and although a coronor's jury agreed, many people in Caswell considered him guilty of matricide.[15]

Stephens had acquired the name "Chicken" before leaving Rockingham County, not because of a lack of bravery, but because he stole two chickens from Thomas A. Ratliff.[16] This label was pinned on Stephens by Josiah Turner, a Raleigh newspaper editor who wrote an account of the incident. Turner was eager to chastise Stephens because he had refused to serve in the Confederate Army

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[14] W. C. Burton, "Drama of 1870: Chicken Stephens Executed By Klan," Greensboro Daily News, May 24, 1970, pp. 1, 10.

[15] Manly Wade Wellman, Dead and Gone: Classic Crimes of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), pp. 140-41.

[16] Ibid., p. 138.

and had even declined to pay the one hundred dollars necessary to hire a substitute.[17]

Stephens was working in Caswell County as an undercover agent for Governor Holden to report Klan activities. His political career started when Judge Albion W. Tourgée appointed him Justice of the Peace for Caswell, as well as granting him, for a fee of twenty dollars, a license to practice law despite his lack of formal training. Stephens held court every day, persuading Negroes to bring charges against the planters. He had been defeated by Bedford Brown in the 1868 state senate election. When Brown was denied his seat because he had served in the Confederate State Legislature, Stephens became Caswell's state senator and earned along with the position a great deal of hatred from local citizens.[18] Indeed, anyone in Caswell County during Reconstruction who proclaimed himself to be a Republican and Negro leader during a time when it was so dangerous to admit as much, was presumed to be either courageous to the point of recklessness, or a fool--or perhaps both.

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[17] Burton, p. 10. Josiah Turner, editor of the anti-Holden Raleigh Sentinel, referred to Stephens in his paper as "Chicken" Stephens. He also reported: "Stephens stole a chicken and was sent to the state senate, if he'd steal a gobbler he'd be sent to Congress.

[18] Wellman, p. 140.

Stephens was also the president of the Union League in Caswell and had promised to deliver the county for the Republican ticket in the forthcoming election. He advocated violence, and when the Yanceyville Hotel burned, suspicion quickly fell upon him. At a meeting at the home of his brother-in-law he gave to each of twenty Negroes a box of matches and told them to burn barns. That night nine barns were set aflame. His brother-in-law, one Jones, admitted the plot after hickory switches were applied to his bare back by the Klan.[19]

On Saturday, May 27, 1870, the Conservative Party of Caswell County was holding a convention at the Yanceyville courthouse.[20] Speeches were made by Samuel Hill, Judge Kerr, Bedford Brown, and others. The courtroom

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[19] J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina (New York: Columbia University, 1914), pp. 473-75.

[20] Conservatives was a name given to members of the Democratic Party after 1865 who opposed Reconstruction and Negro suffrage. To keep Whig supporters, the old ruling class renamed themselves the Conservative Party and joined to fight what they called "Radicals" or Republicans. Ironically the beginnings of this party date from 1861 when Holden led in organizing the discontented elements of North Carolina political parties into electing Zeb Vance governor. These two men took different sides, however, when Holden was unable to control Vance and the party machinery. The Conservatives became opponents of Holden and took the lead in returning the state to home rule. See Trelease, Reconstruction, pp. 106-07, and Lowell Thomas Young, The Impeachment and Trial of Governor William W. Holden, 1870-1871 (unpublished thesis, Department of History, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1965), p. 8.

was crowded with many interested persons including Stephens, who was taking notes on the speakers' platforms. Stephens had been tried in absentia by a Klan jury of twelve men in a cave near Ivy Bluff, and sentenced to death. The time of his execution was set to coincide with the convention. Sheriff Wiley, who had been approached by Stephens to run on the Republican ticket, had promised to let him know his answer later in the day. Wiley, in connection with the Klan, used this to lure Stephens from the courtroom. Stephens and Wiley, in intense discussion, walked down the stairs into a back room of the lower floor, once used as an office for the Freedman's Bureau, but now as a wood storage room. Ten or twelve of the Klan jurors straggled into the chamber. Included were Tom Oliver, Pink Morgan, Dr. S. T. Richmond, J. T. Mitchell, Felix Roan, James Denny, Joe Fowler, and John G. Lea.

Mitchell was designated by lot to murder Stephens but professed to be unable to go through with it. Lea and Mitchell then placed a rope around Stephens' neck, drawing it tight, whereupon Tom Oliver stabbed him in the neck and breast leaving the body sprawled across a woodpile. The Klan members left the room a few at a time and melted into the convention crowd. The door was locked. Later in the day, the Klan assembled at their meeting place, a spot on Country Line Creek. Here they threw the key into the water and swore an oath never to divulge the day's

grisly business.[21] The murder had been well planned to the last detail and carried out in a crowded building. In addition to the hubbub of the convention crowd, taxes were being listed in the room next door, the corridor was constantly full of people, and activities were being conducted in all offices of the building while the crime went completely undetected.

When Stephens failed to return for supper, his second wife, the former Nancy Waters, sent his brothers W. H. and T. H. Stephens (who now lived in Yanceyville) and a party of Negroes to search for him. The courthouse was among the areas searched. Finding the woodroom door locked, one of his brothers peered in from outside but because of darkness could not see the room clearly. W. H. Stephens and several Negroes stationed themselves at the courthouse for the night. At dawn the next morning, they were able to see the prostrate body through the window. Raising the sash, they rushed in and recognized the corpse as Stephens' body. He had not been robbed except for the three pistols he always carried.

Beginning on that Sunday, May 22, and continuing through Thursday, May 26, Coroner A. G. Yancey held an

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[21] "The Statement of John G. Lea," reproduced in Zuber, pp. 30-32. The original statement is in the State Archives, State Department of Archives and History. In this statement, Lea gives complete details on the organization and activities of the Klan in Caswell County. Lea died on September 29, 1935. The story appeared in newspapers on October 1, 1935.

inquest. The conclusion, after hearing testimony by thirty-five witnesses, was that Stephens had died between four and seven o'clock on the evening of May 21, by the hands of some unknown person or persons.[22] Although at the time no proof was found, many knew that the crime had been ordered by Captain John G. Lea, twenty-seven-year-old Confederate veteran and leader of the Caswell Klan. It would be sixty-five years before the truth was fully disclosed. On July 2, 1919, Lea gave a sealed statement of Klan activities to Fred A. Olds of the North Carolina Historical Commission to be opened on his death. This statement, released after Lea's passing on September 29, 1935, gave full details of Klan activities in Caswell, including the murder of "Chicken" Stephens.[23]

In 1867, John Lea had assembled his friends at his plantation home, Leahurst, to form a Klan chapter to redress alleged outrages against Caswell citizens. His sister, Ann Graves, had made the hoods and robes used by the men and kept them under the living room carpet of the Lea home. Besides the actual members, she was the only person who knew of the Klan, but religiously kept the secret.[24] The Klan record in Caswell was comparatively mild for such violent days. Lea reported that the Klan

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[22] Wellman, pp. 146-47. [23] Zuber, p. 32.

[24] Tom Henderson, "Ann of the Ku Klux Klan: Mrs. Graves Sewed White Hoods," Greensboro Daily News, December 17, 1937, p. 9.

imposed only twelve judgments: two whites to be whipped, six blacks to be whipped, one white (Stephens) killed, one black to be wounded by gunshot, one black's property to be destroyed, and one black to be killed.[25] All of these determinations were carried out. The murder of Stephens was significant enough to force Governor Holden to act. On June 6, 1870, he issued a proclamation citing eleven outrages and offered a reward to $500 for the arrest of anyone connected with the Stephens murder. On July 8, he declared Caswell in a state of insurrection and ordered troops to Yanceyville. This was the beginning of the so-called Kirk-Holden War. Ironically, Holden had lived some time in Caswell, had worked on the Milton Chronicle newspaper, and knew many of Caswell's citizens.[26]

William Woods Holden was born in Orange County on November 24, 1818. He proved himself to be an able newspaper publisher after he became editor of the North Carolina Standard by making it one of the most influential of the state. Holden, who had converted from the Whig to the Democratic Party, drifted from the party after failing to achieve the nomination for governor in 1858. He developed into an opponent of the Confederate government and was an agreeable candidate when President Johnson appointed him

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[25] Hamilton, pp. 477, 487.

[26] William K. Boyd, ed., Memoirs of W. W. Holden (Durham: The Seemans Printery, 1911), II, 122-23.

provisional governor in 1865. After helping to organize the Republican Party in North Carolina, he was elected governor in 1868 by endorsing Radical Reconstruction and Negro suffrage.[27]

Holden, unable to suppress Klan activities, called on the General Assembly on December 19, 1869 to grant him the use of martial law. The Shoffner Act of January, 1870 which gave the governor exclusive power to send troops into rebellious areas brought on the event known in history as the Kirk-Holden War.[28]

Holden, fearing Negroes would be intimidated from voting, and wishing to suppress Klan outrages, took drastic action. He organized two regiments of volunteers, the first under Colonel William Clark and the second under George W. Kirk, who would command the troops to occupy Caswell. Kirk, a Tennessee native, had been the leader of a group of Union guerrillas during the Civil War who raided western North Carolina and won for himself a notorious reputation.[29] An army of undisciplined hoodlums, union sympathizers, and a few Negroes was organized by Kirk and his second in command, George B. Burger, in Asheville on July 15, 1870. These troops descended upon Yanceyville on July 18, occupying the courthouse, plundering the town for supplies, and bathing publicly in the

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[27] Crabtree, pp. 99-100. [28] Young, p. 15.

[29] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

square.[30] Kirk's men reportedly used former Klan tactics to intimidate persons into confessions of crimes. Prisoners were cursed, threatened with death, beaten, choked until unconscious, had water poured on their cell beds, and blackmailed.[31] Wilson Carey, a Negro legislator from Caswell, reportedly fled from the county and wired Holden to send troops after the murder of Stephens.[32]

Nineteen Caswell citizens were arrested, without the benefit of basic constitutional rights, by Kirk's men who gave as the only reason that Kirk ordered it and Holden in turn had ordered him. Among those arrested were Judge John Kerr, Samuel P. Hill, Frank A. Wiley, Jesse C. Griffith, Felix Roan, J. T. Mitchell, and John Lea. Chief Justice Richmond Pearson ordered Kirk under writs of habeas corpus to show cause for the arrests and detention of the prisoners. Kirk's refusal to obey the writs was solidly backed by Holden. Then Pearson, fearful for his life, declared the power of the court exhausted. After several trips to Washington by prominent men including Bedford Brown, who visited President Grant, the prisoners' counsel was able to procure bench warrants for Kirk and his men from Judge George W. Brooks of the United States

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[30] Hamilton, p. 515. [31] Young, pp. 71-72.

[32] Jannette Fiore, "William W. Holden and the Standard, the Civil War Years" (unpublished thesis, Department of History, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1966), p. 58.

District Court in Salisbury. Grant had promised Brown the support of Federal troops to control Kirk's militia, if necessary. For a short time Federal troops under Colonel W. W. Eldson were in Caswell.[33] Holden, fearful that Grant would intervene, backed down and instructed Kirk to obey the original writs of Judge Pearson.

The prisoners were released on August 18, in Raleigh without any supporting testimony as to the existence of a Klan chapter in Caswell.[34] Ironically, the Fourteenth Amendment, written to protect rights of Negroes, was used by Judge Brooks to protect men who had tried to deny the Negro political rights.

Kirk's troops continued outrages against the populace. Captain George B. Rodney, a Federal army officer stationed in Caswell reported the following statement:

> The condition of affairs in Yanceyville is beginning to be serious, the North Carolina troops under Colonel Kirk is endeavoring to create a disturbance between the people, or my men, and his troops. His men roam around the country, pillaging, and insulting the people with impunity. The militia threaten to burn Yanceyville when they leave, and unless there is a strong force of United States troops, nothing will prevent them.[35]

On November 10, 1870, Holden issued a proclamation declaring the insurrection in Alamance and Caswell at an end.[36]

The Kirk-Holden War was of course not really a "war," and no battle was fought. It was a period of

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[33] Hamilton, p. 520. [34] Young, p. 21.

[35] Hamilton, pp. 487-88. [36] Ibid.

confusion, terror, looting, and disorder inflicted by Kirk's men on the citizenry of Caswell and a name given the governor's action to control the Klan by his opponents.

The election of 1870 returned enough anti-Holden conservatives to the legislature to bring an end to Kirk's authority and to remove Holden, the only North Carolina governor to be impeached. His conviction on six of eight charges came on March 22, 1871.[37] The war in Caswell had in fact terminated Holden's political career, the Republican Party, and the Klan, which was never active in Caswell again. The Kirk-Holden War, similar arrests elsewhere in the state, and Klan member confessions helped bring an end to hooded activities. "In general, Klan demoralization was so great that its activity came to a halt in North Carolina by the beginning of 1872."[38]

Oblivion

Before the Civil War, Caswell had represented the typical history of the cotton South except that the product was tobacco rather than the more widely grown cotton. After the war, Caswell represented the oppression of Reconstruction at its worst during the Kirk-Holden War, and its intensive cultivation of tobacco had given little

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[37] Fiore, p. 59.

[38] Allen W. Trelease, White Terror, The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 348.

chance for industrial development. After the war, deserted plantations, lost fortunes, eroded soil, and a large unskilled black population offered little in the way of economic growth. Caswell had reached her height during the Antebellum Era, only to decline as rapidly as she had prospered. There were some attempts at tobacco manufacturing (as at John Cobb's factory), but after 1870 anyone wishing to achieve success in business left the county. The large plantations were broken up into smaller farms with little chance for profit. Caswell, once a leading county of the state during the period of able statesmen, educational facilities, and tobacco affluence, found itself reduced to poverty and virtual oblivion. Forgotten was the exciting history of her first one hundred years, as the county faced a painfully slow recovery during the next century.

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APPENDIX A

Caswell County Soldiers in the American Revolution[1]

Names	Rank	Description of Service
Thomas Belsaih	Private	U. S. Army
Braxton Carter	Do	Do
William Norman	Do	Donohoe's U.S.Art.
Jacob A. Hart	Do	N. C. Militia
William Adkins, Sen.	Do	N. C. Cont'l
William Badget	Do	N. C. Militia
David Baker	Do	Do
Peter Badget	Private and Ens.	Do
Jeremiah Beaver	Private	Do
Robert Browning	Do	Do
Charles Cock	Do	Va. Militia
Joseph Dameron	Do	N. C. Militia
John Davis	Do	Do
John Dill	Do	Do
Elisha Evans, Sen.	Pri.Inf.and Cav.	Do
John Ferrell	Private	Do
Starling Gunn	Do	Do
Dudley Gatewood	Do	Do
John Graves	Captain	Do
Zacharia Hastings	Do	Va. Militia
Berry Hunt	Do	Do
William Harville	Do	N. C. Militia
Benjamin Long	Do	Do
John McMullen	Lt. and Capt.	Do
Richard Martin	Private	N. C. Cont'l
John Mathins	Do	Md. Militia
Daniel Merrit	Do	N. C. Militia
John Marlan	Do	Do
William McMennamy	Do	Do
William Pleasant	Do	Va. Cont'l
William Parker	Do	N. C. Militia
Thomas Roan	Do	Do
William Roberts	Do	Va. Militia

[1] Roster of Soldiers From North Carolina In the American Revolution (Raleigh: Ashe & Gatling, 1932), p. 424. Published For the North Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution.

Caswell County Soldiers in the American Revolution (cont.)

Names	Rank	Description of Service
Elisha Rowark	Private	N. C. Militia
William Roberts	Do	Va. Militia
Samuel Stevens	Do	N. C. Militia
William Slad, Sen.	Do	Do
Jonothan Starkey	Pri.Inf. and Cav.	Do
Richard Smith	Private	Do
William Ware	Do	Do
John Ware, Sen.	Do	Do

APPENDIX B

Caswell County Soldiers In the Civil War[2]

Thirteenth Regiment, North Carolina State Troops

Names	Rank
Officers	
H. A. Rogers	Lt. Col.
John T. Hambrick	Major
Henry A. Rogers	Major
Charles D. Hill	Quartermaster
John H. McAden	Surgeon
W. G. Stephens	Surgeon
J. H. McAden	Surgeon
F. A. Walke	Assistant Surgeon
Jesse Fleming	Adjutant
Henry A. Walker	Sergeant Major
Company A	
Officers	
John A. Graves	Major
L. B. Henderson	Captain
R. Y. McAden	1st Lieut.
J. N. Williamson	1st Lieut.
M. W. Norfleet	2d Lieut.
G. W. Gunn	2d Lieut.
F. L. Poteat	2d Lieut.
W. T. Williamson	2d Lieut.
Wiley P. Robeson	2d Lieut
Davis S. Locket	2d Lieut
J. N. Williamson	2d Lieut.
Henry B. Fowler	2d Lieut.
W. S. Williamson	2d Lieut.
Jos. W. Dupree	2d Sergt.

[2] John W. Moore, Roster of North Carolina Troops In the War Between the States (Raleigh: Ashe & Gatling, 1882), I, 471-475, 480-486.

Names	Rank
Company A (cont.)	
Officers (cont.)	
F. L. Poteat	2d Lieut.
N. K. Roan	Color Bearer
Wiley P. Roberson	2d Lieut
N. R. Kerr	2d Corporal
F. L. Gunn	3d Corporal
L. B. Henderson	Captain
Privates	
Brady, James W.	
Byerly, Jacob	
Brinsfield, Calvin	
Brinsfield, Martin	
Boswell, George	
Busnell, Henry	
Corbett, James T.	
Covington, George	
Cape, George	
Clark, P. F.	
Cook, W. L.	
Deatz, H. C.	
Dennis, F. J.	
Davis, John G.	
Dickerson, George B.	
Duke, John W.	
Evans, Wilson	
Evans, S. W.	
Enoch, W. L.	
Ferrell, W. L.	
Furguson, James	
Fitzgerald, R. T.	
Fitzgerald, E. B.	
Fitzgerald, O. N.	
Fowler, Henry B.	
Graves, Felix	
Graves, J. H. T.	
Graves, William G.	
Graves, George A.	
Gillespie, Joseph	
Gwyn, R. M.	
Hall, J.	
Harallson, Beasely	
Hansley, Henry	

Company A (cont.)

Privates (cont.)

Hodges, G. F.
Harallson, Price
Harallson, Allen
Hatchet, Wm. H.
Harrison, Thos. S.
Hawkins, C. O.
Henderson, J.
Henderson, N. L.
Hensley, Henry
Howard, Henry
Howard, Wm.
Hooper, James
Jeffreys, J. G.
Jones, E. O.
Jones, H. M.
Kennon, W. G.
Kimbrough, A.
Kimbrough, John
Kimbrough, Rufus
Kimbrough, James
Lea, Calvin G.
Lea, John G.
Lea, James W.
Lockett, Davis L.
Long, David C.
Lyon, John K.
Lawyers, Thomas
Mayhard, Henry
McCann, James A.
McAden, John H.
Merritt, Solomon
Mitchell, Wm. D.
Moore, J. B.
Moore, Spencer
Morris, J. S.
Massey, R. C.
Moore, S. A.
Moore, A.
Moffit, Abel
Neal, F. R.
Page, Jas. W.
Park, John S.
Pattells, Wm. H.
Primer, Wm. T.
Poteat, Jas. M.
Pettigrew, S. C.
Roberts, J. L.
Roberts, R. L.
Ragle, S.
Reagan, J. C.
Richmond, H. L.
Roberts, John
Roberts, Wm. H.
Robertson, John
Robertson, Monroe
Shields, Thomas
Sledge, Crawford
Stone, Thomas
Scott, Pleasant
Sink, James A.
Smith, R. S.
Summers, H.
Suttle, Gabriel
Thompson, J. W.
Thompson, H. C.
Thompson, Thos. W.
Turner, Thomas J.
Totten, Logan M.
Totten, H. C.
Totten, Jno. C.
Totten, Thomas
Tadler, B. G.
Tate, Robert
Trogden, Henry K.
Valter, W. H.
Walter, H. T.
Warren, A. M.
Williamson, John W.
Williamson, James A.
Williamson, J. N.
Withers, E. B.
Womack, W. F.
Womack, W. H.
Wood, L. H.
Womack, D. G.

Names	Rank
Company C	
Officers	
James T. Mitchell	Captain
Seward H. Hunt	Major
W. W. Rainey	Captain
Thomas C. Evans	Captain
Leonard H. Hunt	1st Lieut.
Samuel R. Thornton	1st Lieut.
Eustace Hunt	2d Lieut.
Jasper Fleming	Adjutant
W. B. Chandler	2d Lieut.
C. T. N. Davis	2d Lieut.
W. G. Stephens	2d Lieut.
Samuel R. Thornton	1st Lieut.
Stephen D. Richmond	Adjutant
John E. Roberson	3d Sergt.
Abner R. Terry	4th Sergt
Samuel H. Hines	Captain
D. Cleveland Hill	Q.M. Sergt.
James L. Hamlett	3d Corporal
W. W. Rainey	Captain
Privates	
Atkinson, Augustus	
Atkinson, Adolphus	
Allen, John	
Allen, Wm.	
Brocks, John T.	
Burch, A. J.	
Braddon, G. W.	
Brewer, Robert E.	
Burton, J. A.	
Burke, John	
Byrd, Lewis	
Campbell, William	
Chandler, W. B.	
Carter, Jasper A.	
Cazort, Wiley	
Case, Needham	
Chance, Yancey	

Company C (cont.)

Privates (cont.)

Davis, C. T. N.
Duke, Archibald
Dismukes, H. M.
Evans, Thomas C.
Earp, Lawson
Farmer, Enoch H.
Ferguson, Allen
Farley, W. T.
Farmer, E. H.
Ferguson, Robert
Gorgen, G. W.
Gordon, W. W.
Gordon, William
Hamlett, Henry
Haddoch, John
Hamlett, Thomas
Hendrick, J. G.
Hendrick, C. M.
Hill, Charles D.
Holcombe, Joel J.
Hamlett, Robt. J.
Hamlett, Henderson
Hines, Edward P.
Howard, Adolphus
Horton, Jarrell
Harris, Wm.
Hart, Elisha
Johnson, S. M.
Jones, Walter J.
James, Wm.
Keirege, L. D.
Kennedy, Lorenzo D.
Longwell, Davis
Martin, Clarence D.
McCain, W. H.
McCain, A. P.
Moore, Robert
Nicholas, David
Owen, Henry
Piper, Geo.
Pittard, Addison
Pittard, Joseph R.
Patterson, A. H.
Patterson, David
Phelps, James
Piper, Robert
Powell, Henry
Powell, William M.
Powell, W. W.
Powers, Archibald
Rainey, J. P.
Rice, David
Raine, E. N.
Spoorman, Charles
Stegalt, Farmwell
Stephens, Armistead
Sparks, Hugh
Sparks, G. W.
Stamps, Ed. R.
Stephens, W. G.
Stephens, Archibald
Smith, John B.
Smith, Jarrold
Stanfield, William
Terry, Jos. D.
Thomas, James
Thompson, William H.
Tally, Henry
Talley, John
Welsh, J. W.
Wood, Wm.
Watkins, John L.
Wallace, Jas. J.
Worsham, John D.
Walker, Henry A.
Williams, John D.
Yarborough, J. B.
Yates, Lewis

Names	Rank

Company D

Officers

John T. Hambrick	Major
Henry A. Rogers	Major
Wm. G. Woods	1st Lieut.
Thomas J. Stephens	Captain
E. Brock Holden	1st Lieut.
Wm. G. Woods	1st Lieut.
Henry A. Rogers	2d Lieut.
Daniel W. K. Richmond	2d Lieut.
Thomas Chambers	2d Lieut.
Wm. Q. Stephens	2d Lieut.
John W. Allen	2d Lieut.
Thomas J. Stephens	Captain
Robert Wright	2d Sergeant
Thomas Chambers	2d Lieut.
John H. Burton	4th Sergeant
Jasper C. James	1st Corporal
Andrew J. Craft	2d Corporal
Bedford M. Stephens	3rd Corporal
William L. Stephens	2d Lieut.

Privates

Allen, John W.
Austin, George A.
Atkins, Gaston
Andrews, Lindsey
Berris, A. J.
Brien, C. W.
Battler, Joshua H.
Boshammer, Henry R.
Bunch, Charles
Benton, Geo. M.
Brien, John R.
Craft, Van-Buren
Cates, Hiram
Compton, Silas

Company D (cont.)

Privates (cont.)

Cazort, Haywood
Campbell, J. M.
Duncan, George
Dunnavant, Alex.
Donoho, Edward L.
Evans, John W.
Geatherston, Thos. W.
Featherston, Wm. H.
Fuller, John L.
Fowler, Zach.
Ferrell, Sidney M.
Graham, Wm. R.
Gordon, James
Haywood, Wm.
Hamilton, John F.
Harrison, Alex. J.
Howard, John
Holden, Lucian
Harrison, John A.
Hinkle, M. H.
Ingram, Charles
James, Isham
James, Robert J.
Johnson, William
Johnson, James
Jones, R. M.
Lea, Green D.
Love, James
McFarland, Walker
Martin, J. M.
Mattock, William
Norman, Anthony
Pittard, S. T.
Pittard, Elijah
Pleasant, Alvis
Pigg, Andrew J.
Rogers, Joseph
Rogers, James
Rains, James
Roberts, Reason
Richmond, B.
Stephens, Andrew
Solomon, Thomas
Solomon, John
Shields, Wm.
Stephens, John C.
Solomon, Thomas
Terrell, Jonathan
Terrell, Ludwig M.
Turner, William
Whutlow, William
Whutlow, John W.
Woods, John
Woods, Wm. G.
Woods, John S.
Woods, James M.
Weddon, Henry
Warren, B. Y.
Williams, H. S.
Wade, John C.

APPENDIX C

Rise in Civil War Prices in Caswell County from 1861 to 1865[3]

Product	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865
Corn	$ 60¢ Bu.	$ 2.00	$ 15.00 Bu.	$ 30.00	$ 50.00 Bu.
Wheat	1.00 Bu.	3.50	20.00	40.00	60.00
Oats	.50 Bu.	2.00	10.00	15.00	40.00
Potatoes	.50 Bu.	1.00	5.00	20.00	50.00
Bacon	.15 lb.	.50	5.00	7.00	10.00
Tobacco	.05 lb.	.75	1.50	1.50	6.00
Sugar	.12 1/2 lb.	1.50	3.00	none	none
Coffee	.16 2/3 lb.	3.00	10.00	none	none
Bushels Cotton	1.25 Bu.	5.00	40.00	50.00	100.00
Salt	.01 lb.	.50	.75	1.00	2.50
Indigo	.10 oz.	2.00 oz.	6.00	8.00	none
Pepper			12.00 lb.	15.00	15.00
Soda	.12 1/2 lb.	1.50	5.00	8.00	20.00
Cotton	.12 1/2 lb.	.40	1.50	2.50	5.00

[3] John F. Flintoff, Diary (Providence, North Carolina; April 27, 1841 to May 25, 1901), pp. 14-15.
This list was recorded by John F. Flintoff, great-great-grandfather of the author, to show how prices increased in Caswell County during the Civil War.

Product	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865
Iron	$ .06 lb.	$ .40	$ 1.00	$ 2.50	$ 5.00
Leather	.30 lb.	2.00	10.00	20.00	25.00
Land	10.00 Acre	25-50.00	100.00	none	none
Gold	Par	8-16	25.00	28.00	100.00
Calico	.12 1/2 yd.	1.50	5.00	12.00	20.00
Wool	.50 lb.	2.50	10.00	20.00	25.00
Whiskey	1.00 gal.	3.00	none to sell	none	none
Brandy	1.00 gal.	3.00	50.00 gal.	100.00	160.00
Cider	.10 gal.	.25	5.00	5.00	
Horses	150.00 head	500.00	2,000.00		4-6,000
Cows	25.00 a head	100.00	300.00		1,000
Pork	10.00 (cist)	30.00	300.00	500.00	
Plows	3.25	5.00	25.00	40.00	
Paint	.25	.75	2.50	5.00	12.50
Horse Shoes	.25 each	.50	2.50	4.00	7.50
Nails	.06 lb.	.25	1.50	2.50	
Load of Wood	1.50	2.50	10.00	20.00	
Negroes (per person)	1,500	2,500	5,000	5,000	
Cotton cords	.50	10.00	50.00	50.00	100.00

APPENDIX D

Members of the General Assembly From Caswell County, 1777-1881[4]

Year	Senate	House of Commons
1777	James Saunders	John Atkinson Richard Moore
1778	James Saunders	John Williams Peter Farrow
1779	James Saunders	William Moore Peter Farrow
1780	Dempsey Moore	Peter Farrow John Williams Stephen Moore
1781	Dempsey Moore	Josiah Cole
1782	John Williams	William Moore
1783	William Moore	David Shelton
1784, Apr.	William Moore	David Shelton
1784, Oct.	William Moore	John Atkinson Edward Clay William Moore
1785	Dempsey Moore	Robert Dickens Adam Sanders
1786	Dempsey Moore	Adam Sanders Robert Dickens
1787	Dempsey Moore	Adam Sanders Robert Dickens
1788	Robert Payne	Benjamin Douglass John Graves
1789	Robert Payne	John Womack Robert Dickens
1790	Robert Payne	Robert Dickens John Graves

[4] Wheeler, Historical Sketches, pp. 80-81; Journals of the Senate and the House of Commons of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina (Raleigh: William E. Pell, State Printer), Sessions 1777-1881.

Year	Senate	House of Commons
1791	Robert Dickens	James Williamson John Graves
1792	James Williamson	John Graves David Shelton
1793	John Williams	Gabriel Lea Daniel Burford
1794	John Williams	Gabriel Lea William Parr
1795	John Williams	Solomon Graves Daniel Burfort
1796	Wynn Dixon	Robert Blackwell Solomon Graves
1797	Wynn Dixon	Robert Blackwell Solomon Graves
1798	Azariah Graves	Saml. Molton[Morton?] James Yancey
1799	Wynn Dixon	Samuel Morton Sanuel Moore
1800	Samuel Morton	James Yancey Richard Simpson
1801	Samuel Morton	James Yancey John McAden
1802	Marmaduke Williams	John McAden James Yancey
1803	Samuel Morton	James Yancey John McAden
1804	Samuel Morton	Richard Hornbuckle Laurence Lea
1805	Azariah Graves	Richard Hornbuckle John McMullin
1806	Azariah Graves	James Burton John McMullin
1807	Azariah Graves	James Burton James Yancey
1808	Azariah Graves	James Yancey James Burton

Year	Senate	House of Commons
1809	Azariah Graves	Isaac Rainey Nathan Williams
1810	Azariah Graves	Isaac Rainey Nathan Williams
1811	Azariah Graves	James Yancey Isaac Rainey
1812	Nathan Williams	Samuel Dabney James Rainey
1813	Nathan Williams	Quentin Anderson Barzillai Graves
1814	Barzillai Graves	Isaac Rainey John P. Harrison
1815	Barzillai Graves	Romulus M. Saunders Bedford Brown
1816	Romulus M. Saunders (Became U. S. Senator)	Warmer Williams Bedford Brown
1817	Bartlett Yancey	Bedford Brown John P. Harrison
1818	Bartlett Yancey	Romulus M. Saunders Barzillai Graves
1819	Bartlett Yancey	Romulus M. Saunders Barzillai Graves
1820	Bartlett Yancey	Barzillai Graves Romulus M. Saunders
1821	Bartlett Yancey	Quentin Anderson Barzillai Graves
1822	Bartlett Yancey	James Yancey Barzillai Graves
1823	Bartlett Yancey	Bedford Brown James Rainey
1824	Bartlett Yancey	James Rainey Charles D. Donoho
1826	Bartlett Yancey	John E. Lewis Charles D. Donoho
1827	Bartlett Yancey	John E. Lewis Charles D. Donoho

Year	Senate	House of Commons
1828	Bartlett Yancey(d.1828) Bedford Brown (served remainder of term)	James H. Ruffin Charles D. Donoho James Rainey
1829	Bedford Brown (became U.S.Senator, replaced by) James Rainey	John Wilson James Kerr
1830	James Kerr	Littleton A. Gwinn Stephen Dodson
1831	James Kerr	Littleton A. Gwinn John T. Garland
1832	James Kerr	Barzillai Graves Littleton A. Gwinn
1833	James Kerr	John E. Brown Stephen Dodson
1834	James Kerr	John E. Brown Littleton A. Gwinn
1835	James Kerr	Littleton A. Gwinn Stephen Dodson
	Beginning of two-year terms	
1836	James Kerr	Littleton A. Gwinn William A. Lea
1838	James Kerr	Levi Walker Littleton A. Gwinn
1840	James Kerr	Calvin Graves Levi Walker
1842	Bedford Brown	Calvin Graves Levi Walker
1844	Littleton A. Gwinn	Calvin Graves James K. Lea
1846	Calvin Graves	John B. McMullen Richard Jones
1848	Calvin Graves	John B. McMullen Richard Jones
1850	George Williamson	Samuel P. Hill David S. Johnson

Name	Senate	House of Commons
1852	Elijah K. Withers	Samuel P. Hill William Long
1854	J. A. Graves	Samuel P. Hill William Long
1856	Samuel P. Hill	William Long Elijah K. Withers
1858	Bedford Brown	John Kerr Stephen E. Williams
1860	Bedford Brown	John Kerr Elijah K. Withers Samuel P. Hill
1862	Bedford Brown	Samuel S. Harrison William Long
1864	William Long	Montford McGehee Samuel S. Harrison
1865	T. A. Donaho	Samuel S. Harrison Philip Hodnett
1866	Livingston Brown	Philip Hodnett William B. Bowe
1868	Bedford Brown	Philip Hodnett William Long Wilson Cary
1870	Wilson Cary	W. Paylor E. B. Withers
1872		Thomas J. Foster George Bowe
1874	George Williamson	Thomas S. Harrison Wilson Cary
1876		Wilson Cary Thomas S. Harrison
1879	Giles Mebane George Williamson	Wilson Cary Thomas S. Harrison
1881		A. Bigelow Thomas S. Harrison

APPENDIX E

Statement of John G. Lea[5]

Immediately after the surrender of General Lee, in April, 1865, a bummer named Albion W. Tourgee, of New York, from Sherman's army, came to Caswell County and organized a Union League, and they were drilling every night and beating the drums, and he made many speeches telling the negroes that he was sent by the government and that he would see that they got forty acres of land. He succeeded in getting J. W. Stevens and Jim Jones appointed justices of the peace of Caswell County and they annoyed the farmers very much by holding court every day, persuading the darkies to warrant the farmer, &c. Stevens was run out of Rockingham County for stealing a chicken.

The first trial that Jim Jones had, a negro stole Captain Mitchell's hog. He was caught cleaning the hog by Mitchell's son and by a darky whose name was Paul McGee. He was carried before Jones and Jones turned him loose and said he had been appointed by Governor Holden to protect the negro and that he intended to do it. Soon thereafter I formed the Ku Klux Klan and was elected county organizer. I organized a den in every township in the county and the Ku Klux whipped Jones and drove him out of the county.

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[5] Statement by John G. Lea concerning the murder of John W. Stevens (Stephens) and Ku Klux Klan activities in Caswell County. On July 2, 1919, Lea gave to Fred A. Olds of the North Carolina Historical Commission this sealed statement, to be opened after his death. This story was released on September 29, 1935, sixty-five years after the crime was committed. The original statement may be found in the State Archives, State Department of Archives and History.

J. W. Stevens burned the hotel in Yanceyville and a row of brick stores. He also burned Gen. William Lee's entire crop of tobacco, and Mr. Sam Hinton's crop. Ed. Slade, a darky, told that he burned the barn of tobacco by an order of Stevens and another darky told about his burning the hotel, also by an order. Stevens was tried by the Ku Klux Klan and sentenced to death. He had a fair trial before a jury of twelve men. At a democratic convention he approached ex-sheriff Wiley and tried to get him to run on the republican ticket for sheriff. Wiley said he would let him know that day. He came to me and informed me of that fact and suggested that he would fool him into the room in which he was killed. He did so and ten or twelve men went into the room and he was found dead next morning. A democratic convention was in session in the court room on the second floor of the courthouse in Yanceyville, to nominate county officers and members of the Legislature. Mr. Wiley, who was in the convention, brought Stevens down to a rear room on the ground floor, then used for the storage of wood for the courthouse. I had ordered all the Ku Klux Klan in the county to meet at Yanceyville that day, with their uniforms under their saddles, and they were present. Mr. Wiley came to me and suggested that it would be a better plan, as Stevens had approached him to run on the republican ticket for sheriff, and he had told him that he would let him know that day, to fool him down stairs and so, just before the convention

closed, Wiley beckoned to Stevens and carried him down-stairs, and Captain Mitchell, James Denny, and Joe Fowler went into the room and Wiley came out. Mitchell proceeded to disarm him, he had three pistols on his body. He soon came out and left Jim Denny with a pistol at his head and went to Wiley and told him that he couln't kill him, himself. Wiley came to me and said "You must do something: I am exposed unless you do." Immediately I rushed into the room with eight or ten men, found him sitting flat on the floor. He arose and approached me and we went and sat down where the wood had been taken away, in an opening in the wood on the wood-pile, and he asked me not to let them kill him. Captain Mitchell rushed at him with a rope, drew it around his neck, put his feet against his chest and by that time about a half dozen men rushed up: Tom Oliver, Pink Morgan, Dr. Richmond, and Joe Fowler. Stevens was then stabbed in the breast and also in the neck by Tom Oliver, and the knife was thrown at his feet and the rope left around his neck. We all came out, closed the door and locked it on the outside and took the key and threw it into Country Line Creek. I may add that it was currently believed that Stevens murdered his mother while living with him. Stevens kept his house, within sight of the courthouse and now standing, in a state of war all the time with doors and windows barred with iron bars and a regular armory with a large supply of ammunition.

Col. A. K. McClure of Philadelphia, Pa., came to Yanceyville. He was for Horace Greely against Grant. Wilson Cary, a colored man, better known as the "Archives of Gravity" replied to Col. McClure and said that Senator Stevens, who had been elected to the State Senate by the negroes, stole a chicken and was sent to the State Senate and if he would steal a gobbler he would be sent to Congress, and you could have heard the negroes yell for miles around and there were at least 2000 negroes present.

The first state election we had in North Carolina, when Gov. Holden was elected, we had 2800 negro majority. The Freedmen's Bureau Agent from Michigan, Captain Dawes, came down to take charge of the election. I carried him down home with me. He and I fought each other in the Civil War. I carried him out fox hunting and had a beautiful chase, and on the day of election he came to me and said that he was sent to carry the election by the government and if it was found out on him he would be courtmartialed and possibly shot. He told me where he put the ballot box, so I worked on the ballot box until twelve o'clock at night and then rode to Locust Hill, nine miles distant, and counted until day, and we elected a ticket by twenty-seven votes. Caswell's bonds stood at par, while Person and Rockingham, adjoining counties, went down to five and six dollars. They went Republican.

To show the feeling, I may say, at the first State election after the War, in 1866, Tom Lea, colored, voted the

democratic ticket. A great mob of negroes gathered in Yanceyville and we learned that they had seized him. There were hundreds in the mob, and when we came up we found that they had Tom on a rail and were carrying him around, singing and shouting as they went. With me were Sheriff Griffith, Thos. L. Lea and Weldon Price. We rushed upon the crowd and the sheriff struck several of the mob and knocked them down and we took Tom from them, unhurt.

Governor Holden was born in Caswell County and knew the situation. That was why he was so prejudiced against the county. He declared martial law and had every prominent citizen arrested by a regiment of cut throats, who could neither read nor write, from western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee, commanded by Col. Geo. W. Kirk. Col. George Williamson got a writ of habeas corpus from Judge Mitchell of Salisbury, but Col. Kirk and Governor Holden did not obey it. He then went to Chief Justice Pearson, with the same result. I then came to Raleigh with Col. Williamson and saw General Matt. W. Ransom and told him of our troubles and he said that he would go that night to Elizabeth City and see Judge Brooks, U. S. District Judge. He issued the writ, and we went back to Danville. Captain Graves and Col. Williamson served the writ. Lt. Colonel Burgin of Kirk's regiment told Colonel Williamson that if he ever put his foot in Yanceyville again he would shoot his head off. They failed to arrest me on the day

of the general arrest, so I went home and the next day they came and arrested me and brought me to Raleigh. Major Yates came to my house with ten or twelve men and when he came to the house I was lying down, asleep. It was raining, and my sisters came running into the house and told me there was a crowd of Kirk's men out in the yard. I rushed to a drawer and got my pistols, but my sister grabbed me and told me not to go out in the yard nor to try to use my pistols. The major came to the door and said: "I come to arrest you and take you to Raleigh as a witness". I said, "By what authority do you make this arrest", and he said "by authority of the Governor of the State". I told him that I could not walk to Yanceyville, seven miles distant. He told me to have my horse sent up to the church that he had more prisoners up there. When I arrived at the church, Lil Graves, a colored man, said: "Mars' John, I didn't bring them. They made me come. They have sent Mars' Nat on". They sent me with one man, a youth of 24, with a rifle slung at his back, on an old horse twenty-four years old belonging to Dr. Garner, while I was on my speedy fox hunting mare. I could have made my escape easily but on account of my younger brother I thought it best for me to go. When I got to Yanceyville, to my surprise I found my brother in great glee, laughing. I asked him what was the matter. He said that a thrashing machine had just come into town and Kirk's men thought it was a cannon and they rushed

into the courthouse and grabbed their guns. The soldier that carried me begged me all the way to Yanceyville not to let anybody shoot him. He also asked me to let him get behind me. He then unslung his gun and so we went into the town. This guard begged me to let him come to my house and work for me, saying he did not expect to find so many kind people and that he would be glad to live in the neighborhood; that he had been brought down from the mountains, not knowing where he was going nor what he was to do, or what sort of people he would be among. When Kirk's men arrived in Yanceyville, Old Aunt Millie Lee was selling ice cream at the courthouse. It was the first they had ever seen and several of them said "Ain't this the best frozen victuals you ever tasted".

A man by the name of John Spellman, editor of a Raleigh paper, went to Governor Holden and had me released on my own recognizance. I then went over to the hotel at Raleigh and found Judge Kerr, Col. Williamson, Sam Hill and others. Judge Kerr advised me to take the first train out and go to Arkansas, saying if I stayed here they would hang me. I told him that I had two uncles living near Little Rock, Ark., who came to my father's every summer and they looked so much like a corpse that I was like General Grant, "I believe I had rather be hung here than die of slow fever in Arkansas". So the next day they arrested Capt. Mitchell, Sheriff Wiley, Felix Roan and myself and

tried us before the Supreme judges, Dick, Settle and Pearson. The trial lasted for a week. Ex-Governor Bragg and Judge Battle defended us. Bailey and Badger prosecuted and they never did prove that there was a Ku Klux Klan in Caswell County.

The day that Kirk arrived in Yanceyville I went to Judge Bowe and said to him that there were enough ex-confederate soldiers there to whip Kirk's regiment and Judge Bowe said that that would never do, that we had better go into the court room, where the candidates were speaking. We went and he took his seat inside the bar. I sat down behind him. Col. Kirk marched his men, four abreast, up the steps. He walked in front of Bowe and asked if this was Bowe. Bowe told him it was. He said "I arrest you". Judge Bowe asked him by what authority. With an oath he shook his pistol at him and said "By this", whereupon Judge Bowe shoved him back and told him that was no order. I had a large hickory stick in my hand. I raised the stick to hit him when Tobe Williamson caught it and kept me from striking him, and you had better believe I was glad he did. I left Yanceyville that evening and went over to Danville and got the writ of habeas corpus as above stated.

The day I was arrested I was carried to Yanceyville and all the prisoners had been sent over to Graham except a few from Alamance who had confessed being Ku Klux. I was carried over to Graham the next day and all the other Caswell

boys started to Raleigh next morning. Late that afternoon Judge James Boyd, United States Judge, came and asked me how I would like to take a walk; that he had permission to take me out provided I would agree to come back. I agreed, so we walked awhile, finally coming to his house. He asked me to have a seat on the porch. In a few minutes the bell rang for supper. I told him I had plenty to eat at the courthouse, that my friends had sent in to me, Mr. Banks Holt and others, but he insisted on my taking a warm supper and as soon as we finished eating he said to me, "Lea, I was a Ku Klux. I have disgraced myself and my little wife". I asked him how. "I turned State's evidence". Why did you do it? He replied "Moral cowardice. When Kirk's men hung Murray up by the neck and they let him down he was apparently dead (he lived 20 years after this, but really died from the effects of this injury), they then came to me and put the rope around my neck and I wilted". He and his young wife both cried like a baby and Boyd said, "Lea, I will never expose you. I know you are the county commander in Caswell". I said, "Oh no, there are a great many Leas in Caswell; I am not the one".

The day the arrest was made in Yanceyville, late that afternoon, Lt. Col. Burgin with eight men went down after ex-Sheriff Wiley, nine miles from Yanceyville; went in his tobacco field where he was standing and told him they had come to arrest him. He asked them by what authority. Burgin shook his pistol at him and said, with an oath, "This is my

authority". His men rushed on Wiley, who knocked down seven of them, but one slipped up behind him with a fence rail and knocked him down; they then put Wiley on a horse, bare-back, tied his feet to the horse and whipped him nearly all the way to Yanceyville. The blood flowed freely, he being in his shirt sleeves. Burgin told me that Wiley was the bravest man he ever saw. When they arrived in Yanceyville, that afternoon, Burgin took him into a room in the courthouse, ordered his men to draw their guns on him, and told him that if he did not tell who killed Stevens they would kill him. With his head straight as could be he opened his coat, slapped his chest and dared them to shoot.

The night I reached Graham they put sheriff Wiley and Josiah Turner in jail with a crazy negro who holloed all night long. They didn't sleep a wink. Next morning they were taken out to go to Raleigh and Mr. Turner kept repeating that the powers of the judiciary were exhausted and Col. Kirk told him to shut his mouth. He then flapped his arms and crowed like a rooster and said "Well, I reckon I can crow". Kirk then said "Hush up that, too!". The militia detachment were terribly frightened, thinking that they would be attacked in Durham. They closed all the windows and barred all the doors.

The night after Jones was whipped the Ku Klux went up to see if he had moved, having been ordered to do so. There were three very worthy darkies living in the

neighborhood, named Stephen Taylor, William Garland and Frank Chandler. They were carried up to the grave yard by the Ku Klux, where we had left our horses. I walked through the grave yard, placed my hands on Will's naked shoulder and it nearly scared him to death. He shook all over. The next day Will came by my house and Capt. Graves, my brother-in-law, asked him where he was going. Will said, "Lordy, Mars' Billy, I'm going across the creek". "What's the matter, Billy?" asked Capt. Graves. "Dem things got me last night. They were as tall as the eaves of this house. I knows they came out of the graves, for I saw them with my own eyes and one came up and put his hand on my shoulder and his hands chilled me clean through".

While I and the three others referred to were being tried before the Supreme Court, on the lower floor of the Capitol, on the bench warrant issued for us, the trial of the prisoners from Caswell County taken by the writ of Judge Brooks, which was the third writ, was being held in the Senate Chamber, directly over us. Our case was dismissed and we left at once for home. They had a great demonstration in Raleigh. There was a street Parade, cannon were fired, tar barrels burned and speeches by a great many prominent men were made. Judge Kerr's speech created great excitement and enthusiasm. Only Wiley and Josiah Turner went to jail. When I reached home, Sheriff Griffith, who had been a prisoner, came and summonsed me to go with him and we ordered the heads of the Union League of America to

leave the county within twenty-four hours and they did so without exception, going to Danville.