

NORTH CAROLINA,
SUPREME COURT.

Raleigh, N. C., 31 Dec. 1894

His Excellency,

The Governor,

Under the provisions of Secs. 3609 & 3610 of The Code, the long cherished intention of the State to publish its "Colonial Records" was carried out to a large extent by the publication of ten large Volumes under the supervision of the late Col. H. L. Saunders. Unfortunately death overtook him when the work had only been brought down to the close of the year 1776. The most interesting period of our history was then just beginning. Under the auspices of your board I took up the work in ~~the~~ ^{May} ~~the~~ ~~May~~ ~~of~~ ~~1893~~ ¹⁸⁹³. I soon found that the real difficulties of the ~~work~~ ^{undertaking} had just begun. Owing to the

fact that we had no fixed Capital till near
the close of the last century, that there was
no place in which to deposit the State
archives, that the ^{successors} Governors lived at
their respective homes, only meeting the
Legislature when assembled, the burning
of the capital in 1832, the loss of many
valuable records by their being loaned
to intending historians, ^{who failed to return them,} the destruction
incident to the Federal occupation in
1865 and chaotic condition of affairs in
of 1868-70, the pillaging by autograph
hunters and other causes our archives
prior to the present century were a
mere fragment. Down to the year 1776
Col Saunders was enabled to supply a
large part of the "Records" by copies of
the duplicates of all important pa-
pers which prior to Independence
were always "sent home" (as it was
called) and filed in the proper Of-
fices in London. But with Inde-
pendence that ceased. He could therefore
no longer rely on that source to furnish our lost Archives.
I gathered up all the fragments of our
archives that could be still found here,
including the Mass Legislative Journals

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and the Executive Letter Books. I also secured, ~~for~~ examination, from the State Historical Society, from the Astor Library and from many private collections copies of such letters as would throw light upon our history. Mr Sainsbury, long the representative of the State in London, sent me from The Public Records office ^{copies of} ~~such~~ ^{recent} material as was then of the years 1776-1781. He also furnished copies of such material as had been over-looked in the search made for Col Saunders. Many valuable letters have been copied from ^{unpublished} the papers belonging at one time to Gen Horatio Gates. The papers, also unpublished, of Gen Nathaniel Greene were also graciously ~~offered~~ ^{to my inspection} by their present posses-

~~former~~ ser, but those throwing light upon
N.C. history being subsequent to the date
fixed by the Legislature, Jan 1. 1781, I could
not avail myself of the offer. The records
at Washington, in all the departments,
were carefully explored ^(under the authority of your Board) by a most
competent scholar, Maj Graham Daves,
and we are indebted to him for the
recovery of most valuable matter for
our history. In person, I also visited
the Departments & Libraries in Washing-
ton, the Libraries containing Miss col-
lections in New York and ^{inspected} the "Draper"
collection in the State Historical So-
ciety collection at Madison, Wisconsin.

From these and some other sources,
a large quantity of valuable material
has been collected, though very far from
being as complete as it would have
been had the State accepted the offer
of Judge Murphy to compile and pub-
lish its archives in 1829.

The matter ^{now} in hand and ready for
the printer I estimate as sufficient

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to fill two large volumes. Its publication will lay open to the world our Revolutionary ^{history} to an extent hitherto thought impossible, though from causes above stated it lacks very much of being complete. The work has been delayed $\frac{3}{4}$ of a century too long. The material in hand would have been published ere now but that Mr Sainsbury, who is getting quite old, has been delayed ^{by his feeble health} in sending us a small quantity of material he still has to copy and Mr. Graham Daves has some little material he can still send us from Washington. When these delayed copies are sent us, the ~~rest~~ material is all ready for ~~putting~~ the printer.

I would respectfully recommend (1) That the
legislature extend the limit from Jan
1. 1781, which was in the midst of the
war, ~~to~~ Jan 1. 1790 so that our printed
archives will take in the ^{whole} period ante-
rior to our entrance into the Federal
Union. (2) That ~~an~~ Index ^{be made} of the
~~whole work~~, including the 10 Vols
of Col. Saunders & the subsequent
vols. ~~be ordered~~. This would add
tenfold, I may say, to the value and
usefulness of these Volumes.

Most respectfully
Walter Lark.

Colonel
Roos