

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

ELDER C. B. HASSELL

(1809-1880)

Business, Civic, Religious Leader
Educator-Author

WILLIAMSTON, NORTH CAROLINA

SR
-67

25-

T1W590

NC

57269

HASSELL WROTE THE
HISTORY OF THE
KENTUCKE PRIMITIVE
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

ELDER C. B. HASSELL

(1809-1880)

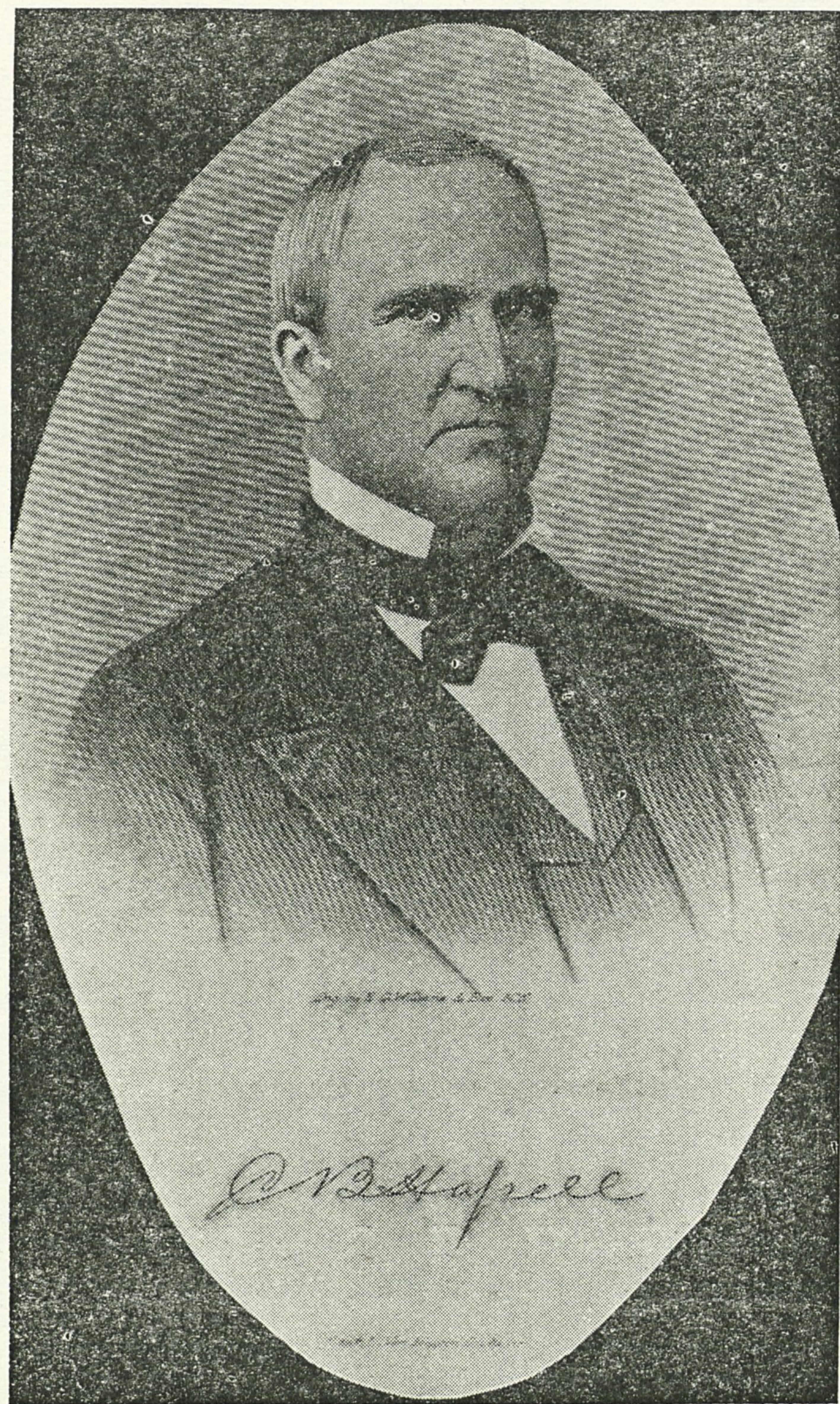
Business, Civic, Religious Leader
Educator-Author

WILLIAMSTON, NORTH CAROLINA

1809-1880

Nolar
Ref
CT
275
H388
A3
1958

Elder C. B. Hassell



1809 — 1880

Autobiography of C. B. Hassell

The subject of this memoir was born on the fourteenth day of October, 1809, in the county of Martin, State of North Carolina, within about three miles of Williamston. His father's house was situated near the main road leading from Williamston to Washington, immediately opposite the dwelling house of William Biggs, subsequently owned by his son Thomas Biggs. His father, Joshua W. Hassell, was the only son of Jesse Hassell who married a Mourning Barnes, and unto them were born five children, four of them daughters, Mourning, Elizabeth, Sarah and Sydia. Jesse Hassell lived in Washington County below what is called Mackey's Creek within about two miles of where that stream empties into the Albemarle Sound. His widow continued to reside there until and after her intermarriage with James McDowell. She had only one child by Mr. McDowell, but it died in infancy, and Mr. McDowell and wife both died on the plantation of Jesse.

Jesse Hassell was the only son of William Hassell who first settled in Tyrell County (now the lower part of Washington County) and was the first to invade the forest in those parts; Jesse was born there, but subsequently moved to the upper part of Albemarle and settled at the place above named.

It is unknown to the writer from whence William Hassell, the great-grandfather of C. B. Hassell, first emigrated, or who was his father; but report has it that he came from England, settled there, cultivated the soil and also the grape called the "Scupper-

nong" which became so celebrated in after years for its flavor and for the wine it produced.

The mother of C. B. Hassell was named Martha Biggs before her marriage. She was first married to John Williams, by whom she had one son, John J. Williams who lived with his mother and her second husband until grown and then moved to the state of Tennessee and is now (1840) living in Savannah, Hardin County, in that state. He has been twice married, but is at this time a widower with about five children. The father of Martha Biggs was named James Biggs, who was the son of Joseph Biggs. Joseph Biggs, who was the great grandfather of C. B. Hassell by his mother's side, moved from Virginia and settled in Martin County on the plantation subsequently owned by his son William and his grandson Thomas, about three miles from Williamston on the main road leading from that town to Washington. He had four sons and two daughters, James, Kader, William, Joseph, Sarah and Mourning, and from him sprang the entire and numerous family of Biggs known and living in Martin County to this day, besides all those who have died or moved away.

The step-grandfather of Joshua W. Hassell was named Joshua Leary; Joshua Leary's mother's maiden name was Worldley.

Joshua W. was named by his step grandfather who gave him the name of Joshua Worldly, after himself and mother.

Joshua W. was taken from his parents and reared by his grandmother and her husband, Mr. Leary. Mr. Leary was wealthy and took great pleasure in promoting his adopted grandson and

1-22-01
Hm

had intended to leave him a good share of his estate, but he became unfortunate in after life and lost his estate. Consequently, he had nothing to bequeath when he died.

Old Mr. Leary moved at one time from Washington County and settled in Martin County, contiguous to the residence of Joseph Biggs and his sons; which circumstance originated the acquaintance between his adopted grandson, Joshua W. Hassell, and Martha Williams, the widow of John Williams and daughter of James Biggs.

Cushing Biggs Hassell, son of Joshua W. and Martha Hassell, was named for his father, mother and a cousin of his great grandmother, which last mentioned was dubbed with the singular cognomen of Cushing: and the name the old lady had frequently attempted before to thrust upon her relations, and have revived in the person of some of their children; but could not succeed in its disposition 'til the veritable hero of the subject of these memoirs came into the world to receive it.

C. B. was the first child of Joshua W. and Martha Hassell; they afterwards had born unto them Elizabeth Cherry and Eli Cherry Hassell. They were named Cherry because of their mother's connection with the family of Cherrys in Martin County, her mother having been a Cherry. Elizabeth C. Hassell was married before her brother C. B., to Warren Biggs, son of William Biggs, who was a son of Kader. She with her husband are both living now (1840) at the country residence of her father before he moved to Williamston. She has had four children, three of whom are living, viz, Alvinia, Ellen and John. Eli

C. Hassell died in his tenth year, about two years subsequent to the decease of his father; he was a sensible and promising boy, the pride of his parents and admiration of his friends. His elder brother C. B., had undertaken his education and flattered himself with high expectations of his future usefulness and aid; but an all-wise Providence, who giveth and who taketh away, thought proper to blast all these fond expectations by a removal of the child from time to eternity on the 13th day of October 1826.

Joshua W. Hassell moved to Williamston about the year 1815 and pursued various avocations for a living; during the residence of his life he, at times, taught school, acted as constable, worked at the blacksmith's trade, kept a grocery store, became Naval Store Inspector, did a fishing business, etc. etc. He was both inspector for Williamston and Captain of the Williamston Militia Company at the time of his death. He was a hospitable and strictly honest man, kind and affable to all who knew him. He was unfortunate and did not succeed at anything; he became intemperate in his latter days and it turned out at his death that his estate was not sufficient to pay his creditors.

He possessed just about enough education to know the value of it and determined to give his children as much as possible; especially his eldest son; about whose education he expressed much solicitude, and repeatedly declared his intention to school him till he reached his twenty-first year.

His means being quite limited, he was however unable to accomplish his wishes in that particular, and consequently sent Cushing B.

to school only occasionally, and that to country teachers of very limited capacities, by which means his education was small and without system. He however sent him alternately until his death, at which time his son C. B. was receiving instructions from a man by the name of Foster Thayer, in the Williamston Academy. His decease happened on this wise: Henry Swanner who married an aunt of his, and who lived a little below Mackey's Ferry immediately on the Albemarle Sound, sent for him to see a son of his, Uriah by name, who was in a state of extreme illness. Joshua, while on his way down, was taken ill, and tarried a while at a friend's house below Plymouth, getting a little better, he resumed his journey and eventually reached Swanner's house, but grew worse, complaining of a violent pain in his side, until he died—a few days only subsequently to his arrival there.

He departed this life on the 25th day of November A. D. 1824, in his 38th year. Mr. Swanner received him coldly and paid him very little attention during his illness notwithstanding he had sent expressly for him and hitherto had professed the warmest attachment for him.

Mr. Swanner could not be prevailed on by the neighbors or the sick man himself to let the wife and eldest son of his friend Hassell know of his sickness, until it was apparent to all around that the young man was dying—for the reason as given by himself that "he had rather send two away than for one to come".

The husband and father were long dead before the wife and son reached Swanner, and when they did, the weeping widow was not

allowd to enter the house unless she would cease to weep, for the profound reason that it would interrupt the sick young man, (who by the by eventually recovered). Mr. Swanner refused plank for the coffin of his deceased friend, declined to have one made or to have him interred. These duties were performed by others whom Cushing Biggs Hassell afterwards remunerated, from the fruits of his own industry. The sick man himself was aware of the unkindness of his host, and it is said that went off under the following circumstances; After urging in vain to send for his wife and boy, he threw himself suddenly on the back part of the bed, declared he "would never forgive him if he were to live a thousand years", laughed and expired without a struggle or a groan. His son C. B. who was alive to the inhumanity of the scene, retired alone during this occasion to the Sound Beach, and grieved and wondered at the conduct of his "Uncle Swanner" as he called him. The conduct of Mr. Swanner remains yet a mystery and cannot be accounted for by the writer on any other grounds than the following: During his financial embarrassment Mr. Hassell had mortgaged or deeded for redemption, as to a friend, his possessions in Williamston to Henry Swanner. Before making his last call on Swanner, he told some of his neighbors that he had nearly redeemed the same and anticipated closing the matter soon, it was supposed that he took the necessary papers with him and was prepared on his last visit to settle and retake the title to his possessions. Such being the case, Swanner might have thought it to his advantage to get hold of

all the receipts and papers relating to the transaction—destroy them, and remain in full possession of the property. He was a professor of Religion, but no doubt a vile hypocrit; which is no argument against Christianity, but rather in its favor, that there should be some wolves in sheep's clothing. The Baptist Church finally excommunicated him from her privileges and membership. The writer of this feels that he can forgive him for all these offenses and prays the Lord to grant him a repentance not to be repented of.

Mr. Swanner has fallen much in his circumstances and is at this time (1840) destitute of a home that he can call his own. He has frequently asked for and obtained assistance from C. B. Hassell, the orphan whom he so badly injured, and may yet have to require still greater acts of friendship. Thus it appears that the wicked meet with their reward to some extent even in this life.

Joshua W. Hassell was buried in the burying ground of his uncle Joshua Hassell about two miles in the interior from Henry Swanner's residence and the Albemarle Sound.

Chapter the Second

Cushing Biggs Hassell (born October 14th 1809) was quite a mischievous child, according to the best oral tradition, and soon after, assuming a perpendicular gait, played "sad havoc" with all the articles that fell within his reach. Shoes, balls, tools, crockery and light articles of every description that he could get his in his possession were thrown indiscriminately into the fire or out of doors.

His disposition for rudeness re-

mained with him at least until he reached his third year, when it was agreed by all hands, crazy Luke Bennett, the school master, included (he was deranged only at times) that the young chap must go to school in order to be kept out of mischief. To this proposition, the child had no serious objection, and he was often seen afterwards with his basket on his arm, trudging over the fields and along the road to the school house, in company with a large-sized friend who once for all carried a pillow for our youthful hero; because it was understood from the first that he should be allowed to take a nap near the master's chair whenever he became sleepy, and so he did. It was soon discovered that he was a little apt and his master recommended that he should lay aside his 'Primmer' and take a spelling book. This was accordingly done, and that spelling book, as strange as it may appear to the present generation of leaf-tearers and book-spoilers, was kept by him until he was grown. Notwithstanding the fact that he was such a mischievous chap when he was first introduced to a school room, he afterwards, as he advanced in years, became more sedate, and when he finally quit school, was considered to have left none behind him so remarkable for steady habits and serious disposition. He was made a good deal of by his relations, and at a very early age was taken by them from home and kept for months from his parents, as a kind of pet.

His grandmother who had inter-married with Mr. James McDowell, was eager to raise him, and taken all together, it would amount to years he has lived with

them on the Albemarle Sound.

He called his step-grandfather "Daddy Jimmy". He received some little education in that neighborhood—principally from a teacher named Henry N. Jasper, and was a favorite of the teacher and liked by the entire school. Mr. Jasper taught him first in a dwelling house formerly occupied by a Mr. Everett, situated in sight and on the right hand side of the road below the float bridge across Mackey's Creek about two miles: and he secondly taught in a house nearly opposite the first, situated on the left hand side of said road in the woods. Henry Swanner lived between the last mentioned house and the Sound. Mr. McDowell and his wife resided about one mile from that part of the main road situated between the two school houses. Joshua Hassell, the great uncle of C. B., resided within about three-quarters of a mile from his grandmother, and his aunt Elizabeth, who married Solomon Armstrong, lived within a still shorter distance. It follows, of course, that all that particular section of the country formed the scene of C. B. Hassell's early boyhood, and is regarded by him, as yet, as a kind of sacred soil.

These localities are mentioned in order that if any of his children should happen to visit these parts they may think of these things and also that the remains of their grandfather, Joshua W. Hassell, are deposited in the burying ground of his uncle, Joshua Hassell, who's place of residence is mentioned above. C. B. H., after finally quitting his grandmother's home, and returning to his parents, frequently visited that neighborhood up to the time of his father's death, but seldom af-

terwards—perhaps not more than two or three times since.

After his father moved to Williamston his (C. B. H.) opportunities for improvement were somewhat multiplied; schools were numerous and general advantages better. When not at school he was at home, at work in the garden or field, performing errands and the like—frequently hunting and fishing, and sometimes placed behind the counter of some merchant in the place. During the spring season of the year his father frequently did a fishing business near the river and he assisted him in this. C. B. was an excellent water lad, was quite active—understood the various methods of taking fish—managing a canoe, etc., and was good gunner for one of his age. He was employed a little perhaps in two stores in Williamston previous to his father's death. About the year 1820 he was taken to Plymouth by Ely and Britt (Horace Ely and Thoma Britt) and acted as clerk for them, perhaps for one summer and fall, but being taken very ill, his father took him home, and disliking Britt, he did not send him back. Britt endeavored to make a rogue of him, but failing in that particular, he was not so very much attached to him (C. B. H.) as to urge him to return. Nothing special occurred in the life of C. B. H. His chief distinguishing traits of character consisted in an aptness to learn when at school and regular moral deportment when at school and elsewhere, he made some little progress under the instructions of the teachers in the vicinity, in different houses, but the most of his education was received in the Williamston Academy under the tutorship of

Charles G. Thain, Chauncey Ripley, Luman Whittlesey and Foster Thayer, the last mentioned of whom he was going to school to when his father died. He immediately quit school after that event, knowing his utter inability to proceed for the want of money, and, with extreme reluctance, he packed up his books and bade adieu to his teacher, school mates and the halls of science. Some friends urged him to continue at school until the end of the session, offering to defray the expenses thereof, but he declined the kindness on the grounds that it was necessary for him to engage in some kind of business immediately if possible, the proceeds of which might aid in the support of himself, mother and family.

Turned loose in the world at the age of fifteen, fatherless and penniless, he might as many have done, spurned the advice of good friends, set at naught the authority of his mother, indulged in idleness and dissipation, until he had proven a disgrace to society and a burden to his friends. His determinations, however, were different and from that day, although poor in purse, he was proud of his reputation and good name even to the present time, and esteemed it better than riches. Horace Ely, being the largest creditor, administered on his father's estate, but, it is thought, received little for his trouble after giving to the widow and family the year's allowance awarded them by the court.

C. B. Hassell after working a while in the blacksmith shop formerly owned by his father, in company with a young man whom his father had raised, obtained employment with Mr. Henry B.

Smithwick, merchant as clerk at the salary of five dollars per month. This was during the winter of 1824-25. In the spring of 1825 he took a situation with Mr. D. W. Bagley, merchant at some increase in salary. Mr. Bagley left immediately for the north and on his return home by sea with his goods was caught in the celebrated storm of 3rd of June, 1825, and was a long time given up for lost. The vessel however was only driven a distance from the coast and eventually reached her place of destination with the cargo and all hands safe. C. B. continued with Mr. Bagley until winter when he left him and again set in with Mr. Smithwick, who continued to employ him until the spring of 1826 when he bought him out—his stock then consisting of only a few groceries. Then, it appears that the subject of this narrative commenced business on his own account, although in a small way, before he was seventeen years of age. He continued in that capacity till autumn of that year when he acceded to the proposition of Messrs. T. S. Bryan and Co., merchants of Halifax,—to take a situation with them as clerk. The following individuals composed the firm, viz, John S. Bryan, James I. Bryan and Thomas T. Hogg, the last of whom was assisted by his brother, Gavin Hogg, and all four of which gentlemen proved themselves such to him by their kindness in after life. They made the proposition to him through Mr. Samuel Hyman of Williamston, who was another one of his abiding friends, as well as a man of talent and excellent standing in society.

C. B. Hassell therefore left Williamston and repaired to Halifax

about November, 1826, where he found things to his liking and began to make some better progress in acquiring a knowledge of mercantile affairs. He received then only ten dollars per month including board and washing; but that proved sufficient to clothe him and leave a little to spare his mother, who continued very much in need of his assistance. She had left Williamston and returned to her old place of residence in the country. C. B. Hassell found among Messrs. J. S. Bryan and Co., letters, one from Mr. Hyman recommending him to them as a suitable clerk, which after enumerating the traits in his character wound up by saying "But what is better than all, I believe him to be strictly honest".

The reader may rest assured that the clerk used every exertion to maintain the character in the estimation of his employers, which had been given by his patron, Mr. Hyman. The character of an honest man was then his highest ambition, and it was one which he ever afterward desired to maintain above all things temporal. He has often, no doubt a thousand times thought of Aristides of Greece, who was called the just, and was ever of opinion that his was one of the most enviable characters in ancient or modern history.

During his residence in Halifax a debating society was formed there by some of the most talented and worthy men of the place, under the title of "Philodemic Association". He was admitted to membership and became well satisfied of the utility of such institutions.

In October, 1827, he attained the age of eighteen years, and en-

tered into several resolutions, amongst which were the following: they are not mentioned here being anything extra-ordinary, but merely to show the distance he then was from a dissipated and reckless life.

1st. Temperance. From twelve years of age he had been cautious about drinking ardent spirits, considering it a dangerous habit and having seen the bitter consequences of such practice in others. He then resolved to drink no more as a habit, but if used at all, only as a convenient medicine.

2nd. Up to that period, though raised in a gaming and vicious community, he did not know the different cards in a pack, and rejoicing in his marvellous escape in that particular, he resolved never to know them.

3rd. Profane or foolish by-words. Having hitherto occasionally used some childish words of this nature, such as "By George" — "Dog my cat" — "By Ganny" — "By the Pipers", and the like, he then resolved absolutely to abandon such a contemptible and puerile habit.

4th. Tobacco. He had previously seldom been guilty of chewing tobacco, smoking a pipe or puffing with a cigar in his mouth. He now estimated the whole to be a vain, filthy and unhealthy habit and resolved to abandon it — giving it up to the aged and decrepit men and women, who might, with much more propriety, perpetuate the practice in the sunshine or chimney corners for amusement when they were unable to get it anywhere else.

5th. Honesty and probity. His experience heretofore having confirmed him in the opinion that truth and honesty were absolutely

indispensable to a good reputation and sure riches, he now determined to adhere to these virtues in every instance throughout life, and hold in execration a crafty, deceptive and equivocal character.

He was now entering a stage of responsibility, where his actions would be closely scrutinized, and his future character be clearly indicated for good or evil; consequently he was determined to be circumspect in his conduct and conversation.

During his stay at Halifax a gentleman by the name of Burgess, a physician, whose office was on the same lot with that of the store he lived in, agreed to hear lessons from him in Latin. He had not before studied it and eagerly embraced the opportunity to become acquainted with the language. His leisure moments enabled him very soon to run through the grammar and commence reading, but his tutor became so intemperate that he, in a little while, entirely neglected to hear his recitations. Thus, he had another quarrel with Mr. Alcohol, but for whose influence he might have become a Latin Scholar.

Chapter the Third

This chapter is devoted principally to Religious Experience. The winter of 1827 and '28 formed a very important period in the life of C. B. Hassell. He felt himself arrested by some Supernatural power, and exceedingly distressed on account of the original depravity of his heart and the consequent impure streams that were constantly issuing from this corrupt fountain. He had at first read the Scriptures with a sceptic's eye, and actually noticed some passages which he supposed contra-

dicted each other; intending at some future time to expose the whole and prove to a demonstration that Bible was only a cunningly devised fable, arranged entirely by the ingenuity of man. But the word of Divine Truth proved barbed arrows to his heart. He had hitherto boasted to himself especially of his good moral character, was exceedingly self-righteous, and professed Christians, who all looked filthy in his sight, and he thought abounding in immortality. But the reading of the Scriptures, various spiritual letters from his mother, and an occasional discourse from the pulpit, served to awaken him to an awful and true knowledge of his state and standing in the sight of a Holy and Righteous God. He became much concerned and indeed alarmed for his safety, and that without the paraphernalia of a mechanical excitement of the passions. The passions had little to do with it; it was a spiritual impression and a burden on the heart known only to him and to his God. He was much more desirous to hide these struggles from the world than to proclaim them from the house top or in the great congregation. He very naturally but ignorantly fled to the law for refuge and safety from the storms and tempests which that same Law was heaving against his bosom. He resolved and re-resolved to amend his life—to perform certain duties—to omit certain sins, etc., but found to his great mortification that all his resolutions, fine deeds, religious performances etc., were filthy rags—an abomination in the sight of a Holy God. Not one resolution could he keep or one deed perform that did not produce a sick-

ening and disgusting sensation in his heart. But despairing of salvation by the deeds of the law—seeing no way of escape and deliverance from sin and its awful consequences, Christ Jesus was presented to the eye of his understanding as being the end of the Law for righteousness to the believer—that the believer in Jesus was freely justified from all things which the Law of Moses could not exempt from him—and that it was not required of the believer to keep the Ceremonial Law, inasmuch as Christ has kept that Law for him to a punctilio, and the Father hath accepted of that obedience in full from that due from his elect children. It was presented to his mind that faith in Christ was the only medium through which peace and pardon could flow—and that when the convicted soul abandons all dependence in the strength of his own arm, and, in despair, is made to throw himself entirely on the mercy of Omnipotence, then it is that he is not found clothed in his own righteousness of Jesus Christ—faith being imputed to him for righteousness.

It was on the 13th day of January 1828 that C. B. H. had reason to believe that his sins were pardoned, while bowed in secret at a throne of grace, whereunto he was brought by the sovereign power of God Almighty's Spirit; and on which occasion he felt the burden of sin removed and experienced a feeling of happiness and joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. Tongues are but feeble instruments in this matter, and one borrowed from the brightest Seraph that flits around the throne of God, would prove insufficient to describe the feelings and views

of a saint, when the rays of pardoning mercy first break in upon his enraptured soul. C. B. H. immediately felt that it was his duty to be baptized and connected with the Church of Christ. There was no Baptist Church in Halifax, and his desires were for a connection with the Church at Skewarkey near Williamston. He endeavored to make a visit as early as possible to his mother and old acquaintances when an opportunity would perhaps be afforded him to join that Church. This did not occur until the March following. The Ordinance of Baptism rested with much weight on his mind, and he sometimes feared that he should not live to comply with his duty in that respect. He perhaps dreamed oftener than once that he was dead and in the act of being taken in his coffin to the grave—and all without having been Baptized—which would produce great remorse of conscience. He however, paid the contemplated visit to Williamston and on the 11th day of March, 1828, offered and was received by the Church at Skewarkey as a candidate to Baptism, which Ordinance he received at the hands of Elder Joseph Biggs, minister of said Church, on the 13th of the same month, C. B. H. being then in his nineteenth year.

By Baptism is meant immersion, for nothing else constitutes Scriptural Baptism; and no sensible and honest man acquainted with the Scriptures can come to any other conclusion. The proud heart recoils at such a humiliating stoop, and learned fools have for centuries been trying to convince the world that the Evangelical writers did not mean what they said—and with all imaginable so-

phistry, ease the conscious of religious professors with a mere mockery and rank counterfeit of this sacred institution. But with all the exertions of pseudo-Baptists, thousands of their communicants are so dissatisfied with their reasoning as to claim immersion at the hands of others.

The religious sentiments of C. B. H. in part were the following:

1st. One only infinitely wise, holy and Supreme Being, constituted by the Union, - co-eternal, of Father, Son and Holy Ghost - the "three that bear record in heaven".

2nd. The fall of man, original guilt and consequent depravity of every human heart.

3rd. The absolute predestination of all things by Almighty God, including that of all his Spiritual Israel unto eternal life, through and in Jesus Christ, their head, bishop, King and Priest, who was from eternity deemed precious and elected for this purpose as chief cornerstone of Zion.

4th. The absolute that the Holy Ghost will find all the chosen in Christ, regenerate their soul, lead them unto Christ, and show them the way of salvation and the riches of their inheritance, pure and undefiled in heaven above.

5th. The perseverance of the saints in grace—their final conquest and glory, and the impossibility for all the principalities and powers of earth or hell to defeat, frustrate, or bring to nought, the purposes and decrees of Almighty God.

And these continue to be the firm sentiments of C. B. H. unto this day. Were things otherwise, all would be uncertainty and confusion and much doubt would ex-

ist about the final salvation of even one of the human race.

Chapter Four

There was no other white male member of the Baptist Church in Halifax, and the situation of C. B. H. was therefore a lonesome one in regard to religious society. A Sister Long, a widow woman, resided within sight of town and he frequently resorted to her residence as to a place of retreat from the busy scenes of wordly affairs and crowds of the irreligious. She was a warm and devoted Christian and was much calculated to cheer up a lonesome youth who needed all possible encouragement. She had a lovely and accomplished daughter who took great delight in obeying and pleasing her mother, but was no professor of religion. After quitting his residence in Halifax, C. B. H. paid that place a visit on business and failed not to call on his old Sister Long. Her daughter had been married to a gentleman by the name of Redding Blount of Greenville, Pitt County, and the old lady was preparing to join them there. She afterwards did so, and it is believed, died at Greenville. Mr. Blount and his lady eventually moved to some one of the Southwestern States, it is believed. While in Halifax C. B. H. was solicited by a Mr. P. W. Dowde, Missionary Baptist preacher, located in Raleigh, to go and live with him in Raleigh and prepare for the ministry. Dowde lived in Raleigh, and frequently took a missionary tour. Sometimes he preached in Halifax, when and where C. B. H. became acquainted with him. The division in the Baptist

Churches on the subject of Missions was little known to C. B. H. at that time; indeed the subject had not reached that excitement and importance which it afterwards did. Consequently when the application was made to C. B. H., having already had, as he supposed, something like a call to the ministry, he acquiesced to the proposal. Some friends, however, advised against the step, and his mother by letter positively forbade it. He made the subject one of serious and prayerful consideration and came to the determination to decline the measure altogether.

The people of Halifax town were a gentlemanly and enlightened people. They ever extended toward C. B. H. the utmost courtesy and regard; and his stay with them for about two years, was evidently to his advantage; yet they were generally very irreligious and desired to hold themselves as much as possible above all religious or divine influence.

In the autumn of 1828 (perhaps November) the firm of J. S. Bryan & Co. wound up their affairs and quit Halifax, and C. B. H. returned home to this mother. On his way home he called on Mr. David Clark of Halifax County, Scotland Neck, and solicited his aid in the procurement of a situation in business somewhere. Mr. Clark promised to do so whenever the opportunity offered. After remaining at his mother's a few days, C. B. H. took a clerkship with a Mr. Nymphus Price, merchant in Williamston, at the wages of some \$10 or \$12 dollars per month, with whom he remain-

ed 'til January, 1829. While clerk for Mr. Price, his old friend Mr. David Clark passed through Williamston and called to see him. He offered him then a clerkship with the firm of Bryan & Clark, commission merchants at Plymouth, N. C., himself and C. B. H.'s former employer, J. S. Bryan, composed the firm. Mr. Bryan had gone to Plymouth, in fact, a while before the dissolution of the Halifax firm, leaving Mr. Hogg to attend in person to the business there. C. B. H. accordingly repaired to Plymouth about the first of January, 1829, after having had a pleasant tarry with Mr. N. A. Price. He was boarded by the Plymouth firm at the house of Mr. Benjamin Maitland, where he remained and continued to board so long as he lived in Plymouth. This house he found to be a home indeed, Mr. Maitland and his family continuing from that day forward to extend unto him the utmost friendship and kindness, both in sickness and in health. He has frequently called on Mr. and Mrs. Maitland when visiting Plymouth and always found them the same unchanged friends. When Mr. Maitland removed to New York to transact commission business, C. B. H. there also found him a friend and his family in Brooklyn a home, when he visited the North on business. Mr. Maitland subsequently returned to Plymouth with his family, the more effectually to attend to his interests there, which was left in the hands of others upon his going to New York.

C. B. H. found his situation with Messrs. Bryan & Clark very

agreeable. In May, 1829, they received into co-partnership Mr. Benjamin Maitland, which changed the title of the firm into that of Bryan, Maitland & Co. This firm did an extensive commission and wholesale grocery business—and that profitably too — they made money.

On settling with C. B. H. for his services as clerk for Bryan & Clark, Mr. Bryan gave him but \$150.00 for his services with the firm, Bryan, Maitland & Co. He received \$250.00 per year. While at Plymouth, C. B. H. generally attended the monthly meetings of the Baptist Church at Moratock Meeting House, when and where he enjoyed himself very much. During his stay there one of the annual sessions of the Kehukee Association was held at Moratock on which occasion C. B. H. was much refreshed by the presence of various brethren and elders of his acquaintance. He frequently corresponded with and occasionally visited the Church at Skewarkey, near Williamston, where his membership belongs and continues without intermission to belong to this day (1840). He seldom heard preaching in Plymouth worth the hearing, but continued while there a pretty regular attendance at the Methodist Meetings. Some of the members of that society were warm personal friends of his, and he was frequently in their company, but had serious arguments with them at times on the doctrine of the Gospel. He united with them in getting up a Sunday School and a Temperance Society, but was never at any time the least disposed to compromise ten-

ets with them. He, however, soon became indifferent to both Temperance Societies and Sunday Schools, and eventually disgusted with the measures of such institutions and others of similar character as established in the United States under the general cognomen of "Benevolent", inasmuch as such institutions tend to Arminianism, are connected with both Church and World, and go to make up the great machinery of what may be termed "Protestant Jesuitism" in this country.

While in Plymouth, N. C., C. B. H. also assisted in forming a debating society, which continued to exist until he left there. The same proved both profitable and pleasing to himself and others during its continuance. The society had a comfortable room and took a semi-weekly newspaper. Their meetings were weekly. They appointed C. B. H. to deliver the first anniversary address, who did so in the courthouse to a very respectable audience, and to general satisfaction. While there he also assisted in establishing a uniform company of light infantry called the "Plymouth Guard". He was chosen first sergeant of this Company, took much interest in its reputation, and was most active in its parades, equipment and military discipline.

He formed many acquaintances in Plymouth, some of a lasting character, and when he took his leave of them, did so with a great deal of reluctance. There were some Baptist females in town with whom he had frequent sessions of enjoyment, during the time; there were held weekly prayer meetings at which he frequently

acted as speaker. But the time arrived for him to depart and say farewell to both temporal and spiritual friends.

Chapter Five

Mr. Henry Williams of Williamston, N. C., having solicited C. B. H. to return to Williamston and commence business with him for a share of the profits, he accepted the offer and after obtaining the consent and approbation of his Plymouth employers in so doing. Mr. J. S. Bryan gave his consent cheerfully and appeared gratified at the prospect of his clerk's doing better than he could with him at \$250.00 wages. Mr. Bryan subsequently settled permanently in New York, and there, as well as in North Carolina and on all occasions from first to last acquaintance, he behaved the friend and gentleman toward C. B. H.

Having entered into a written agreement of co-partnership previously with Mr. Williams, C. B. H. repaired to Williamston about the first day of June, 1831, and commenced business under the title of Williams & Hassell. Mr. Williams was a man of capital and furnished the stock of goods and the store-house free of expense, save the interest on the capital stock invested, and C. B. H. shared stock invested, and C. B. H. shared Williams the remaining two thirds. C. B. H. at first boarded with Mr. Williams, but in the course of a few months purchased of Henry Swanner, the premises, formerly occupied and owned by his father, Joshua W. Hassell, at the price of \$200.00, after having unsuccessfully threatened Swanner with a law suit if he did not release it unto C. B. H., his mother and sis-

ter without pay. It was only intended as a threat though, inasmuch as C. B. H. was aware that he could command no evidence sufficient to re-instate his father's title, however just it might have been. He accordingly bought the right, moved the house on it farther from the road, repaired them, enclosed the premises better, had by virtue of an order of court, the road in front straightened and widened so as to compare with the main street in Williamston (these premises just bordering on the town line proper), and opened an avenue above the dwelling house, 45 feet wide, from Main Street to the back street, thereby creating, to all appearances, another square in Williamston. He then bought a lot in town of H. B. Smithwick, adjoining the aforesaid premises, which he made a garden of. That part of his grounds lying above the cross street or avenue composed the largest barnyard and grove—then came the avenue—then the dwelling house yards and then the garden. Having thus arranged, he commenced house-keeping by taking his mother to live with him. In the winter of 1831-32 he was chosen one of the town commissioners, and while in that capacity principally aided in having the town property surveyed, attended in person the running and with his own hand drove spikes, where the lightwood posts are now to be seen, on the town lines, corners of streets, etc. He had one thing more to accomplish and that was to get married. Consequently on the 17th day of May, 1832, he was married to Mary Davis, daughter of Durham and Elizabeth Davis; and on the suc-

ceeding day took home his bride to share with him the pleasures and pains, the prosperities and adversities of mortal life. Thus within the limits of one year C. B. H. had quit a clerk-ship in Plymouth, commenced business for himself in Williamston, purchased real estate, prepared houses thereon, changed the appearance of the location, acted as town commissioner during the survey thereof, embracing a storm period, as the lines frequently invaded private interests, and, last and most important of all, took a wife and permanently settled.

Durham Davis, father of Mary, was the son of William Davis, who resided within about two miles of Williamston. He (William) raised five children: — Durham, Nancy, Polly, Celia and Betsy. Durham being the only son, had bequeathed unto him the Manor Plantation, which he took possession of and lived on after the death of his father. Nancy was married to Richard Williams, being his second wife, the grandfather of Mary Davis, by Mother's side, whereby Durham Davis could say after marriage what few others could say:—

"My father is my brother,
I am my sister's son;
My sister is my mother,
And how can this be done?"

Polly Davis was married to Thomas Eaton, Celia Davis was married to Isom Ballard, and Elizabeth Davis was married to Ebenezer Smithwick.

Elizabeth Davis, wife of Durham, was the daughter of Richard Williams, who emigrated to this country from England. He came a penniless youth, but, through

untiring industry, economy, steady habits, and strict moral honesty, he amassed a handsome fortune, leaving at his death an estate worth sixty thousand dollars. He first taught school upon arriving in this country, then turned farmer, and at length became merchant, at which business he was very successful. He died at his residence in Williamston in 1826. He had twelve children, six of whom lived to be grown:— Elizabeth, Seth, Henry, Mary, William and Penelope. Elizabeth was married to Durham Davis, Seth died single, Henry was first married to Cinderilla Clements and then to Elvira Williams, daughter of Lewis Williams. Mary was married to William Clements, William to Ann Maria Jones, and Penelope to William Slade. Henry Williams inherited the dwelling and premises of his father and resides there still (1840).

Durham and Elizabeth, parents of Mary Davis, were married on the 24th of November, 1808. They at first lived with Mr. Richard Williams, then in a house near his dwelling in Williamston, then at the dwelling place of old Mr. William Davis after his death, and lastly at the place where the widow Elizabeth Davis now lives, it being about two miles from Williamston, on the road leading from Williamston to Washington. The ~~manor~~ plantation of William Davis, situated between the Hamilton and Greenville roads, about two miles from Williamston, is now owned by Mary Hassell. On it is the burying ground of the Davis family, which the present owners intend shall never be sold from the privileges of the survivors of that family. Durham

Davis was a farmer and owned an extensive farm at his death. The same was upon the land now owned and occupied by his widow, having been purchased and given her by her father, Richard Williams, and containing some six or seven hundred acres.

Durham and Elizabeth Davis had been born unto them twelve children six of them at three births, but only two of the twelve lived to be grown: Mary and Elizabeth. Elizabeth inter-married with Joseph D. Biggs in the year 1835. He was the son of Elder Joseph Biggs. She has had two children both of whom are now dead (1840). She and husband live in Williamston; he is a merchant and also clerk of the County Court of Martin. She and husband live in the lower, and Mary and husband live in the upper end of town. The store house of J. D. Biggs is situated on a corner formed by one of the cross streets and the store of C. B. H. is located on the opposite corner of the same street, only about 45 feet apart. C. B. Hassell and Joseph D. Biggs are first and second cousins; they are nearly of the same age; they are both members of the Baptist Church at Skewarkey, and both married sisters. Another evidence of union may be mentioned on account of the existing times of party excitement, they are both Whigs of 1840 and share the high honor alike of elevating William Henry Harrison of Ohio to the Presidential Chair.

C. B. Hassell and wife have had to this time (1840) born unto them four children and all of them are living:

Henrietta Hassell born March

7, 1833; Ely Davis Hassell born November 19, 1834; Lavinia Hassell born June 22, 1837; Theodore Hassell born November 5, 1839. Their weights are as follows: (Dec. 4, 1840) Henrietta, 42 lbs.; Ely D., 42 lbs.; Lavinia, 38 lbs.; and Theodore, 25 lbs. Showing a gain of Ely on Henrietta, but a much more astonishing one by Lavinia on both. She is a promising child for size and bids fair to equal her grandmother, Martha Biggs Hassell, who weighs about 285 pounds. C. B. Hassell only weighs 130 pounds, and his wife about 100 pounds.

Chapter Six

Mrs. Elizabeth Davis administered on her husband's estate and encountered the most extreme difficulty in settling it, owing principally to numerous, large and fraudulent claims urged against it by a set of unprincipled men, who had combined to render it insolvent, if possible. Mr. Henry Williams, brother of Mrs. Davis, assisted her in the management of the business with a great deal of credit to himself. When C. B. Hassell came into the family, however, there were heavy claims still pending against the estate and the termination doubtful. He obtained additional counsel and went through the matter quite favorably. Mrs. Davis closed the business as administratrix, and C. B. H. became guardian for young Elizabeth, his wife's sister. His mercantile affairs went on quite favorably; the firm of Williams and Hassell sold a quantity of goods and turned a tolerable profit. Nothing of much moment intervened during this period until the time of the dissolution of the firm, which occurred on the

11th of November, 1834, Mr. Williams being tired of business and desirous of winding up his affairs of a business a little and paying more attention to farming, much against the wishes of C. B. H. Determined on quitting, C. B. H. bought him out and undertook the management of the business alone, although with much diffidence and regret to incur the responsibilities and risk of a \$4000 debt for the stock of goods.

It may be here remarked, that C. B. H. found in Williamston a few others, males as well as females, who were Baptists and members of his own Church at Skewarkey, with whom he had continued to have until the present time seasons of religious enjoyment. Weekly prayer meetings have been kept up pretty much the whole of this year, at the homes of the brethren and sisters attentively. This occurred on Sunday evenings. In 1833, it is believed C. B. H. was chosen one of the deacons of the Church at Skewarkey and has continued in that office to the present time.

In the same year, a man by the name of William Clark, who possessed wealth and literary talents and was a member of one of the Baptist Churches within the bounds of the Kehukee Association, withdrew from her communion and wrote a defamatory pamphlet against that Association. Three of the members of the Church at Skewarkey concluded to reply to said publication and the task was principally assigned to C. B. H., who drew up, in answer to it, a pamphlet of about sixty pages; said pamphlet was cordially received at a sitting of the Kehukee Association in 1833

and many copies distributed to the several Churches. The effect of the publication was to silence Clark, and cause his removal to the southwest, perhaps to the state of Mississippi.

Immediately subsequent to the dissolution of the firm of Williams and Hassell, C. B. H., fearing he could not get along so well alone, made a proposition to William S. Williams, younger brother of Henry Williams, to join him in business and receive half the profits, by giving his personal attention to the store, becoming equally bound with C. B. H. for debts incurred and to be incurred and paying into the capital stock \$4000 in money, which was to be paid back to him at the dissolution with interest. This, under the most favorable circumstances, would have been a disadvantageous bargain on the part of C. B. H., but as he was doubtful about being able to compete with the competition in business in Williamston without assistance he felt willing to give William S. Williams the advantage in the bargain for the mere use of his extra capital on interest. But in view of the circumstances that afterward transpired, it was the most unfortunate step that C. B. H. ever made. He had been raised a good deal in the company of William S. Williams and thought he knew him, but it was a great mistake. C. B. H. had enjoyed a pleasant partnership with Henry Williams and supposed he should succeed equally well with his brother. He was well aware that William S. was quite deficient as a businessman, but, knowing that his brother Henry would be close at hand to explain to him and sat-

isfy him about the management of the business, he supposed that any suspicions arising from the want of capacity in William to understand the progress and operations of the business might and would at any time be allayed in this way. When C. B. H. made the proposition to William S. Williams he readily consented, and remarked that he had intended to make the same proposition to him. William S. and his wife were both desirous of the co-partnership. It was formed and operations were commenced but had not progressed one month before C. B. H. discovered that Williams looked on him with a jealous eye, and from that day forth to the dissolution of the firm, which occurred on the 16th of November, 1837, deep and dark suspicions seemed to take entire possession of the bosom of William S. Williams. All the advice, explanations and exertions of his brother Henry never could allay it. C. B. H. would have immediately abandoned the co-partnership, but for the ridiculousness in the public estimation and the disappointment of his customers at so frequent and sudden changes in business. He concluded to endure it and hope for better things, trusting to the exertions of his friend Henry Williams to satisfy Williams' mind and make all fair weather. It was all in vain, for although he would pretend to be satisfied with an explanation by his brother, yet he would continue to come to the store with new suspicions or old ones remodeled. Often and very often was it the case when C. B. H. would be darting around the counter with three times as much

business before him as he could attend to. His partner, instead of aiding him would be looking on suspiciously or in the counting room scrutinizing his conduct and hinting his suspicions to his brother. Provided he had anything to say about the goods that were selling or in the store it would be to decry their value and that in the presence of customers. He, at length, took himself pretty much entirely from the store and did his trading in a great measure with peddlers and other merchants. His influence seemed directed against the store. C. B. H. obliged him to hire a clerk at his own expense or else allow him (C. B. H.) a compensation for his services, which was confirmed by a written agreement. For three long years did C. B. H. suffer the mortification and misery of doing business with such a partner as this, and all the time saying nothing to the public against his character, but on the contrary defending that character as much as he could when traduced by others—at all times assisting him in the settlement of business with others, giving advice, etc. to the best of his abilities.

C. B. H., at length, proposed a dissolution, which was agreed to after the great revulsion in trade in 1837. He took the goods on hand at a discount agreed on and was by contract left to wind up the affairs of the concern as early as practicable. In about one month from the day of dissolution he received a note from William S. Williams demanding an immediate settlement. He replied to him that it was impossible until the debts due to and from the

firm were settled, and this would take considerable time to accomplish as there were or would be about \$30,000 involved in the account. C. B. H. made out to close the business during the year 1837. He drew up two accounts of the whole transaction, intending one for himself and one for William S. Williams and called on William for settlement, stating that he had everything ready and was anxious to settle, adding that the firm had lost about \$1500. This occurred in 1838 and the interest on the account was calculated up to Jan. 1, 1839. Williams promised to call and settle but failed to do so. C. B. H. asked him again, he still delayed, and then I had a written notice served on him to that effect, he still declined, until February Superior Court, when astonishing to think by all sensible men, he filed a bill in Equity against C. B. H. for settlement. For C. B. H. was truly anxious to settle and upon a settlement of all affairs between them, Williams would have owed him about fifty dollars. This suit is still pending, nobody being willing to act as referee in such a voluminous case, for the highest fee which a court can allow a referee, say fifty dollars.

Whenever it is settled, however, it will have proved as sad an error on the part of Williams to commence it as was made by C. B. H. when he first took Williams into partnership. William S. Williams is and has been for some time as much displeased with his brother Henry as he is with C. B. H.—will not listen to him in any matter, but suffers himself to be led on and influenced entirely by the most inveterate

enemies of his brother and C. B. H.

So much of this matter is left on record as a history in brief of the affair, because the greatest attempts have been made out of it to injure the reputation of C. B. H., and further because the suit may not be terminated previous to his death, in which event it would throw some light on the subject for the benefit of his family and representative. The cause of the loss was the large amount sustained on the purchase and sale of Naval Stores, etc. At the fall term of the Superior Court, 1836, C. B. H. was appointed clerk and Master in Equity for the county of Martin, and continues in that office to the present time (1840). He values this office, not so much for its emoluments as for its neatness and dignity, and because the little business that is done pays well and may be done principally at leisure hours. In the year 1836 prices of produce were extravagantly high and business pretty extensive, C. B. H. visited the north and purchased goods in the cities of New York, Boston and Philadelphia, and adopted measures for an extensive trade. He engaged a young man in New York to assist him in business, who made an active clerk; but who quit the firm of Hassell and Williams in June, 1837, and from the character he left behind him induced C. B. H. to suspect that his dishonesty was an additional reason for the loss sustained by the firm on winding up. The great losses, however, were sustained on Naval Stores. Turpentine fell down in New York from \$5 to \$2½, and spirits of turpentine from 70c a

gallon down to 25c, and this while the firm of H. and W. had a large quantity on hand.

During the year 1836, C. B. H. wrote a circular letter for the Kehukee Association, which was adopted at their October session by curtailing it. About this time he purchased what was called the "Yellowley Field" at Equity sale. It contained about 26 acres and made a convenient and valuable enlargement of his dwelling premises. On it is now situated his Cocoonery.

The great revulsion occurred in the spring of 1837 which resulted in the suspension of banks throughout the country—the failure of about 400 mercantile houses in the city of New York and a corresponding bankruptcy throughout the Union. Considering the extent of the business done by H. & W., it was no wonder that they sustained a loss to some extent, while thousands in the country were reduced to bankruptcy and ruin. The integrity of their firm was never questioned. The debts due by them were paid with ease, and a loss was not even known until after the dissolution.

In November, 1837, C. B. H. succeeded the firm of Hassell & Williams and once more found himself alone in business to his great satisfaction. He did a tolerable business until July, 1838, when he was again disturbed by a desire of Henry S. Williams, his old friend and partner, to recommence business, in order to benefit a young man by the name of Ezekiel S. Whitley, who had married Mr. Williams' daughter, and who wished to engage in business in Williamston, N. C. C. B.

H. occupied the storehouse of Mr. Williams. Mr. Williams proposed buying him out, and gave him to understand that he should certainly engage in business whether C. B. H. hold out to him or not. C. B. H. thinking best to sell out and buy a new stock of goods entire, to open in another house, agreed to do so at cost, provided Mr. Williams would buy his interest in the schooner Xuloda. Mr. Williams did not want to buy the vessel, but at length came into the measure. So in the latter end of July, 1838, the bargain was completed for vessel, turpentine distillery, and stock of goods, the last amounting to even \$4000. C. B. H., about the first of September, left home for the North to buy a new stock of goods entire. He succeeded to his satisfaction, but did not get them to Williamston until about the middle of October. He rented a store in the upper end of town, which he now owns at a cost of \$650, and did a fair business for about 15 months, when another revulsion came on and for nearly twelve months now (1840) has not done much. The pressure came on again last winter in New York and embarrassment has extended over the whole country, business of all kinds nearly at a stand, and country merchants and city merchants barely holding their own. A mighty political revolution, however, has been effected and the prospect of better business will open afresh during the spring of 1841, and C. B. H. expects to share a little in the general prosperity. He has made a little money since he recommenced with a new stock of goods, but would have made more but for

dealing in naval stores whereby he has met with his old and usual fare—that of losses. He now feels determined to abandon the produce business altogether, and, in the Spring, after opening a new supply of goods, and thenceforth to sell goods for cash only.

The years of 1838-40 have been considered healthy in Williamston and vicinity. For several years preceding, people were sickly. C. B. H. was much subject to billious colic, and annual return of billious or ague and fever, but since that year has been pretty much free from all three diseases.

C. B. H., although having met with frequent reverses in business, was always favored highly in domestic affairs; things there always appeared to go on smoothly, and he ever found the fireside a calm and sure retreat from the ruffled waters of a business life. Sickness hath often visited his family but the grim monster Death hath as yet made no inroads there and he has been keeping house about nine years. For this he surely feels thankful to Almighty God and for the many other ten thousand blessings that have bestrewed his path, he desires to render grateful acknowledgements, but falls so infinitely short of praising his Maker as he ought that he can but fall to the earth and cry "My Leanness, my Leanness". He is the more and more confirmed of a righteous and over ruling Providence in the world. He is such a strong believer in Predestination that he views all his own actions even to have been for the best, and, by the omnipotence of this doctrine, reconciles to his mind the result

of all matters whether adverse or prosperous. He does not believe in the existence of such a thing as "Luck" or "chance", and has avoided the habit as much as possible of "regretting" anything that occurs in the order of Divine Providence. C. B. H. for two years hath made a statement of his affairs to July 4th, and then written his last will and testament—this practice he thinks perpetuating till death.

Some years ago he had a small house built in his yard for the accomodation of his mother, and she continues to occupy it comfortably.

Intending to try the experiment of a cash store and a silk cocoonery for the year 1841, he brings this biography to a close on the twenty sixth day of December 1840.

C. B. Hassell

Chosen by the Legislature one of the Trustees of the Williamston Academy, he continued secretary and one of the most active members of that body 'til 1840 and beyond that time. Chosen one of the Committeemen for School District Number 5 in 1840 and went to work by getting subscriptions for a house to the amount of \$100. Delivered an oration in the Court House July 4th, 1840.

Copied by Eugenia H. Glover from Frederick W. Hoyt's copy of 1925. Finished on November 30th, 1957.

Published at Williamston, N. C.

October, 1958

By The
MARTIN COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Permission of

Mrs. William R. Glover

(Great-Granddaughter of the author)

Not For Sale

MASTERS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JOYNER



30372 0107 3732 5

NON-CIRCULATING