not only among the citizens of Raleigh, but among the members of both houses of the Legislature. The precise amount is not at present ascertained; but we trust it will be such as will show the liberality of the subscribers, considering the hardness of the times.

Other Early Fires.

In the preface to his *History of New Hanover County,* published in 1909, Col. Alfred Moore Waddell said:

"What is called the Lower Cape Fear region of North Carolina has long been recognized by the writers of our history as the most interesting and, as one of them designated it, 'the most romantic' section of our State. Yet, up to this time, although partial sketches, historical and biographical, have appeared, no attempt at a regular history of it has been published, and now such a history cannot be written because of the destruction, by fire and other agencies, of a large part of the material requisite for the purpose. There was, perhaps, no part of the country where so many planters' residences with all their contents were lost by fire as on the Cape Fear and its tributaries, and it is well known among the descendants of those planters, some of whom were members of the learned professions, that by these fires many manuscripts, family records, and documents of various kinds that would have been invaluable as material for the preparation of a local history, were lost. Besides these fires on the plantations, the town of Wilmington was, at an early period, as well as several times afterwards, nearly destroyed in the same way, with the same results.

"None of the ancient official records of the town of Brunswick were preserved, and a considerable part of the county records was destroyed by Northern soldiers when the town of Smithville was captured by them in 1865. Some of the town records of Wilmington of an early period have also disappeared."

Many years ago, I searched in vain the ruins of the first settlement of Charlestown, at Town Creek, for records of that date, but my search was rewarded later by the discovery in the ruins of a house, said to have been the residence of Nathaniel Rice, of the book of entries and clearances of the port of Brunswick in a partly mutilated condition. I also searched at Lilliput among the ruins of Eleazar Allen's residence, without result; also, the ruins of Governor Tryon's Castle Tryon, or palace, at Orton, which revealed a piece of pottery stamped "W. Dry,

Cape Fear, 1765," and a large bunch of housekeeper's keys upon an iron ring and hook which fitted into a leather belt with a spring by which a key could be withdrawn and replaced. Other relics of less importance were discovered, but no papers. All of these ruins, as well as the ruins of St. Philip's Church, showed the devastation of fire in charred woodwork and melted colored glass.

As early as 1771, Wilmington suffered from a terrible conflagration, and an act of Assembly was passed to regulate the affairs of the town, in view of possible fires. In the account just given of the destruction wrought in 1819, it is mentioned that, in the previous twenty years, there had been several destructive conflagrations.

Mr. J. T. James says: "Wilmington, in common with many other of her sister towns and cities, has suffered often and seriously from the terrible scourge of fire; so much so, indeed, that these visitations have, from time to time, seriously retarded its growth. Scarcely would the citizens recover from the effects of one blow, ere they would be called upon to suffer again. The old chronicles tell us that in November, 1798, a most destructive fire occurred. On July 22, 1810, three stores and five houses, situated near what is now the corner of Market and Second Streets, but then known as Mud Market, were consumed by fire caused by lightning. In 1819, there was a most terrible conflagration, and the four squares bounded by Water, Princess, Second, and Dock Streets were destroyed. In 1827, the square south of the site of the present market house was again burned. In 1840 the square north of the market was consumed for the second time, together with the courthouse, which then stood at the intersection of Front and Market Streets. In 1843 occurred one of the most serious conflagrations of any ever experienced. On April 30 of that year a fire originated in the alley just north of the Cape Fear Bank building and swept with rapid strides to the north. All exertions to check it were in vain, and it was not until everything west of Front Street and north of the bank alley and portions of every square east of the same street and bordering upon it and north of Chestnut were consumed, that its fiery course could be stopped. This fire also destroyed the workshops and buildings of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad Company, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, then situated, as now, upon the corner of Front and Walnut Streets. Three years afterwards, in 1846, the square next south of the