

The Chatham Historical Journal

Volume 3, No. 2

Chatham County, North Carolina

August 1990

UNION INFANTRYMAN SCORNS SHERMAN'S RAIDERS, PRAISES SOUTHERN COOKING DURING VISITS TO HAYWOOD

Robert Hughes

It was late April of 1865 and the Civil War had been all but concluded by the surrender of the Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston. The Union troops under the command of General W. T. Sherman were thus not under a lot of pressure – indeed, they had had more trouble with the Carolina mud in their march north that winter than they had with the small forces that could be mustered against them. So when one member of Sherman's forces – Charles S. Brown, a clerk in the 21st Michigan Volunteer Infantry – wrote to his sister of the events of two days spent in the Haywood, North Carolina, area during that time, he wrote predominantly of the dinners he was invited to, and the women present. That would not be surprising – good food and the opposite sex are probably still the top priorities of present-day soldiers.

But Brown, whose letters home to his sister Etta have been preserved in the Manuscript Department of Duke University's William R. Perkins Library, also provides a glimpse of how life went for a Chatham County community – away from the battlefields, but still wrenched by the war:

. . . On the 25 of April A.D. 1865, Capt. Weimer, Lts. Sage, Bright and Brown procured leave to be absent from camp for the day (they had agreed to go to the town of Haywood N.C. about 10 miles out of our lines), and all mounted at about 8:30 A.M. and started. Crossed the Cape Fear river in an old flat boat and started. Rode and rode and rode and finally came upon an old plantation and learned we were extremely out of the way [lost]. Intercepted a [Negro] and made him show us the way to Haywood, and took him along for a hostage. . .

Arrived at a Capt's, some bodied dismounted, took dinner – had butter, milk, and pickles, picked our teeth and started as crossed the "deep river." Some citizens told us there were ½ a doz. or so mounted men in town and he could not say whether they were Reb. or Fed. so we went for them like thunder, rode into town and one fellow rode off like – (we did). We put for him and ran him down in about 2½ miles and found him to be an old citizen, a Dr. who lived in the region, and O.K. Gave him some "Sage" advice and let him go and started back to see who the rest were.

Found a Q. 4U. of Gen. Hardee's Staff and a Surgeon of the C.S.N. [They were] seated smoking and chatting with Capt. M and Ben Bright. . .

Introduced to Capt. McGowan and Surgeon Sanford. Sat and smoked the calumet of peace finally. Left to visit some of our friends – went down to see Mikes Faucett. Had lots of fun. Old man [is] a Union [sympathizer]. . . .

The time was anything but "lots of fun" for the local residents, as most were suffering from the pangs of the drawn-out war. But if Sherman's Army was hated by many residents (and as Brown showed, there were enough who sided with the Union), Confederate renegades were also feared, for they also pilfered whatever food and goods they could find. Citizens were fearful to the point that any force of order – even one that wore Union uniforms – was informed of the whereabouts of suspicious-looking men. It is also revealing that Confederate officers would be willing to sit with their recent enemies and "smoke the calumet of peace." But the mention of an "OK" old doctor that sped away from approaching horsemen also reveals the continuing tension of the time.

Sherman's forces also scoured the countryside for food to eat, and Brown went on to describe in detail some of the methods of the men (known as Sherman's Bummers) who went out on foraging details. Such "bummers" were also feared and despised by the locals, who suffered from their callous thefts and vandalism, and Brown was certainly not alone among Union men in finding the bummers' tactics deplorable. After describing one terrible raid on people's property in Fayetteville, Brown wrote:

. . . such scenes were enacted in every town we entered in the [Confederate States] – all in [South Carolina] were either visible by the flames or smoke, and for over two months I never was out of sight of burning property of some kind – "such is life" . . . the boys used to delight to fire . . . "just to see the smoke."

Oh! The horrors of war. May you be preserved from them (bah).

Brown went on to tell his sister that the worst atrocities he saw occurred in South Carolina and that the people of North Carolina were more occupied with avoiding Confederate raiders. While in his regiment's camp at Martha's Vineyard (located near Corinth), Brown mentioned in his letter another incident in Haywood that began when some of their "bummers" struck a bad chord with the locals – but still, the incident, for an infantryman like Brown, again ended up in another pleasurable dinner or two:

(Continued on next page)

BROWN'S LETTERS

(Continued from front page)

On or about the 17th of April 1865. The 21st M.V.I. was called upon to furnish one Major and all the mounted men in camp to . . . go foraging. About night they returned and stated that they had struck ill [trouble] in a town . . . named Haywood, and all were ordered out again and [with] the 21st M.V. Regt. as a guard. . . . Reached Haywood about 9 A.M., occupied the town . . . After [having gotten] them established, I . . . finally rode out to a house with Capt. Woodward and dismounted and went in. [We] were asked to dinner. Stayed, had a medium dinner, mounted, rode back - and at the regiment our orderly met us and told that supper was waiting us at Capt. Bryan's in town.

Rode down and found a splendid dinner waiting us: roast turkey and etc. and etc. And 3 pretty young Bryans of the female persuasion to boot (I don't mean we booted them). . . .

Brown added that his host offered him a game of chess, which they played until 8:00 p.m. - a late enough hour as to force them to camp down on the banks of the Cape Fear River before returning to their established camp the next morning. But aside from enjoying all the good food and company, Brown explained that the trip was a success for all - despite their being *tiard* [sic] *as the dickens*, as they and the bummers had returned to camp *with 57 horses and mules; 8,000 pounds of bacon and hams; about 3 chickens and 20 pounds of flour to a man.*

The Flint, Michigan resident - who had observed the burning of Atlanta and taken part in all of Sherman's march, and who had participated in the battle of Bentonville one month before writing his letter - was in the nation's capital in May as one of thousands of soldiers who received a hero's welcome and was hopeful of getting home by July.

Local historian Gene Brooks, who brought Brown's letter to the attention of the Chatham County Historical Association at its January meeting, points out that the Bryans mentioned in the letter lived in the area of the pecan grove near the present-day Haywood Presbyterian Church and that their descendants (including Pittsboro's Clinton Bryan) are still in the area. Brooks further notes that one of the "pretty" Bryans later married a Dr. Budd, who may have been the first surgeon to perform an appendectomy in the U.S. ■

[Robert Hughes is currently sports editor of the Chatham News and Record and is an active and enthusiastic member of the Chatham County Historical Association.]

The *Chatham Historical Journal* is an occasional publication of the Chatham County Historical Association. Its purpose is to disseminate items of historical interest about Chatham County. Material, which should be previously unpublished, may include photographs, private papers, church or organization records, monographs, or letters. Items should be of reasonable length and should include source(s) of research material.

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SILER CITY, NORTH CAROLINA AND THE CENSUS OF 1900

Wade Hadley

The United States decennial census for the year 1900 provides information concerning the town of Siler City as of thirteen years after it was incorporated. The census was taken June 1 to June 6 by John A. Walters. The corporate limits at that time embraced an area one mile square, with the railroad depot at its center. The depot was located just south of where West Raleigh Street crosses the railroad today and on the east side of the tracks.

A population of 440 was recorded, and some of the information from the census is summarized below. The items are listed in the order in which they appear from left to right on the census sheets.

Color or Race

Under this column the entry for each person was B or W. The totals were B (Black), 46; W (White), 394.

Age

The date of birth and age of each person listed in the census was recorded. This record shows only seven persons seventy years of age or older. The oldest was seventy-four years of age. There were a few entries that were blurred and could not be read.

Place of Birth

Most of the people living at Siler City in the year 1900 were recorded as having been born in North Carolina. The exceptions were:

Born in Georgia	4 persons
Born in Pennsylvania	1 person
Born in Virginia	8 persons
Born in West Virginia	1 person
Born in Ireland	1 person

The person born in Ireland was a 26-year-old traveling salesman lodged at a boarding house.

Occupation

A column headed "Occupation, trade, or profession of each person ten years of age or older" listed forty-seven occupations, which provided employment for 169 persons. These occupations, in alphabetical order and with the number of persons having each occupation, are shown below. Forty-six persons were recorded as "in school," a group of 25 boys and 21 girls between the ages of nine and twenty-two years. The occupations were: barber, 1; blacksmith, 1; boarding-house keeper, 2; bookkeeper, 2; carpenter, 1; cotton ginner, 1; cotton mill worker, 64; day laborer, 5; dressmaker, 1; druggist, 1; engineer - grist mill, 1; engineer - saw mill, 1; farmer, 8; farm laborer, 15; grocer, 2; hotel keeper, 1; hotel porter, 1; housekeeper, 2; laundress, 1; lawyer, 1; livery stable keeper, 2; manufacturing, 1; merchant, 1; merchant - dry goods, 5; miller, 1; minister, 2; painter - house, 1; photographer, 1; physician, 2; postmaster, 1; poultry shipper, 1; printer, 1; railroad agent, 1; railroad flagman, 1; railroad laborer, 1; saddler, 2; salesman, 13; saleswoman, 1; sawmilling, 1; sawyer, 1; servant, 6; shoemaker, 2; storekeeper, 1; teacher, 4; teamster, 2; typesetter, 1; wheelwright, 1.

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Education

Under this heading was recorded whether a person could read and could write. There were thirty-nine persons recorded as not being able to read or write. Six persons were recorded as being able to read but who could not write.

The Cotton Mill Employees

The only local industry providing employment for a considerable number of people at the time of this census was the cotton mill (Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing Company), which had opened in November of 1895 with 1000 spindles and had been enlarged by 1900. The plant manufactured yarn.

Of the sixty-four persons recorded as employed by this mill, one person was listed as superintendent, one as an overseer, and two as engineers. Sixty persons listed their specific occupations, such as carder, doffer, lapper, reeler, spinner, and spreader. This group of thirty-one males and twenty-nine females ranged in age from 10 to 30 years. Workers between the ages of ten and 18 years made up 76 percent of the total. One father had four sons and one daughter between the ages of ten and twenty years employed at this cotton mill. Several parents had three or four children working there. ■

THE REV. THOMAS MANN, PIONEER CIRCUIT-RIDING PREACHER

J. Lamont Norwood*

The Rev. Thomas Mann was born in Amherst County, Virginia, in 1769. Sometime when he was quite small, he migrated with his family to Stokes County and then to Chatham County, North Carolina. The earliest land deed on record in Pittsboro to the Manns is 1805, but a passage in Mann's diary suggests that he lived in Chatham at a much earlier age. He writes, on October 13, 1813: "Preached at Olive's. Rode to George Woods, Maryann Tole was there. When we were small, we used to play. I loved her, and thought when I became a man I would marry her, but I never did ask her for before I was grown I got religion and she was wicked. I could not feel free to marry her. She now has ten children, six daughters, four sons, lives in poverty, and has a mean husband."

Rev. Mann started his preaching career when he was about twenty-one, but the big end of his ministry was in Virginia. He was in Chatham County from 1805 to 1807 and again from 1812 to 1815. On his retirement (and I use the term retirement loosely, for

**[J. Lamont Norwood is a native of Chatham County. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Second World War. He is a font of information to newcomers and old-timers alike on the history of Baldwin Township. This article derives from a program he presented at the Chatham County Historical Association meeting on June 10, 1990, at Mann's Chapel Church. The complete tape recording of his talk, and an almost-complete transcript of the tape, are available at the Pittsboro Memorial Library.]*

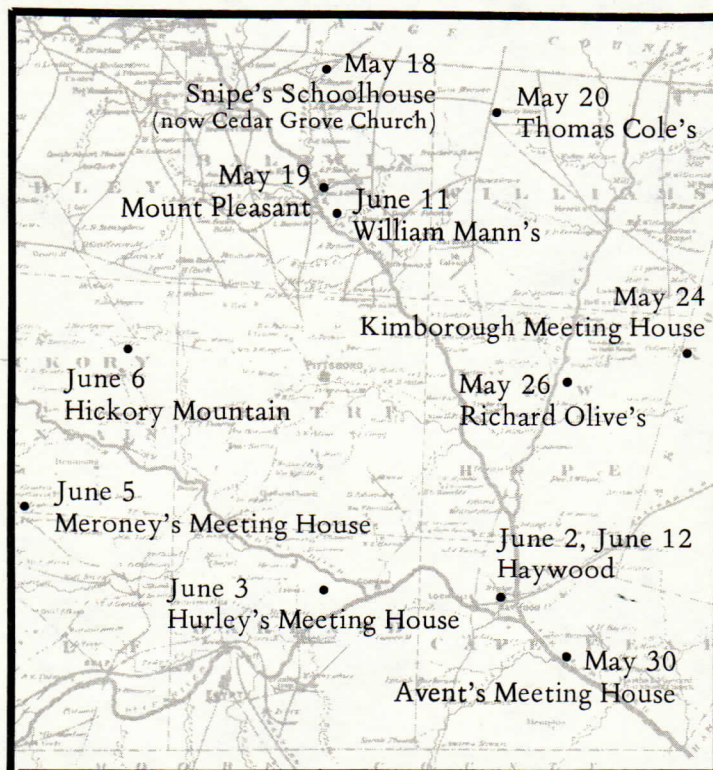
he didn't quite choose to retire – the management decided it was time for him to go, and he didn't like it) he moved to his farm at the place where Wilkerson Creek flows into the Haw River. He was available for speaking engagements whenever anyone invited him.

I have selected a portion of his 1813 diary that seems to describe a typical circuit for Rev. Mann. Not all the places can be identified, but enough can be shown to see that he usually traveled south along the eastern edge of the county and back north through the central part, taking as his base his property on Wilkerson Creek, where his brother William lived.

Well, let's follow what he says. He begins [on May 18] at Snipe's schoolhouse, which is now Cedar Grove. From there to Mt. Pleasant, from Mt. Pleasant to Thomas Cole's. The old foundation of the church is still recognizable in the woods a short distance from the Cole Park Plaza. From there he continued on east and came along roughly where Jordan Lake is now. At times he reached into Wake County, at Kimborough's, for example. Then he comes on down to the Moncure-Haywood area.

We can identify some places indirectly. He said he was at Avent's meeting house. The Avents owned the ferry and they didn't have much land, so the meeting house had to be close to the ferry. Likewise by indirection we can identify Hurley's. Mann's brother-in-law owned land in the corner where Deep River and Rocky River converged. Whenever you find him preaching at Hurley's you'll find shortly before or thereafter that he visited his brother-in-law, so we can

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Location of some of the places visited by the Rev. Thomas Mann in May and June, 1813.

Base map is Captain Ramsey's 1870 map of Chatham County, N.C. Approximate scale is 1" = 6 mi.

feel sure that when he is at Hurley's he is not far from his brother-in-law's place.

From there he goes on up to Meroney's. Meroney's is where it always was. It has been in existence since 1808. But his next visit is to Hickory Mountain. Now Hickory Mountain Methodist Church is not that old, but we assume the place Mann preached was in the vicinity. He goes on to Grace Meeting House and McMaster's. I can't identify those but I'm sure he's north of what is now U.S. Highway 64. Soon thereafter the "rode to William Mann's" to complete his circuit. Notice what a long rest he took — all night, for the next morning he's out on the road again. That was typical of the kind of dedication he had.

*This article will be continued in a future issue of
The Chatham Historical Journal*

Excerpt from a Journal of the Rev. Thomas Mann*

Thursday, 13th

Preached McMaster's Meeting House from 1 Samuel 2:30. Rode to Joshua Edwards for a night meeting, but no one came.

Friday, 14th

Preached a funeral over Christopher Brewer's (child) at John Brewer's from 2 Corinthians 4:14-15.

Saturday, 15th

Preached Alston's Schoolhouse from Psalm 16:11.

Sunday, 16th

Preached at Jeremiah Meeting House from Job 21:14-15. Rode to Brother William Mann's.

Tuesday, 18th

Preached at Snipe's from 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

Wednesday, 19th

Preached at Mount Pleasant from 1 Corinthians 1:30.

Thursday, 20th

Preached at Thomas Cole's from 1 Corinthians 1:30 and Sister (merritt) got converted and shouted for an hour more or less. A blessed time.

Saturday, 22nd

I walked about my plantation. I leave home: 18 dollars in bank notes and 10 dollars in silver.

Sunday, 23rd

Preached at Davis Meeting House from 1 Chronicles 28:9. We had a glorious time. I labored with the people til after 5 o'clock. Many shouted and lept for joy. Read the rules. Stayed at Mr. John Moore's.

Monday, 24th

Preached at Kimborough Meeting House. Stayed at Brother Briggs. Henry Hardy came to visit me here.

Tuesday, 25th

Rode to Sihon Smith's.

Wednesday, 26th

Preached at Richard Olive's from Job 26:6. Rode to (Edmund) Barker's.

Thursday, 27th

Rode to Holly Spring Meeting House. Brother Henry Hardy came in and I asked him to preach and handed him the hymn book. He sung and preached from Mark 16:15-16. He preached a good sermon. Brother Hardy got me some casamoore at Raleigh for a half dollar a yard, six yards.

Friday, 28th

Called at Thomas Fox's. Got our horses fed. Eat honey. I prayed. Then we rode to Bethel Meeting House. Hardy preached. Read the rules. Brother Hardy met part of the class and I

*[The original journals are housed in the Manuscript Department of Duke University's William R. Perkins Library. The excerpt here is copied from a transcript prepared by the Rev. Wilkenson, which transcript belongs to J. Lamont Norwood. Minor discrepancies between this excerpt and the original are to be expected.]

met the other part. We dined at William Pegrem's. Rode to John Moss's.

Saturday, 29th

Brother Hardy preached.

Lord's Day, 30th

Brother Hardy preached Avent's Meeting House. Rode to Brother William Avent's.

Monday, 31st

We parted. Rode to William Rolling's. Preached. A dull time.

June, 1813

Tuesday, 1st

Preached Providence Meeting House from Psalm 34:19. Met the class and had a shout.

Wednesday, 2nd

At breakfast at William Avent's. Preached at Haywood. Met the class. Turned out Frances Drake for drunkenness and put Betsey Winton back on trial six months for marrying a sinner. Rode to John Hurley's.

Thursday, 3rd

Preached Hurley's Meeting House. My three sisters came: Francis Smith and her husband, Jerimina Morgan, and Deliah Williams.

Saturday, 5th

Preached at Meroney's Meeting House from Chronicles 28:9. Rode home with Robert Wilkerson to Allen Smith's.

Sunday, 6th

Two-day meeting at Hickory Mountain Meeting House. I preached from 1 Corinthians 1:30. We had a shout and dance. Thomas (Churchfield) exhorted. Stayed at Benjamin Harris's. Too wicked for me.

Monday, 7th

Rode 18 miles to Holstead's.

Tuesday, 8th

Preached at Holstead's from 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

Wednesday, 9th

Preached at Grace Meeting House. Rode home with Arnel Hutton.

Thursday, 10th

Preached McMaster's Meeting House.

Friday, 11th

Rode to William Mann's.

Saturday, 12th

Quarter Meeting at Haywood. Brother Weaver, presiding elder, preached. Hugh (McPhaill) exhorted.

Lord's Day, 13th

9 o'clock love feast. A large number, I admit, but all according to rule and as I examined all that I did not know and made one that was called a Methodist mad as I did not know him. When he came to the door I asked him if he was a Methodist and he turned, shouted off and made me no answer. And when I came out of love feast he spoke to me on the subject. I told him he came so seldom to meeting that I did not know him. We have a large congregation today so we moved the seat out of the house in the woods.

John Weaver preached, then Hugh Mc(Pharll). Both pleased me. Robert Wilkerson and I exhorted. He pleased me, but I did not please myself. I invited mourners to the stand and six came and prayed and sung. Some shouted. We had a good meeting; a glorious love feast also.

At the close of the love feast I baptized a young woman and a child and her name was (Betha no) Bowhannan. She last year wanted me to dip her, but I would not. I told her that I would pour water on if it was two or three (parllfull). So today I poured some out of a pitcher on her in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Monday, 14th

Rode to William Mann's.

Tuesday, 15th

Preached Snipe's Schoolhouse.