

THE EDITOR'S BOOK NOTES

A Guide to the Study and Reading of North Carolina History, by Hugh Talmage Lefler. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955. 89 pp. \$2.00 paper.

Based on Dr. Lefler's syllabus for a course in North Carolina history, the study outlines in this guide will be of most value to people with access to a large research library. Basic books necessary to the use of the study outlines are the Ashe, Connor, and recent Lefler-Newsome histories of the state, and Lefler's *North Carolina History Told by Contemporaries*, Boyd's *History of North Carolina: The Federal Period*, and Hamilton's *North Carolina Since 1860*. Fulltest use of the outline is dependent on access to libraries with files of historical periodicals.

The first chapter of the book is a succinct essay on "Sources for the Study and Writing of North Carolina History: State and Local." Both primary and secondary sources are included with identification of institutions owning major manuscript collections.

Chapter II, "Select List of Books and Articles Relating to North Carolina History," Chapter IV, "Select List of Novels, Stories, and Pageants—Chiefly Historical," and Chapter VII, "Books and Articles Relating to North Carolina Counties and Towns" will be useful to any North Carolina librarian. It would be more useful if the many out-of-print books had been so marked.

Any library which has or is building a North Carolina history collection will find the *Guide* valuable. Some will find a sturdier binding necessary.

The Raleigh Register, 1799-1863, by Robert Neal Elliott, Jr. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955. (The James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science, vol. 36.) 133 pp. \$1.25 paper bound.

The *Raleigh Register*, the first anti-Federalist newspaper in North Carolina, was founded and edited by Joseph Gales until 1833 when his son Weston Gales took over. The elder Gales was a firm advocate of Jeffersonian democracy. Weston Gales was a conservative man who also believed that leadership in the government should be reserved to those born and educated for such responsibility, and that the rights of all the people were best protected in such a regime. Both father and son supported the anti-Jackson Whig party. After Weston Gales' death in 1848, his son Seaton assumed the editorship until 1856 when the paper was sold. Most of the book is concerned with the paper before Seaton Gales became editor.

This doctoral study reflects the Gales' opinions on affairs of town, state and nation and is valuable as a mirror of political, cultural and social issues and progress during the period of publication.

No single institution has a complete file of the *Register* and this addition to the Sprunt Studies will be valuable to anyone interested in the history of the period. It contains a bibliography of sources, an index and is well documented.

The North Carolina Guide, edited by Blackwell P. Robinson. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955. 649 pp. \$5.00.

This is a complete revision of the Federal Writer's Project, *North Carolina: A Guide to the Old North State*. The format of the older guide has been retained. There are some errors such as directions to the site of a western N. C. waterfall which dried up some years ago, and the statement that swimming is permitted in an eastern N. C. lake condemned by the board of health. However, considering the mass of information presented, there are few statements contrary to fact.

Included in the "General Background" are chapters on: "Folkways and Folklore," by William T. Polk; "Natural Setting," by B. W. Wells; "History," by Hugh T. Lefler; and "Architecture," by Louise Hall. Descriptions of the larger towns and cities are followed by suggested tours through the state. Information about the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the national forests in North Carolina precede a detailed index.

The *Guide* should be in every North Carolina library—and probably is.

Cradle of Liberty: Historical Essays Concerning the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, May 20, 1775, by Archibald Henderson. Charlotte: Mecklenburg Historical Association, 1955. 53 pp. \$1.00. (Available from J. A. Stenhouse, Box 1902, Charlotte.)

In May, 1775, a committee of men from Mecklenburg County passed a series of resolutions declaring political and military freedom from Great Britain and recommending establishment of local democratic government. Contemporary documents established that a meeting was held on May 31, 1775, and that twenty resolutions known as the "Mecklenburg Resolves" were adopted.

Was there an earlier meeting on the night of May 19 and the early morning of May 20, 1775, where a similar and even more revolutionary set of resolutions known as the "Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence" was passed? A state pamphlet published in 1831 maintained there was such a meeting. The Convention of 1861 placed the date, May 20, 1775, on the state flag. In 1905 George W. Graham published the "texts" of both sets of resolutions, with biographical sketches of M.D.I. signers and other documents supporting the authenticity of the M.D.I. (*The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, May 20, 1775, and Lives of Its Signers*. Neale, 1905) William Henry Hoyt proved to his own satisfaction that the document was "spurious". (*The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence*. Putnam, 1907.) James H. Moore retaliated with a *Defence of The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence* (Raleigh, 1908).

Historians including Ashe, Connor, and Lefler have generally held that the Resolves were authenticated, but the M.D.I. is still unproven.

In *Cradle of Liberty* Dr. Henderson has reached a "moral certainty" that: (1) The news of the Battle of Lexington reached Charlotte on May 19. (2) The Committee of Safety met that night and by early morning had drafted The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. (3) The text was not published in contemporary papers because of its explosive nature—the later Resolves being a more thoughtful statement of this body. (4) The action of the Rowan Committee, taken June 1, 1775, disapproving of the revolutionary nature of the Mecklenburg action could not refer to the Resolves passed May 31.

Whether historians will accept the evidence assembled by Dr. Henderson remains to be seen. Librarians will want to add the pamphlet to their North Caroliniana.

Our Circulation is Almost 700!

North Carolina Libraries now has a paid circulation of 694. This includes individual and institutional members and subscriptions. The count was made by Marjorie Hood, Corresponding Secretary of NCLA as this issue went to press. The editors hope that this indicates growing activity on the part of North Carolina Librarians, and a record attendance of the Conference in High Point.