

## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

It is not probably known to many of our readers, that the citizens of Mecklenburg County, in this State, made a Declaration of Independence more than a year before Congress made theirs. The following Document on the subject has lately come to the hands of the Editor from unquestionable authority, and is published that it may go down to posterity.

NORTH-CAROLINA, *Mecklenburg County*,  
May 20, 1775

In the spring of 1775, the leading characters of Mecklenburg county, stimulated by that enthusiastic patriotism which elevates the mind above considerations of individual aggrandisement, and scorning to shelter themselves from the impending storm by submission to lawless power, &c. &c. held several detached meetings, in each of which the individual sentiments were "that the cause of Boston was the cause of all; that their destinies were indissolubly connected with those of their Eastern fellow-citizens—and that they must either submit to all the impositions which an unprincipled, and to them an

unrepresented parliament might impose—or support their brethren who were doomed to sustain the first shock of that power, which, if successful there, would ultimately overwhelm all in the common calamity. Conformably to these principles, Col. Adam Alexander, through solicitation, issued an order to each Captain's Company in the county of Mecklenburg, (then comprising the present county of Charrus) directing each militia company to elect two persons, and delegate to

more general and organized government be established in this province.

A number of bye-laws were also added, merely to protect the association from confusion and to regulate their general conduct as citizens. After sitting in the Courthouse all night, neither sleepy, hungry, or fatigued, and after discussing every paragraph, they were all passed, sanctioned and decreed *unanimously*, about 2 o'clock, A. M. May 20. In a few days a deputation of said delegation convened when Capt. *James Jack* of Charlotte was deputed as express to the Congress at Philadelphia, with a copy of said Resolves and Proceedings, together with a letter addressed to our three Representatives there, viz. *Richard Caswell*, *Wm. Hooper* and *Joseph Hughes*—under express injunction, personally, and through the state representation, to use all possible means to have said proceedings sanctioned and approved by the general Congress. On the return of Capt. Jack, the delegation learned that the proceedings were individually approved by the members of Congress, but that it was deemed premature to lay them before the House. A joint letter from said

three members of Congress was also received, complimentary of the zeal in the common cause, and recommending perseverance, order and energy.

The subsequent harmony, unanimity and exertion in the cause of liberty and independence, evidently resulting from these regulations, and the continued exertion of said delegation, apparently tranquillised this region of the State, and met with the concurrence and high approbation of the Council of Safety, who held their

them ample power to devise ways and means to aid and assist their suffering brethren in Boston, and also generally to adopt measures to extricate themselves from the impending storm, & to secure unimpaired their inalienable rights, privileges and liberties from the dominant grasp of British imposition and tyranny.

In conforming to said Order, on the 10th of May, 1775, the said delegation met in Charlotte, vested with unlimited powers; at which time official news, by express, arrived of the Battle of Lexington on that day of the preceding month. Every de-

legate felt the value & importance of the prize, & the awful & solemn crisis which had arrived—every bosom swelled with indignation at the malice, inveteracy and insatiable revenge developed in the late attack at Lexington. The universal sen-

timent was: let us not flatter ourselves that popular harangues—or resolves; that popular vapor will avert the storm, or vanquish our common enemy—let us deliberate—let us calculate the issue—the probable result; and then let us act with energy as brethren leagued to preserve our property—our lives,—and what is still more endearing, the liberties of America. *Abraham Alexander* was then elected Chairman, and *John McKnitt Alexander*, Clerk. After a free and full discussion of the various objects for which the delegation had been convened, it was unanimously Ordained—

1. *Resolved*, That whosoever directly or indirectly abetted, or in any way, form or manner countenanced the unchartered and dangerous invasion of our rights, as claimed by Great-Britain, is an enemy to this Country,—to America,—and to the inalienable rights of man.

2. *Resolved*, That we the citizens of Mecklenburg County, do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us to the Mother Country, and hereby

sessions at Newbern and Wilmington alternately, and who confirmed the nomination and acts of the delegation in their official capacity.

From this delegation originated the Court of Enquiry of this County, who constituted and held their first session in Charlotte—they then held their meetings regularly at Charlotte, at Col. James Harris's and at Col. Puffer's alternately one week at each place. It was a civil Court founded on military process. Before this judicature all suspicious persons were made to appear, who were formally tried and banished, or continued under

guard. Its jurisdiction was as unlimited as forism, and its decrees as final as the confidence and patriotism of the County. Several were arrested and brought before them from Lincoln, Rowan and the adjacent countries.—

fore them from Lincoln, Rowan and the adjacent countries.—

[The foregoing is a true copy of the papers on the above subject, left in my hands by John McKnitt Alexander, dec'd. I find it mentioned on file that the original book was burned April, 1800. That a copy of the proceedings was sent to Hugh Williamson in New York, then writing a History of North-Carolina, and that a copy was sent to Gen. W. R. Davie.

J. M'KNITT.]

The following ROYAL PROCLAMATION was communicated at the same time, and is published as a curiosity.

## NORTH-CAROLINA.

By his Excellency JONIAH MARTIN, his Majesty's Captain General, and Governor in Chief of the said Province, &c. &c. &c.

### A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas the King ever anxious for the welfare and happiness of all his people, and sensible to the representations which have been constantly made to him of the steady and unshaken loyalty, and of the inviolable fidelity and attachment



absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British Crown, and abjure all political connection, contract or association with that Nation, who have wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties—and inhumanly shed the innocent blood of American patriots at Lexington.

3. *Resolved*, That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent People, are and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing Association, under the control of no power other than that of our God and the General Government of the Congress; to the maintenance of which independence, we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor.

4. *Resolved*, That as we now acknowledge the existence and control of no law or legal officer, civil or military, within this County, We do hereby ordain and adopt, as a rule of life, all, each and every of our former laws,—wherein, nevertheless, the Crown of Great-Britain never can be considered as holding right, privileges, immunities or authority therein.

5. *Resolved*, That it is also further decreed, that all, each and every military officer in this county is hereby reinstated to his former command and authority, he acting conformably to these regulations. And that every member present at this delegation shall henceforth be a civil officer, viz: a Justice of the

peace, in the character of a 'Committee man,' to issue process, hear and determine all matters of controversy, according to said adopted laws, and to preserve peace, and union, and harmony in said County,—and to use every exertion to spread the love of country and fire of freedom throughout America, until a

of his faithful subjects in this province to his person and government; and confiding entirely in their repeated assurances to his Majesty of their own utmost exertions in co-operation with his arms whenever they should be directed to their support. AND WHEREAS, his Majesty, moved by these considerations, and by every the most tender and paternal feeling of concern, and regard for the sufferings & misery of his faithful people, under the intolerable yoke of arbitrary power, which his Majesty, with indignation, sees imposed by the tyranny of the rebel Congress upon his freeborn subjects, hath been pleased to send an army to their aid and relief, I HAVE THEREFORE thought it proper, by this Proclamation, to inform his Majesty's loyal and faithful subjects in this Province, of this great proof and instance of his Majesty's gracious attention to them, and at the same time to advertise them that the royal army under the command of Lieutenant-General Earl CORNWALLIS, is thus far advanced to their support, leaving it to themselves to compute its power and superiority from the great, signal, and complete victory which it obtained, when in force very inferior to its present strength, over the rebel army on the 16th of August: AND WHEREAS while his Majesty, on the one hand, holds forth grace and mercy to his deluded subjects, who shall immediately, and with good faith, return to their duty, to which they have been invited in vain

by every reason and argument, and by every consideration of interest, of freedom and happiness; he is determined on the other, to employ in the most vigorous and effectual manner the force of his arms, and the united strength of his faithful people, to restore and maintain to them that genuine liberty, peace and prosperi-