

July 2019

Undated (09)

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Recommended Citation

Jones, M. (n.d.). Cleveland County Early Days - Undated (09), The Daily Star. Fay Webb Gardner Collection, Gardner-Webb University Archives, John R. Dover Memorial Library, Boiling Springs, NC.

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In Cleveland County's

By MAMIE JONES

LONG REMEMBERED EVENTS

An event those who saw it never forgot, occurred on the night of November 13, 1833, when "stars fell like snow" from midnight till nearly dawn, and it looked like the world was on fire.

At that time there were more than 4,000 people in the area that is now Cleveland County. It is a safe guess that nine out of every ten persons who saw those falling stars promised their God that if He would not burn up the world that night, and would let them live, they would mend their erring ways.

THE CHARLESTON EARTHQUAKE

On the 31st of August, 1886, about nine o'clock at night, occurred what is generally referred to as "the Charleston earthquake", but it scared the sin out of many a man—and woman, too—right here in Cleveland county. Our people did not know much about earthquakes, and when the earth tremors began they did not know what was happening.

At the home of one of my relatives, two young men were calling on two teen-age girls, and the four were playing cards. When the quakes began making the house shake and the dishes rattle the boys were so frightened they left hurriedly, and ran all the way home—a long mile—scattering playing cards as they ran.

ZEB VANCE SPOKE HERE

Zebulon B. Vance, called by many "the most colorful North Carolinian of the 19th century", spoke here on two memorable occasions. Vance had twice been elected governor of North Carolina during the War years (that is in 1862 and 1864) and in 1876 was again the Democratic candidate for governor. His Republican opponent was Tom Settle.

Older men will recall hearing their fathers tell of the joint debates held by Vance and Settle when they stumped the State together, appearing in nearly every county, speaking to great crowds in what was said to be the greatest political campaign ever held in North Carolina.

Tom Settle, the Republican candidate, "a man of fine personal appearance, of fine address, conscious of fine attainments, and eloquent, entered with eagerness into the contest."

Zeb Vance, the Democrat, has been called "the greatest stump speaker of all time, humorous and witty," was ready for his adversary.

Their debate in Shelby was held under a spreading oak tree on the northeast corner of the Court Square. Until this tree was cut down about 15 years ago, it was famed as "the oak tree under which Zeb Vance stood when he spoke in Shelby."

Vance got the majority of the votes on election day, and became governor of the State for the third time. Incidentally, there were 12 Negro members of the legislature that convened soon after his election. In 1879, he was elected United States Senator which office he held until his death in 1894.

POLITICAL RALLY AND BARBECUE

On September 7, 1884, Shelby and Cleveland county staged a big political rally. Senator Vance was the chief speaker. Delegations from nearby counties came to hear the beloved Vance, and each of these visiting groups were met as they came into town by a cavalcade of 500 Clevelanders on horseback.

Altogether, more than 6,000 people attended the speaking which was held at Hopper's park, where the speakers' stand and the two bowling alleys were gay with flags and bunting. Picnic dinner was spread on the grounds, and in addition to the food brought in baskets, more than 1,000 pounds of barbecued meat was served.

When Vance saw the crowds he said, "I bring 'em down, don't I, boys?" In addition to Vance, other visiting speakers were S. M. Finger, W. H. Kitchen, and ---- Cowles "who expounded the true Democratic doctrine". In that day the "true Democratic doctrine" meant State's Rights and White Supremacy. Local speakers were Capt. L. J. Hoyle, L. D. Fulenwider, and A. B. Suttle.