On Saturday, May 3, 1856, another grand rally of the Democrats was held in front of the Carolina Hotel, on Market and Second Streets, and the assembled crowd proceeded thence with torches at a late hour in the evening to "The Oaks," on Dry Pond.

The *Journal* says that insulting reference had been made by the Know-Nothings to the "Sand Hill Tackies." Hon. Warren Winslow was the principal speaker and received the thanks of the assembly for his eloquent address. He was followed by Mr. John L. Holmes, who spoke in earnest and stirring style. The fateful election of commissioners of navigation, which was to include one of the most painful tragedies in the history of Wilmington, occurred on the 5th of May, 1856.

The *Journal* says that by some strange mistake an active and staunch Democrat, in the heat and excitement of the voting, got hold of and put in a Know-Nothing vote, thus in fact electing Mr. Flanner, whereas, had the mistake not occurred, Mr. Costin would have been elected.

In the meantime, intense excitement throughout the town was caused by a rumor that Dr. Wilkings' speech, referred to, had incensed his friend, Mr. J. H. Flanner, who had published a card which resulted in a challenge to mortal combat from Dr. Wilkings. I was then nine years of age, at Jewett's school, and I remember distinctly the excitement of the schoolboys while Mr. Flanner dashed past the schoolhouse behind his two black thoroughbreds on the way to the fatal meeting.

The *Herald* of Monday, May 5, 1856, said: "Our community was painfully startled on Saturday afternoon last by the reception of a telegraphic dispatch from Marion, S. C., to the effect that a hostile meeting had taken place near Fair Bluff, between Dr. William C. Wilkings and Joseph H. Flanner, Esq., both young men and citizens of this place, and that on the third fire the former received the ball of his antagonist through the lungs, and in a very few moments expired. The difficulty grew out of a speech made by Dr. Wilkings on Wednesday evening last at the Democratic meeting at the courthouse. They fought with pistols, at ten paces, Dr. Wilkings being the challenger." The gloom over this dreadful affair hung for many years over those who participated in it, and the principal who survived the duel, and, going abroad as a State agent, survived the four years' war, died some years later, it is said unhappy and under a cloud in a foreign land.

The following cards are taken from the *Daily Journal,* May 5, 7, and 8, 1856, to show something of the temper of the public mind with reference to this sad and exciting affair.

Died.

Died in Marion district, S. C., on the 3d instant, Dr. W. C. Wilkings, of Wilmington, N. C., aged about 30 years.

Lost to the community in the full promise of a glorious manhood, few men could be more deeply or more generally regretted than our deceased friend. Brave, ardent, and generous, gifted by nature, refined and strengthened by education, there lay before him the prospect of a long, useful, and honorable career. That career has been cut short, the promise of his ripe manhood left unfulfilled, and he has gone down to his grave before his time, but his memory will long survive in the hearts of his friends, and the turf that rests over his cold form be kept green by the unbidden tear starting even from eyes that knew him not in life.

Our intimate acquaintance with Dr. Wilkings was of comparatively recent date, and arose out of community of political feeling. But we soon learned to love and respect the man for himself, and we now mourn him as a personal friend. It is for those who have known him longer and better than we to do justice to his character. We could not omit this feeble and inadequate tribute to his memory.

Yesterday his remains were followed to their last resting place in Oakdale Cemetery by the largest and most deeply affected concourse of people that has ever been seen in Wilmington. Many an eye was wet, although long unused to tears, and as the solemn bell tolled all hearts throbbed mournfully and painfully. When he died, a MAN, a noble, true-hearted man, passed from amongst us.

Today.

Saddened by a great calamity in our midst, we have no heart today for political discussion. Overpowered by feelings beyond our ability to express, we know that mere words would be out of place. Standing in heart by the freshly opened grave of a valued friend, whose warm grasp yet thrills through our frame, can we be expected to raise a shout of contest or victory? Duty to our