

the anniversary of the First Mecklenburg Declaration. It was opened again as an assay office in 1868 and the bullion produced was sent to Philadelphia to be coined. Operations ceased finally on June 30, 1913. We are indebted to W. H. Brett, Director of the Mint in Washington, for our dates.

At some time after the Charlotte mint building had been taken down, a decision was reached to build a replica of it for use as an art museum. Thus the gold rush has become legend, perpetuated with other historic memories by a warm-hearted people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THANKS are due James A. Stenhouse, architect, informed antiquarian, and first president of the Mecklenburg Historical Association, who has made available copies of his own writings, photoprints of documents and rare historical records, and brochures relating to the history and economic progress of Mecklenburg County. On one of his visits to Charlotte the author was given by Mr. Stenhouse a comprehensive motor trip that included visits to old buildings and other spots of historic interest, and to the old Presbyterian parishes.

For more than forty years Dr. Archibald Henderson of Chapel Hill has published at intervals his discoveries in research, supporting the integrity of the May 20 Declaration of Independence. He has produced accurate and persuasive evidence, every line of which stands up under investigation. Dr. Henderson has been helpful to this work in consultation and the weighing of evidence. For years Professor of Mathematics at the University of North Carolina and author of works on regional history, he is internationally distinguished as the authorized biographer of George Bernard Shaw.

The Mecklenburg Historical Association of Charlotte published in May, 1955, a collection of thirty articles by Dr. Henderson, somewhat abridged, upholding the integrity of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May 20, 1775, that previously had appeared in magazines and newspapers. The book, *Cradle of Liberty*, sold rapidly and is now out of print. The Historical Association presented copies to the President and Vice President, and members of the Cabinet and of Congress.

The late Senator W. Kerr Scott brought to a climax, North Carolina's May anniversary tribute to its venerated scholar-warrior by introducing Dr. Henderson before a joint session of Congress on May 20, 1955. Applause greeted the defender of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, whose written words had silenced some critics and discredited others. Senator Scott then read to the assemblage the five resolutions of independence. An account of the proceedings may be seen in the *Congressional Record* for the first session of 1955.

Thanks are due also to Dr. James W. Patton, director of the Southern Historical Collection at Chapel Hill, and his associate Dr. J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, for making readily available the Mecklenburg papers and supplying information about their history. Much of the new information in this book has been derived from examination of these papers.

Dr. Chalmers Davidson, Professor of History at Davidson College, has been generous with advice and encouragement: help gladly acknowledged.

Miss Josephine L. Harper, in charge of manuscripts for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, has helped greatly by expediting photoprints of

many letters and pages of manuscript in the Draper Collections in Madison. Most valuable has been a set of photoprints of the voluminous letters written by Professor Charles Phillips of Chapel Hill to Dr. Lyman C. Draper, here quoted at length for the first time.

The research by Colonel John H. Wheeler (1806-1882) has yielded a varied store of particularly useful material for this book. Colonel Wheeler specialized in historical studies and in biographical sketches of all the major characters involved in the Mecklenburg independence movement. He was author of two sizable books: *Historical Sketches of North Carolina* and *Reminiscences and Memoirs*, the latter published posthumously in 1884. The University of North Carolina gave him a Master of Arts degree in 1853. He was a well-informed supporter of the historic value of both the First and Second Mecklenburg Declarations of Independence.

John Fries Blair, of Winston-Salem, a nephew of Miss Adelaide Fries, is thanked for assistance in getting up the chapter on the important corroboration of the Mecklenburg Declaration story by the records of the Moravian Church. Mr. Blair also has helped materially by reading proofs of the full text and giving expert counsel on the presentation of detailed evidence.

LeGette Blythe's spirited novel, *Alexandriana*, has helped with its color and its framework of fact, and has stimulated research in several directions. Its account of the rising of the Regulators and the battle of the Alamance is perhaps the most exciting single story of those exciting pre-Revolution days. Equally interesting is the running account of the Charlotte convention and subsequent events in the Revolution. The novel is now out of print; it deserves re-issue.

The New York Public Library has on its shelves all or virtually all of the books and magazines required for this study. Robert W. Hill, chief of the Manuscripts Division, has given expert aid in interpreting the significance of the William Polk papers in the Emmet Collection.

Kenneth W. Whitsett and Victor C. King of Charlotte, diligent searchers into Mecklenburg history, have obliged with lively bits and with suggestions leading to research that counted.

Various persons at Princeton University have been gracious with their information about alumni who played interesting parts in the brave doings at Charlotte. Rollin L. McNitt, a Los Angeles attorney and student of history, has assisted with criticisms and comments based upon his own research.

The best and most interesting presentation of the case against the May 20 Mecklenburg Declaration was made by William Henry Hoyt in his book published in 1907: *The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence*. Through the intervening years it has been respected by scholars. It should be studied if possible by all who read this book. Mr. Hoyt died September 6, 1957, without having published anything more on the subject.

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- Loomis Collection in Southern Historical Collection in University of North Carolina Library: the papers of Peter and William Q. Force bearing on Mecklenburg Declaration and other matters of early American history.
- Mecklenburg Papers in Southern Historical Collection: the primary documents, many secondary papers, letters, and newspaper articles.
- Draper Collection of letters and manuscripts gathered by Lyman C. Draper, in Library of Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison. These deal mostly with frontier history.

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BIOGRAPHY OF THIS BOOK

THIS STUDY in Mecklenburg County patriotism and independence of spirit began in 1925 and is therefore a fairly mature thirty-five years of age as the book goes to press. The section dealing with Prof. Charles Phillips' deviation in quoting from the Davie Copy was first published, experimentally, in the *Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review* in February, 1954.

The author began research in the belief that when John McKnitt Alexander's minute book was burned in April, 1800, nothing but fond memory was left to back the first Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May 20, 1775.

Leading scholars had written their texts to convey just that conviction. That is, all but one, who has turned out to be the only one who seems to have read and studied widely enough to get the right answers. This scholar is Dr. Archibald Henderson of Chapel Hill.

The writer of the monograph now in the reader's hands has sought to go deeply into the study of manuscripts, to discover what may have been only partially considered in prior readings, and what may have entirely escaped attention.

Virtually all the new detail in this book has come from a study of manuscripts, letters, and documents. It is exciting to find how some of these papers have been abused and misrepresented, in the assumption no doubt that this rough treatment would not be later detected.

Almost everything in the book has been written and rewritten, over and over, in efforts to make the text clear and precise in statement. The Foreword, which is a kind of recapitulation like the overture to a piece of music, has been rewritten a score of times.

Until about the fifteenth time, the author cherished a quotation from Mark Twain, that fell neglected by the wayside. Let us pick it up and try it again: "A theory without evidence is like a man without bones. It may look all right but it can't stand up."

ON FRONT OF JACKET: *Monument commemorating Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May 20, 1775, erected May 20, 1898; here shown in front of Courthouse in Charlotte, N. C.*