

GENERAL INTEREST

THE TWO CALDWELL MONUMENTS ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA.

DR. Joseph Caldwell came to Chapel Hill on October 31st, 1796, from a Tutorship at Princeton University, then and until recently, the "College of New Jersey." He entered upon his duties as Professor of Mathematics after only one day's rest, and in a few months the institution was placed under his charge as Presiding Professor. His health beginning to fail after two years, the Trustees, in order to prevent his departure gave the principalship to Rev. James S. Gillaspie, but after a rather stormy administration he resigned the place and Mr. Caldwell was induced to take charge a second time. In 1804 the Trustees elected him to the Presidency and he continued in this office until 1813. Being fond of the study and teaching of Mathematics, and wishing to complete his treatise on Geometry, he applied to the Trustees to choose a new President, recommending Rev. Robert Hett Chapman, D. D., of New York. His counsel was heeded but, after four years unpleasant experience, mainly on account of the heated political feeling engendered by the war with England, Dr. Chapman gave up his post and early in January, 1817, Dr. Caldwell again became President, very reluctantly, but as a matter of duty to the University he loved so well. He had already resisted the blandishments of a larger salary and the chief place in a richer college of another state.

After a few years the University came into possession

of considerable funds from the sale of Tennessee lands, and became more prosperous. High water mark was reached in 1823, the number being 173, which, considering the sparse population and difficulty of travelling in those days, was conclusive proof of the public confidence. The Trustees, on this account, and in expectation of continued receipts from the sale of their lands, sent Dr. Caldwell to Europe, at his own suggestion, for the purchase of books and apparatus for instruction, and began the construction of a new chapel, the Old West Building and a third story to the Old East. The Faculty also was enlarged.

It was not long before a financial crisis came and blasted this prosperity. The number of students diminished, the sales of land ceased and the golden stream from Tennessee dried up. The Trustees were no wiser than other men. They shrunk from discarding professors and discontinuing their building, and soon they owed a debt of forty thousand dollars.

Anxiety about this financial trouble was not the only affliction of the good President. He was attacked by a grievous internal malady, which became a constant and chronic torture. He journeyed to Philadelphia, whose physicians then stood at the head of their profession in America, but they thought his disease beyond the reach of surgery. Bravely and uncomplainingly he performed his duties, never asking for aid. Even when the Trustees elected Professor, afterwards Judge, Walker Anderson, to perform his duties, he insisted on taking on himself half the work. He sunk to his rest on the 27th of January, 1835. He was buried in the middle of the lot now called the Village Cemetery, which had

been laid off on University land and enclosed by a stone wall under his direction. His grave had been walled in by his own orders.

President Caldwell attained a very high place in the public regard. In 1804, simultaneously with his election as President, the General Assembly appointed him a Trustee of the University. He was the astronomical expert to run the western part of the boundary line between the Carolinas. He had published admirable letters over the pen name of Carlton, advocating a railroad from our Western boundary to Beaufort. He had ably championed popular education. The name of the county of Caldwell given six years after his death shows the estimation of the legislature, the representatives of the people. The following resolutions of the Trustees, whom he served, have the merit of truth without exaggeration.

“Raleigh, 6th of February, 1835.

On motion of Governor Swain.

Whereas the Executive Committee with the deepest emotions of sorrow have received intelligence of the death of Rev'd. Joseph Caldwell, D. D., President of the University,

Resolved unanimously, that by the eminent purity of his life, his patriotism and zeal in the cause of learning, and his long, faithful and distinguished public service at the head of the University, Doctor Caldwell has approved himself one of the noblest benefactors of the State and deserves the lasting gratitude and reverence of his countrymen.

Professor Anderson was then requested to prepare a memoir of the life and character of the deceased Presi-

dent, to be delivered at the following Commencement. This was excellently done and was printed in pamphlet.

Judge Frederick Nash and Rev. Dr. Wm. McPheeters were appointed to erect an appropriate monument "in the burial ground near the University." The authorities afterwards concluded to place it in the Campus, and the site chosen was thought to be sufficiently remote from any building then standing or likely to be erected. Its inconvenient proximity to the New West Building shows how mistaken as to the progress of the University were the locators.

The body of Dr Caldwell has been exhumed twice. A day or two after his death, at the instance of the Philanthropic Society, it was taken up by Mr. Waugh of Raleigh in order to procure a plaster cast of his features. The bust is now in Gerrard Hall and is a faithful reproduction. The grave was reopened on October 31st 1846 and the remains were reinterred by the side of his wife at the base of the monument.

His wife died October 30th, 1846, while on a visit to Chapel Hill. Her maiden name was Helen Hogg, she being a daughter of James Hogg, a prominent merchant of Hillsboro, who was one of the Commissioners that chose the site for the University. Her first husband was William Hooper, son of the Signer of the Declaration of Independence of the same name. He died early leaving two sons, William and Thomas Clark, and when the elder was prepared for the University, she moved to Chapel Hill in order to have him with her. Dr. Caldwell had married Susan Rowan, who, with her infant daughter, died soon leaving him a widower and childless. Before many years elapsed the fascinating young widow

became the President's wife, and well she adorned her station by the graciousness of her manners the activity of her benevolence and leadership in good works. Her elder son, Rev. Wm. Hooper, D. D., became one of the ripest scholars, the most interesting and informing speakers and most learned divines in the South. After the President's death she moved back to Hillsboro, where were many relations, and was on a visit to Chapel Hill when she died. The following notice, kindly copied for me by Miss Alice C. Heartt from the Hillsboro Recorder, of which her father, Mr. Demnis Heath, was for many years editor, is a truthful estimate.

“HILLSBORO RECORDER.”

Thursday, November 5th, 1846.

“Died at Chapel Hill on Friday morning, the 30th ultimo, in the 78th year of her age, Mrs. Helen Caldwell, relict of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Caldwell, late President of the University of North Carolina. The deceased was a woman of extraordinary endowments, blending in her character the highest mental culture with all the Christian graces, in their liveliest exercise. She has left few superiors; and those who enjoyed her acquaintance will feel that, by her removal, a space has been left in society, which will not soon be filled. But with what confidence can her friends and relations commit her to the tomb. She was a bright and shining light in the Church, and it was impossible to be in her company without admiring the Cristian cheerfulness which she at all times exhibited.

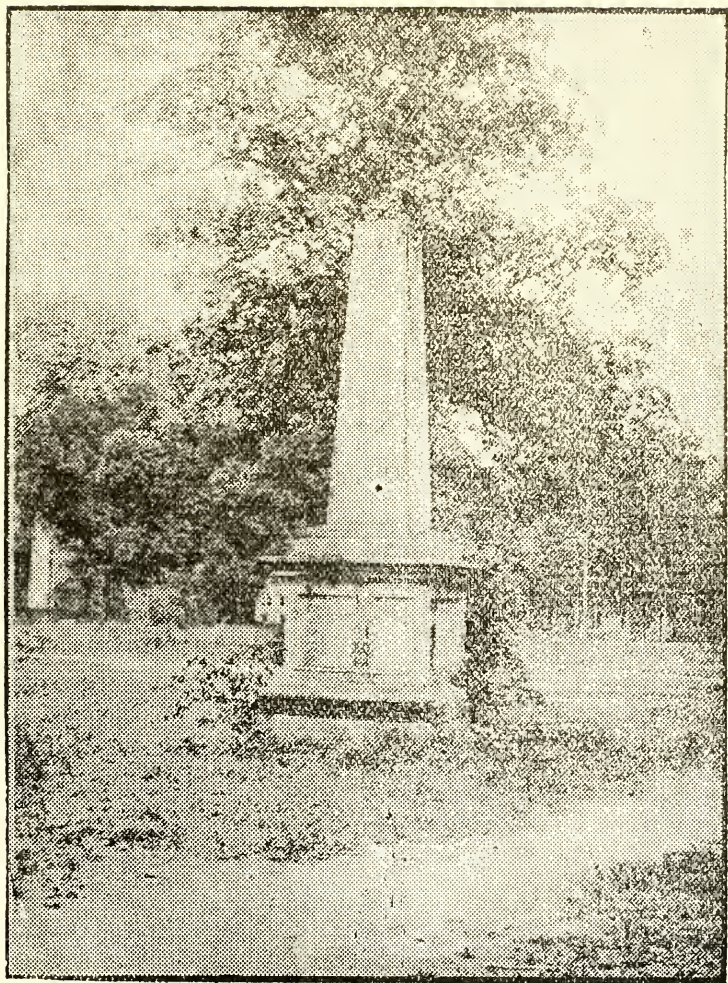
“The funeral obsequies were performed at Chapel Hill on Sunday last, the President and Faculty of the University acting as pall-bearers on the occasion. The

sermon was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Mitchell from Phil. IV. 3, and her remains were deposited with those of her late husband, at the base of the monument erected to his memory by the "Trustees of the University."

Thirty years afterwards her child, Dr. William Hooper, after laboring in many fields, was living in Chapel Hill, where he had spent most of his boyhood and much of his manhood. He was attacked by a fatal disease and as he felt himself sinking towards the portals of death, longed to be laid by the side of his mother. The University authorities readily granted his request, and, when on the 19th of August, 1876, the Centennial anniversary of the signing by his grandfather of the instrument which declared the independence of the American people, the good man breathed his last, he was borne from Gerrard Hall to the resting place which he had chosen.

This monument is of sandstone from one of the quarries near the University Buildings, possibly that on the land bequeathed to the institution by Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Mason. The stone soon began to crumble and grow dingy. Moreover the plan was to insert on the eastern face a marble slab with an appropriate inscription in Latin. When this slab came from the workman at the North, the Latin was found to be so atrociously bad as to be beyond amendment. The Professor of that language, in disgust, seized a hammer and broke the offending marble into fragments. It was never replaced.

At the Commencement of 1847 amid the general enthusiasm aroused by the visit of President Polk to the scene of his graduation twenty-nine years before, it was



THE OLD CALDWELL MONUMENT.

proposed to erect a new monument of marble, more worthy of the President, so much venerated by the older Alumni. The motion was made by John Y. Mason, of the class of 1816, then Secretary of the Navy. President Polk headed the subscription and others of the eminent Alumni present followed, it being agreed that no one should contribute more than three dollars. It was not until the Commencement of 1858 that the monument was ready to be dedicated. It was prepared under the supervision of a Committee, President Swain, Mr. Wm. J. Bingham and Judge William H. Battle.

It is an obelisk of white marble over twenty feet high, standing in front of the South Building, not far from the Davie Poplar. A tablet toward the top bears as emblem of Dr. Caldwell's services to the State, a Rail Road wheel, an Engineer's Transit, and the Holy Bible. The inscriptions are as follows:

On the North face;

"In grateful acknowledgment
Of their obligation to
The First President of this University,
Joseph Caldwell, D. D.
The President of the United States,
The Governor of North Carolina,
And other Alumni
Have raised this monument
A. D. 1847."

On the West face;

"Born at Lamington, New Jersey,
April 21st 1773.
Professor of Mathematics in this
University, 1796.
Died at Chapel Hill
January 27, 1835."

the bodies were removed to the monument under the supervision of W. H. Battle

On the South face;

“He was an early
Conspicuous and devoted advocate
Of the cause of Common Schools and
Internal improvements in North Carolina.”

On the East face;

“Near him repose the remains of
His beloved wife,
Helen Caldwell.”

The monument is the work of Struthers and Company of Philadelphia. It was transported by water to Wilmington, and then, by the liberality of the Wilmington and Weldon and North Carolina Railroad Companies, brought without charge to Durham. Mr. Paul C. Cameron with like generosity caused it to be hauled with his own team over the rough road to Chapel Hill, the bridge over New Hope being specially strengthened to bear the unusual weight.

The dedicatory services were on the day preceding Commencement day, 1858. The Alumni marched from Smith Hall, while the band played a funeral dirge, to the site of the monument, and standing around it with uncovered heads, sang the grand Doxology, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” Then Rev. Dr. James Phillips, the only survivor of Dr. Caldwell’s colleagues, offered a prayer with that extraordinary propriety of language and solemnity of utterance for which he was distinguished. The procession was again formed and, marching to Gerrard Hall, the Alumni, students and visitors, listened to an excellent address, commemorative of the deceased President, by one of his pupils and greatest admirers, President of the Alumni Association,

the late Paul C. Cameron. I give a few words of his eulogy delivered in 1889 at the Charter Centennial.

“These woods must ever call up the memory, form and characteristics of Joseph Caldwell, and will, as long as these walls by which we are surrounded shall stand, or this pleasant village is known as a seat of learning; and so long as the name of the University is on the map; it will be associated with that of the first President. To leave it out would be as if the topographer should present us with Switzerland without its profile of mountains, or old Egypt without its overflowing and fertilizing Nile, or our vast North American Continent without the great Father of Waters, in his grand sweep from the lakes of the North to the Gulf of Mexico. The good man needs no eulogy at my hands, and no praise of mine can add a cubit to his stature. His early struggles in its behalf must stand alone in the building up of this institution. He came like Paul to plant, and then like Apollos to water with his tears, prayers, benedictions and benefactions to the end of his days—a continuous effort of thirty-one years.”

“It is a pleasant memory to the surviving Alumni to recall the steady devotion of good President Caldwell to this institution and his complete identification of himself with the citizens of the State in every interest. He made himself a freeholder and a slave-holder, and today the chief servant* of the institution is of his family of slaves. And so long as the great trunk line railroad from Morehead City shall increase the wealth and commerce of the State the name of Caldwell will be remembered as its first projector in the letters of ‘Carlton.’ ”

KEMP P. BATTLE, '49.

* The late Wilson Caldwell.