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THE  
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"CAROLINA! CAROLINA! HEAVEN'S BLESSINGS ATTEND HER!  
WHILE WE LIVE WE WILL CHERISH, PROTECT AND DEFEND HER."

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DAUGHTERS OF THE REVOLUTION

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The object of the BOOKLET is to aid in developing and preserving North Carolina History. The proceeds arising from its publication will be devoted to patriotic purposes.

EDITORS.

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## CORNELIUS HARNETT: THE PRIDE OF THE CAPE FEAR.

BY R. D. W. CONNOR,

Secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission

The life and character of Cornelius Harnett have been the subject of eulogy from the pen of every student of his career. Bancroft praises his "disinterested zeal" in the public cause. Richard Frothingham says: "Harnett was the foremost actor in the movement for independence." McRee mentions him as "the representative man of the Cape Fear." Archibald Maclaine Hooper, whose name betrays his parentage, says that Harnett was "the favorite of the Cape Fear and the idol of the town of Wilmington." "He was incomparably the first man of the Cape Fear country," writes another, "and second to none in the state." Mr. George Davis calls him "the pride of the Cape Fear \* \* \* the life-breathing spirit among the people." Governor Swain wrote that "no true North Carolinian will read his public letters without increased respect and affection for the state and without very high admiration of the courage which sustained the writer in the darkest days of the revolution, and the lofty and disinterested patriotism exhibited throughout the whole course of his legislative career."

These expressions of eulogy are justified not only by his public and private services to the state, but also by the confidence and admiration in which he was held by his friends, and the fear and hatred expressed for him by the enemies of

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## EDWARD MOSELEY: CHARACTER SKETCH.

BY D. H. HILL.

“Of all the men who watched and guided the tottering footsteps of our infant State, there was not one who in intellectual ability, in solid and polite learning, in scholarly cultivation and refinement, in courage and endurance, in high Christian morality, in generous consideration for the welfare of others, in all true merit in fine, which makes a man among men, who could equal Edward Moseley.

HON. GEORGE DAVIS.

Fortunately for men of action the judgment of their contemporaries is often modified or reversed by the clearer judgment of posterity. Of Wycliffe, the first translator of the Bible into our “modir tonge” and one of the stoutest opponents of ecclesiastical tyranny, a contemporary, Lewis, says, in his “Life of Wycliffe:”

“On the feast of the passion of Saint Thomas, of Canterbury, John Wycliffe, the organ of the devil, the enemy of the church, the idol of heretics, the image of hypocrites, the restorer of schism, the storehouse of lies, the sink of flattery, being struck by the horrible judgment of God, was seized with the palsy throughout his whole body, and that mouth, which was to have spoken huge things against God and his saints, and Holy church, was miserably drawn aside, and afforded a frightful spectacle to beholders; his tongue was speechless and his head shook, showing plainly that the curse which God had thundered forth against Cain was also inflicted on him.”

Of this same Wycliffe Dr. Patterson Smyth says, in the tempered judgment of 1899:

“In him England lost one of her best and greatest sons, a patriot sternly resenting all dishonor to his country, a reformer who ventured his life for the purity of the church and the freedom of the Bible—an earnest, faithful ‘parsoun of

a toune' standing out conspicuously among the clergy of the time.

'For christes lore and his apostles twelve  
He taughte—and first he folwede it himselve.'

In like manner if we should credit the official contemporaries of Edward Moseley, he was "of all men most base." Gov. Hyde and his followers in the Legislature of 1711 joined in a petition to "The Palatin and Lord Proprietors" to "remove those three restless Incendiaries Col. Carey, Mr. Porter and Mr. Moseley from having any share in the government." Gov. Pollock, smooth and suave, complains that "he was the chief contriver and carry-er on of Col. Carey's rebellion." Gov. Burrington, passing rich in the vocabulary of expletive, brands him as "the great land-jobber of this country," and further declares to the Legislature that Moseley is "a person of sufficient ability" to be "Publick Treasurer," but wishes that his "integrity was equal to his ability." Gov. Johnston writes the Board of Trade that "the only remains of faction in this colony is kept up by Mr. Moseley and the Moors."

The remarkable continuity of this courteous attention from crown officers, extending as it does over a good many years, reveals the dynamics inherent in the man. Even if we had no record of Moseley's life other than this continuous gubernational vituperation, we should still be inclined to say, "Official lions found no hind in him; here was a man."

Hence it is no surprise to find modern writers, who have tried to roll the mists away, saying, as Weeks does: "He (Moseley) was the broadest-minded man who lived in North Carolina during the first half of the 18th century. He was a patriot rather than a partisan and as such espoused the cause of religious freedom against the bigotry and narrowness of his age and country;"

Or to find Shinn saying: "It can not be doubted that he was hot tempered and was perhaps often too hasty and liable

to cultivate strong antipathies; yet he was a patriot in his day and did more than any other early character to make the unlettered Carolinians feel that by royal charter 'it is granted that the inhabitants of this province shall have, possess and enjoy all libertys, franchises and privileges as are held, possessed and enjoyed in the Kingdom of England.' In every contest he was on the side of the people."

That Moseley was always "on the side of the people" and that in spite of royal governors he retained their confidence is abundantly shown by such facts as these. One year after Gov. Hyde's assembly petitioned for Moseley's 'removal from having any part in the government,' the people elected him a member of the Assembly. In 1715, in the face of Pollock's charge and just two years after it was made, that he was the backbone of the Cary trouble, the representatives of the people elected him their Speaker. Gov. Burrington's epithet of "land grabber," and doubt as to his having integrity enough to be Treasurer did not deter the Assembly of 1731 from electing Moseley Speaker nor from saying with some heat: "The Members of the House declare that they are very well satisfied as well with his integrity as his ability, his accounts always appearing just and true."

Of the early life of the man thus so differently judged, we have few records; his later life is almost literally a history of the province, so large is his part in its doings. He held almost every office then open to a citizen. Indeed for robust persistence in office-holding Moseley is without a peer in Carolina history. The first year that he appears in our records he was a member of the Cary Council: he dies still a Council member, although his service was not continuous. The office of magistrate, then a very honorable and responsible one, he held nearly all his life. From perhaps 1708 until near his death he was Treasurer of the Colony, and also part of the time precinct treasurer. For many years he was Surveyor-General. He was a Commissioner for running the boundary

line between North Carolina and Virginia and also between North Carolina and South Carolina. He was judge of the Court of Admiralty, five or six times Speaker of the House, President of the Council and thus Acting-Governor, Commissioner on Wages, and for Revisal of laws, chief baron of the Exchequer, and finally Chief Justice of the Colony. This perpetuity and variety of office-holding seem too to have come, not because he was a chronic seeker of office, but solely because he was the fittest man to fill the office.

What were the characteristics of the man who was thus honored by his people?

In the first place it was not necessary for him "to usurp a patriot's all-atoning name," for he seems to have sincerely loved his adopted colony, and to have served it with the steadfast purpose of making it a home fit for free men. Although himself a member of the established church of England, a contributor equal in generosity to the Governor towards its support, and a propagandist of its faith to the extent of sending to England for Prayer Books for distribution, yet there seems no doubt that he set his face like flint against an alliance of church and State in America. Although frequently on terms of such intimacy with crown officers that it would have been to his interest to wink at their usurpations of authority, he steadily resisted all such encroachments on the rights of the people. He was Speaker of the House that in 1715 dared to pass the memorable resolution "that the impressing of the inhabitants, or their property, under pretense of its being for public service, without authority from the General Assembly is unwarrantable, a great infringement of the liberty of the subject, and very much weakens the government by causing many to leave it."

Col. Saunders says of this resolution: "The man who, at that early day, in the wild woods of America, could formulate that resolution, and the people whose assembly could fling it in the face of the government, were worthy of each other."

While holding a royal commission as member of the Council, Moseley refused to pay his quit rents to the royal Receiver at a rate different from what he thought the laws of the colony prescribed, and encouraged others to take the same position.

In the second place he had the boldness of thought and of action that people admire in their leaders. When but a comparative stranger in the province, he did not hesitate to join with Cary in actions which though in themselves illegal redounded to public good. When he believed that Gov. Eden's relations to the pirate Thache or Teach were suspiciously criminal, he with the aid of his brother-in-law, Maurice Moore, made bold to forcibly enter the office of the Governor's secretary and seize official papers apparently for the purpose of disclosing criminality on the part of the officers of the province. On his arrest for this attempt "to bring the good government, diligent and just administration of him the said Charles Eden as Governor to detract, asperse and contempt and to move and stir up debates, strifes and differences, sedition and discord and dissention in this province," as the warrant charged, he could not forbear saying that the governor, chief justice and others with him could procure armed men to come and arrest him but could not raise them to destroy the pirate. He incurred the hostility of Gov. Burrington and was committed to the common jail for interposing in behalf of a poor man without legal counsel, whom the Governor was prosecuting with acrimonious speed. It is not hard to imagine that it was his influence as Speaker that led the Assembly of 1733 to protest against Gov. Burrington's "long disuse of assemblies," and to declare that "the Affairs of the Province in our humble Opinion required the Meeting of an Assembly before this time, not only for an Application to his Majesty toward the Good and happy settlement of this province, but also for the suppressing the many Oppressions, which so loudly have been complained of through the whole

province, which could in no other way so properly be represented as in an Assembly."

In the third place Moseley had the common sense and self-poise on which people rely in troublous times. There was no sham, no affectation, no sounding hollow in his make-up. This is nowhere shown more conspicuously than in the reply that he, Christopher Gale, John Lovick and William Little sent to the Virginia Commissioners who had written them as North Carolina's Commissioners to settle the disputed boundary line between the two States. With lordly pomp the Virginia Commissioners had written: "We think it very proper to acquaint you in what manner we intend to come provided, that so you, being appointed in the same station, may, if you please, do the same honor to your country. We shall bring with us about twenty men, furnished with provisions for thirty days: we shall have with us a tent and marquees for the convenience of ourselves and our servants. We bring as much wine and rum as will enable us and our men to drink every night to do the good success of the following day; and because we understand that there are gentiles on the frontiers, who never had an opportunity to be baptized, we shall have a chaplain with us to make them Christians."

Men of less common sense than the Carolina Commissioners would have been at a loss to know what reply to make to this startling announcement. But the sturdy sense of Moseley and his associates did not desert them.

"We are at a loss, gentlemen," wrote these downright men, "whether to thank you for the particulars you give us of your tent stores, and the manner you design to meet us. Had you been silent about it, we had not wanted an excuse for not meeting you in the same manner; but now you force us to expose the nakedness of our country, and to tell you we cannot possibly meet you in the manner our great respect for you would make us glad to do; whom we are not emulous of out-doing, unless in care and diligence in the affair we come to meet you about."

"That keen thrust under the guard," comments Mr. Davis, "delivered too with all the glowing courtesy of knighthood, is exquisite. My lord Chesterfield could not have improved it. If the Virginians were as familiar with sweet Will as they undoubtedly were with the value of tent stores, they must have had an uncomfortable remembrance of Sir Andrew Aguecheek—'An I thought he had been so cunning in fence, I'd have seen him damned ere I'd have challenged him.'"

But there is another side to the man's character that is pleasant to recall. Active man of affairs as he was, accumulating a fortune as he did, he was withal, in the best sense of the words, a man of letters. His private library, including books on law, on theology, and on general literature, was perhaps the most extensive in the province. A part of his library was left by him as a foundation for a public library in the town of Edenton.

A devoted lover of North Carolina and a diligent student of its history pays this hearty tribute to Col. Moseley's worth:

"The great debt of gratitude that North Carolina will ever owe him is due to his undying love of free government, and his indomitable maintenance of the rights of his people. Doubtless no man ever more fully realized than he 'that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,' nor was there ever upon any watch tower a more faithful sentinel than he. And to him, above all others, should North Carolina erect her first statute, for to him, above all others, is she indebted for stimulating that love of liberty regulated by law, and that hatred of arbitrary government that has ever characterized her people."