

Cp970.33
M82

Ceremonies...Moore's Creek
Battle Ground - 1907

The Library
of the
University of North Carolina



Collection of North Caroliniana
from the Library of
Charles R. Thomas

Cp 970.33
M82

G. P. Thomas

Ceremonies

at the

Unveiling of the Monument

UPON

MOORE'S CREEK BATTLE
GROUND

To the

WOMEN OF THE REVOLUTION

AUGUST, 1907

Speeches of

HON. E. A. HAWES

HON. JAMES F. MOORE

HON. CHARLES R. THOMAS



CP 970.33
M 82

HON. E. A. HAWES' SPEECH OF PRESENTATION.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my pleasure and privilege in behalf of the building committee of the Moore's Creek Battle Ground Association to present this monument, erected to the heroic women of the Revolution. The battles of war, apparently, have always fallen upon men, so monuments to heroes skilled in wielding the sword are nothing uncommon. But there is something peculiarly singular in connection with this monument we have met here today to unveil. In reading history I have never yet learned of a single instance where a monument stands upon a battlefield in the name of woman. But I am glad this association has seen fit to have the inscriptions read as they do. While comparatively few women have their names as a connecting link in the chain of history as Mrs. Slocomb, still they play their parts nobly at home. Thus fitting tributes should be paid them.

The battle of Moore's Creek Bridge was no small event in the Revolutionary war. In the words of Dr. C. Alphonso Smith: "It was the Rubicon over which North Carolina passed to independence and to constitutional self-government. The old monument with the names of Richard Caswell and Alexander Lillington, darkened by the duration of time, vividly recalls such men as James Moore, John Ashe and James Kenan as leaders of the Colonial troops. Thus this granite slab in recognition of women will recall, too, one of the most potent factors of war. When just recognition to the heroes of the lower Cape Fear has been given, their names will have transcended into a part of national song story. The monuments standing proudly upon this

P31374
Thomas

battlefield in the name of martyrs will not be to those gone by, but to the ever living and the ever loved.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set today a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem
When like our sires our sons are gone.

Spirit that made those heroes dare
To die and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare,
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

HON. JAMES F. MOORE'S SPEECH OF ACCEPTANCE.

Gentlemen of the Building Committee:

It is with feelings of mingled pleasure and pride that I, on behalf of the Moore's Creek Monumental Association and the State of North Carolina, accept from you this beautiful memorial to our Revolutionary women.

I also accept and thank you, for the repair of this old monument.

I fully appreciate the efforts of the committee to record and transmit to future generations the history of an heroic and honorable past.

Gentlemen, I am *well* aware, that it is the fulfilment of an untiring work on your part, and so far as my knowledge extends, this memorial to *our* Revolutionary women, is the first in the State of North Carolina to be dedicated to such a purpose.

We have now, on this sacred old battlefield, two monuments, one erected 1857 to the heroes of the battle of Moore's Creek, the American patriots; the other dedicated today to the heroic women of that eventful period. In all of the great achievements of man, woman has ever been ready to perform her part.

There is no higher duty devolving upon *us* as members of the Moore's Creek Monument Association, than to preserve the names of our patriotic men and noble women, and it should be the constant aim of the Association to make this battlefield, as it deserves to be, famous in American history, so that a visit to it may re-ignite the fires of patriotism which actuated our forefathers.

Gentlemen of the Association, to your care, and to your protection, do I now commend these sentinels of liberty and

patriotism, which bear testimony of arduous struggles of our brave ancestors; and as the cycles of time shall sweep over future generations, may the young of both sexes on reading these inscriptions, emulate the noble sentiments which governed those heroes and heroines of the American Revolution.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us cast our eyes above and behold the flag of our commonwealth, let us ever remember that North Carolina was the first of the thirteen original colonies to declare for separation and independence.

We can not too often repeat that Hilton, a few miles below here, on the banks of the lower Cape Fear, was the birth place and cradle of American liberty.

The heroic actions of the patriots of North Carolina before and during the Revolution should be studied, by every reader of our nation's history.

Last, but not least, let us love and cherish the beautiful stars and stripes which so proudly float over our battlefield today, and we should ever be willing and ready to assemble ourselves under the folds of that flag, and pay homage to the American patriot, whose sacrifices and bravery have given to us the grandest country in all the world.

SPEECH OF HON. CHARLES R. THOMAS.

*Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Citizens of the
County of Pender and the Cape Fear Section:*

I rejoice with you exceedingly in the advent of this momentous occasion; this glorious day in the history of Pender County and the Cape Fear Section of North Carolina, upon which we are again celebrating the Battle of Moore's Creek. I especially rejoice that we are here today to celebrate the completion of the work of the Moore's Creek Monumental Association, in the repairs of the monument around which we have so often assembled in former days, the improvement of the battlefield and the erection of this beautiful new shaft to the heroic women of the Revolution of the Cape Fear Section.

For many years, in fact, ever since the County of Pender has been a part of the Third Congressional District, which it is my honor and privilege to represent, I have longed to see this glorious and auspicious day. In connection with the Moore's Creek Monumental Association, the citizens of Pender County and Cape Fear North Carolina, and the Senator, Honorable James F. Moore, and the Member of the Legislature from Pender County, Honorable A. H. Wells, and other citizens of Pender County, I have labored by day and night, in season and out of season and at all times, determined to bring our hopes and desires in regard to this monument and battlefield to a successful fruition and termination. I congratulate the members of the Monumental Association, all those who have interested themselves in this battlefield, and myself, upon the success of this great and important work of commemorating for all generations the battle of Moore's Creek and the heroic men and women of this section of North Carolina.

Gentlemen of the Monumental Association, you have performed your work well and the State of North Carolina through its annual appropriation secured by Pender's member of the Legislature and the Congress of the United States have shown their appreciation of your labors. Very much credit for the success of the movement to fitly commemorate the battle of Moore's Creek should be given to Senator James F. Moore, Mr. Wells, your member of the Legislature and the members of the Moore's Creek Monumental Association.

This day, fellow citizens, is of more than local interest and importance. This battlefield now having secured both national and state recognition will be handed down to future generations in the laws of our State and Nation as among the most important battlefields in the war of the Revolution. No longer can a distinguished Senator from Massachusetts or any other state show a lack of knowledge of the history of their country, and the battle of Moore's Creek will take the place in history it deserves as the first victory and one of the most important victories of the war of the Revolution. These monuments upon this battlefield, one to the heroes who fought here on February 27, 1776, and one to the women of this section will stand for all times pointing heavenward, as incentives to the people of North Carolina, and especially our young men and women to higher aspirations in our individual and national life. Plutarch said: "It was a custom of the Romans to erect monuments to the most celebrated and distinguished citizens and to carve upon each monument the illustrious achievements of him in whose honor the monument was erected. These monuments were set upon a hill and the Roman youth were bidden by their parents to study the lives of their distinguished ancestors as they saw them carved in marble and they were told that they too would have a life monument erected to them and the record of their life work carved upon it, if

they emulated the virtues and practiced the example of those who had gone before. All of the nations of the world commemorate by statues and monuments those events in their history which have led to independence or marked epochs in their life.

The battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, the first victory of the War of the Revolution has not received in the history of our country its just rank, nor has it been heralded to the world as the battlefields of New England, and yet the battle of Moore's Creek was as important as any conflict between the Colonists and the British upon New England soil. All true-hearted Americans take a just pride in the glorious achievements of New England and the great battles fought upon her soil and the memory of Concord and Bunker Hill and of Lexington, "Where once the embattled farmers stood and fired the shot heard round the world," are a part of the glorious heritage of the whole country. What the battle of Lexington was to the Northern Colonies, the battle of Moore's Creek was to the Southern Colonies. The British were preparing to invade the province of North Carolina and suppress the spirit of independence which was more forward in this province than in any of her sisters.

Referring to my own speech delivered in the House of Representatives on January 12, 1904, upon the subject of Moore's Creek Battlefield Monument, the appropriation for which I subsequently secured, and to the account of the battle as contained in the Life and Correspondence of James Iredell, I want to present to your minds a picture of this battle and this illustrious event in the history of North Carolina and our common country.

McRee says in his life of Iredell, it was on the 10th of January, 1776, from on board His Majesty's Sloop "Scorpion," in Cape Fear River, Governor Martin issued his Proclamation, declaring a state of rebellion; that he had

erected the Royal Standard; and summoning all good subjects to rally to its support. On the 5th of February, Donald McDonald, Brigadier General of His Majesty's forces in North Carolina, issued a Proclamation, calling upon all loyal citizens to repair to the Royal Banner, in accordance with the Governor's Proclamation. McDonald's troops were to meet the Governor at Brunswick, on the 15th of February. Sir Henry Clinton, Commander-in-Chief, was expected from New York, Lord Wm. Campbell from South Carolina, and Sir Peter Parker at the head of a squadron. The whole, united, were to advance into the interior, and crush the province of North Carolina. The Highlanders were soon assembled to the number of two or three thousand; they were animated with the hope of retrieving the past, but a remorseless fate was dogging the steps of these doomed men with a pertinacity surpassing that of their own "sleuth hound." One of their leaders was the husband of the celebrated Flora McDonald, whose services to their fallen prince invested her in their eyes with a sacred character; her presence in their camp, and her counsel, enforced by the charms of beauty and wit, exalted their courage into enthusiasm. Though ultimately trodden into the dust by the armed heel of the British, yet could they recall occasions when their impetuous spirit had borne them, a resistless torrent, over the broken hosts of England. They, as soldiers, had been truly baptized in fire and blood; were renowned by their use of the claymore as the best swordsmen in the world, and now, certainly on the strong side, were flushed with the prestige of victory that attached to the meteor flag of St. George. They were marshalled by regular officers, and could not but feel some contempt for the raw, undisciplined militia of the Province. Evading the vigilance of General Moore, and crossing to the left bank of Cape Fear, they moved rapidly down the road to Moore's Creek.

About seventeen miles from Wilmington, Moore's Creek was, as now, spanned by a small bridge. The creek is narrow, but deep. About one hundred and fifty yards from the bridge on the afternoon of the 26th of February, Colonels Lillington and Ashe, at the head of a detachment of the Wilmington Minute Men and New Hanover Volunteer Rangers, had taken their post, determined to contest the passage of the Celts. They hastily threw up an intrenchment at right angles with the road; two small field-pieces were placed in the center so as to sweep the bridge; their flanks were protected by the swamp skirting the Creek. Subsequently, Col. Caswell came up, and finding the front already occupied, drew up his forces in the rear in a second line. The whole American force amounted to about one thousand men and consisted of forces from New Hanover, under Lillington and Ashe, and of the Minute Men from Duplin, Craven, Johnston and Wake Counties, and a Battalion from New Bern.

The Whigs were not in military costume, but clad in simple homespun; in their hands were no muskets whose bayonets gleamed in the sunshine, but long single-barrelled shot guns and rifles, whose range had often been proved in the deer hunt.

About daybreak, on the 27th, the Highlanders came in sight of their antagonists, and the bag-pipes resounded upon the frosty air of the morning. They rapidly formed into a storming column, with a forlorn hope of seventy-five picked men in front; their General being sick, Colonel Donald McLeod took the command. The planks of the bridge had been hastily removed. Their way was effectually barred. Fight they must. They were celebrated for their dashing onset. At the word of command, they passed the bridge, and rushed forward with the force of the hurricane. Though shattered by the fire of the cannon, they closed up their broken ranks and pressed onward, as if to assured victory,

while loud cheers accompanied their advance; but now was heard the voice of Lillington, and a sheeted flame blazed along the American line, attended with a report as of thunder when it rattles amid the mountain crags. There was a moment of awful silence, in which the wind lifted the smoke as a curtain, from that stage of death. Seldom has there been disclosed to human eye a more appalling spectacle of carnage. In front were the dead, the dying, and the wounded—the background crowded with panic-stricken fugitives. Fifty were killed, among whom were Col. McLeod and Capt. Campbell. Fifteen hundred rifles; three hundred and fifty guns and shot bags; one hundred and fifty swords and dirks; two medicine chests worth \$1,500, thirteen wagons with complete sets of horses, and 75,000 pounds sterling in cash constituted the booty. Eight hundred and fifty common soldiers, General McDonald, and many officers were captured. Thus was won in North Carolina, by North Carolina men, the first great, undoubted triumph of the American arms. This gallant achievement entirely disconcerted the well-organized plans of the intended campaign; and North Carolina had the honor to be the first of the provinces to repel the foe from her borders. The truth is that North Carolina never permitted the British to remain upon her soil. As at Moore's Creek Bridge she repelled the first invasion of her soil with North Carolina troops alone, so at King's Mountain she repelled with the aid of her neighbors, Virginia and South Carolina, the second invasion of her soil. I am glad to say that the Congress of the United States, by the action of the Committee of Congress, of which I have the honor to be a member, has provided for a monument upon the King's Mountain battlefield as well as upon the Moore's Creek battlefield. There is interwoven with the battle of Moore's Creek other most important events in the history of North Carolina, and of the nation. Not only was this battle fought by heroic men from this section

of the state, but by this battle and others of the Revolution in which my state participated, imperishable glory and renown have been conferred upon North Carolina. The history of the great achievements of North Carolina in the War of the Revolution have been unjustly neglected or obscured by the writers of history, and her people have been oftentimes too modest to assert the rights to which they were entitled in respect to great events. North Carolinians are content "to be, rather than to seem" to achieve, rather than to boast of what they have achieved; but the history of North Carolina, while not so well known as the history of New England is inseparable from the early settlement of our country and the history of the War of the Revolution. It is needless for me to recall to your minds that North Carolina was one of the foremost and staunchest of the colonies in the Revolutionary struggles and furnished more than her quota of men and eminent commanders, not only in that war, but in all subsequent wars in which the nation has been involved. During the Revolution North Carolina was frequently overrun by British invaders who, however, were repelled with great slaughter whenever an engagement took place. The battles of Alamance, Moore's Creek, Guilford Courthouse and King's Mountain, attest the fighting qualities of her heroes in the Revolution. Upon the battlefield in that war the record of North Carolina is among the foremost. During the Mexican War the contribution of North Carolina to the National army was largely in excess of the average both in numbers and quality. In the Civil War she was first at Bethel, last at Appomattox, and farthest up the heights at Gettysburg. In the war with Spain one of her sons, Worth Bagley, was the first officer killed, giving up his young life as a sacrifice to the nation, falling at Cardenas wrapped in the folds of "Old Glory," and it was the gallant William E. Shipp who fought side by side with the President of our country, Theodore Roosevelt, at San Juan Hill.

That war with Spain cemented the ties between the North and the South, and the soldiers of the North and South marched shoulder to shoulder in a common cause for the liberation of Cuba and for its independence, and protection from Spanish tyranny; and by it much of the feeling and passion engendered by the great civil war was obscured and obliterated. But, fellow citizens, however brave may have been the heroes of that war with Spain, among all the North Carolinians who have fought and bled for their country in any war in which we have been engaged, these heroes of my section and your section of North Carolina who faced the British in 1776, upon this battlefield of Moore's Creek, were among the noblest, truest and bravest. The forces of the Colonies at Moore's Creek led by Caswell, the first Governor of North Carolina, and by Lillington, won a victory unparalleled in its value and importance by any similar battle. Much has been said and written as to whether Caswell or Lillington is entitled to the credit for leadership and for the victory. I have endeavored to present the facts as I have gathered them from history. Both were there, and if Caswell arrived upon the scene later than Lillington, or if Lillington was in the rear, it makes no difference for there was glory enough for all. According to the inscription upon the old monument only one man was killed upon the American side, John Grady, of the good County of Duplin. The inscriptions upon the old monument are as follows:

“In Commemoration of the Battle of Moore's
Creek Bridge, Fought Here February 27th, 1776.
The first victory gained by the American Arms In
the War of the Revolution.

Caswell—

Lillington—

Here lie the remains of Private John Grady, of

Duplin County, who fell bravely fighting for his Country.

“The first martyr in the cause of freedom in North Carolina, and the only Whig killed in this Battle.”

As at the battle of Alamance, North Carolina in advance of all other colonies called upon the nation to resist British tyranny and lighted the fires of patriotism which resulted in the independence of the country, so at the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, North Carolina stemmed the tide of British invasion in the southern colonies and gave fresh hope to the patriots of the north.

Following this battle came the Congress at Halifax, April 12, 1776, in which North Carolina declared her independence through her Congress assembled there, and also following it came the Declaration of American Independence July 4th of the same year. No one of the heroes who fought here ever flinched from the call of duty, and all deserve and should receive now and for all time the thanks of their grateful and appreciative descendants and fellow countrymen. Let this monument to them pointing heavenward, be an incentive to future generations of North Carolina and the Cape Fear section, and the citizens of the whole nation, and let it be an altar of freedom where we may kindle afresh the fires of patriotism should they ever begin to expire. The descendants of the men who fought here while they honor and respect the nation and fight in its defense and for its flag, will never submit to injustice and oppression from any source, nor permit their rights to be invaded by partisan decrees of Federal Courts, or by those individuals or corporations who would arrogantly attempt to over-ride and ignore the just laws of the State.

Robert B. Glenn, the Governor of North Carolina, must have in his veins some of the spirit which dominated the

patriots who fought upon this battlefield more than a century ago.

But, fellow citizens, I am especially delighted today in the fact that the Moore's Creek Monumental Association, after I had secured the appropriation from Congress with the aid of Senator Overman, in the United States Senate, in addition to the repairs of the old monument, decided to erect here another monument to the heroic women of the Revolution of the Cape Fear Section, who so justly deserve a place in history side by side with the heroic men whose battle cry was "Liberty or Death." This battle is connected with the history of two most charming women, Flora McDonald and Mary Slocumb. Flora McDonald was the wife of Allan McDonald, a relative of General McDonald, who led the Tory forces. It was this noble and beautiful girl who saved the life of Charles Edward Stuart, "Bonnie Prince Charlie," after the defeat of the Scotchmen and followers of the House of Stuart, at the Battle of Culloden. Mary Slocumb was the wife of Lieutenant Slocumb of the Patriot Army. She has many descendants scattered throughout this entire section of North Carolina, who honor and revere her memory. Her son served in the Congress of the United States, representing the district which I now represent, and her brother, Charles Hooks, was also a member of the Congress of the United States, representing the Wilmington District. This separate shaft, fellow citizens, erected upon this battlefield in memory of the heroic women of the Cape Fear, white and pure and stainless as the good women it commemorates, is the first recognition so far as I am informed of the women of the Revolutionary period of our history. Without them success in that war, and in every other war of the country would be impossible. In the war between the states it was the women of the South who assisted and aided the soldiers of the South during those four long years, when oftentimes amidst disaster and defeat the

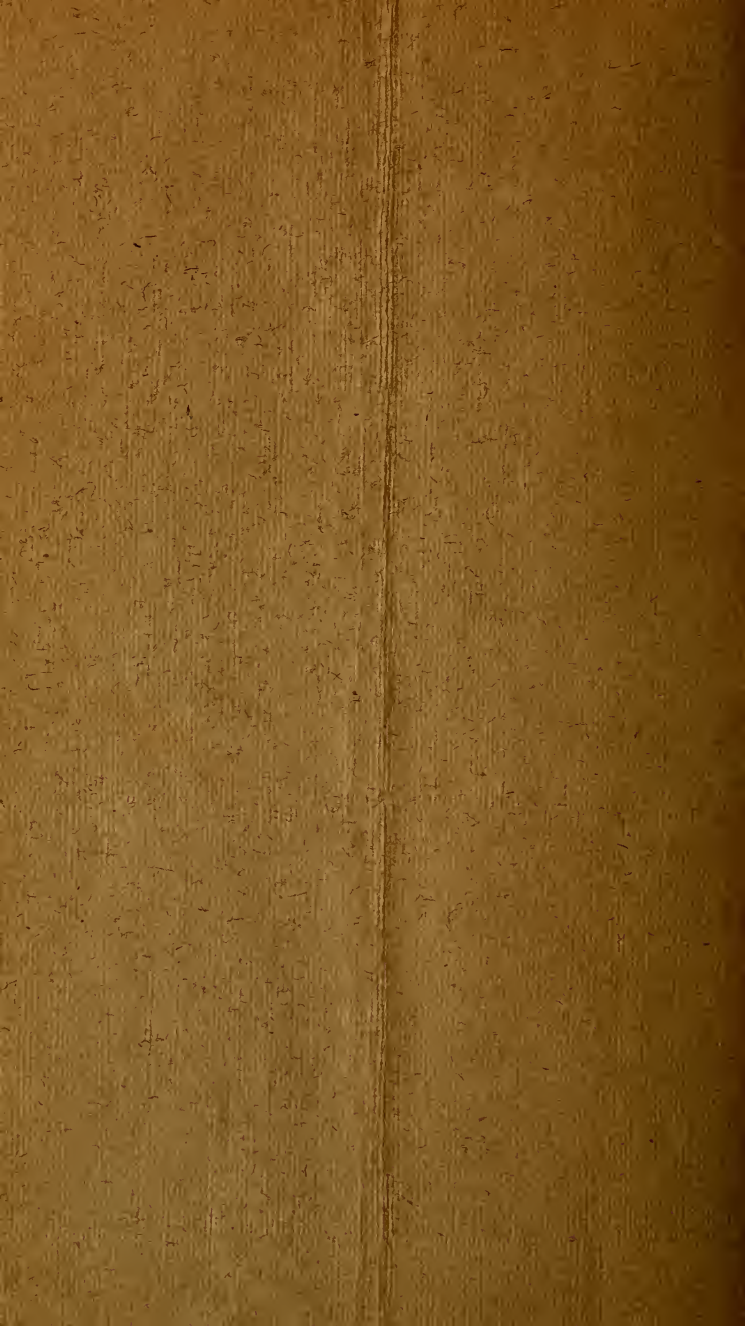
indomitable spirit of the South refused to succumb and sent out fresh thousands of her sons to die upon a hundred battlefields for a lost cause, yes, lost forever, but living and cherished in its undying memories in the hearts of the people of the Southland; and when the Civil War was over it was the women of the South who raised before the manhood of the South a nobler standard and spanned the horizon with a bow of promise, and it is the women of the South who with unchanging devotion upon each succeeding tenth of May come with love and music to scatter roses over our heroic dead. And so in the War of the Revolution the women of the Cape Fear Section of North Carolina stood side by side with their husbands and fathers and brothers in defense of the rights and liberties of the Colonies. No words I can utter can fitly eulogize the women of the Revolution. They were bold, patient, loving, long-suffering and brave. They defied the British and manifested a spirit without fear, nerving the hearts of the men of the Revolution to strive for independence.

It was the women of Edenton, North Carolina, who refused to drink tea because it was taxed by the British Parliament. It was Mrs. Ashe, a North Carolina woman, who, when the British officer Tarleton ridiculed Col. William Washington and said he was so ignorant that he could not write his name, promptly retorted: "At least, Col. Tarleton, you must admit that Col. Washington knows how to make his mark." Whereat Col. Tarleton flushed with anger because he bore upon his face the mark of the sword of Col. Washington. Finally it was Mary Slocumb, whose name is inscribed upon yonder beautiful monument of Italian marble, who upon this battlefield of Moore's Creek nursed the wounded and dying soldiers after a night ride of sixty-five miles from her home without an escort. All honor to her and her descendants and to every heroic woman of the Revolution and to their descendants, and the noble women of

this day and time who reside in the Cape Fear Section of North Carolina, who would now do and dare as she did on that terrible night ride of 1776.

No monuments of stone or marble can express our full appreciation of these brave men and women of the Revolution, and their memories are enshrined in our hearts, and as we assemble each year around these monuments let us cherish the memory of their noble deeds and their heroism, and preserve for all coming generations of the noble people who inhabit Pender County and Cape Fear Section of North Carolina, the history of their lives and their glorious achievements in the cause of American independence. They helped to lay the foundation of the greatest Government upon which the sun shines.

“Nor shall their glory be forgot
While Fame the record keeps;
And Honor marks the hallowed spot,
Where Valor proudly sleeps.”



UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL



00032701755

FOR USE ONLY IN
THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION

