

Barzillai Shuford Graves Was Caswell Sheriff 61 Years Ago

By TOM HENDERSON.

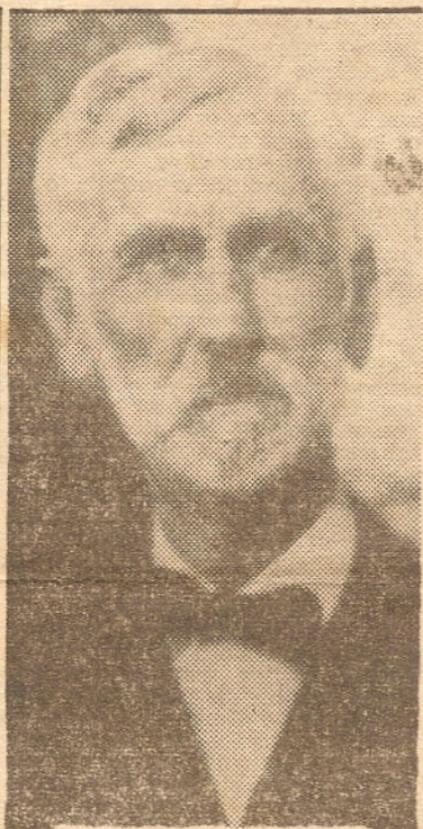
YANCEYVILLE, July 22.—The promise of long life is to those who keep the statutes of the Lord and preserve the temples of their own physical bodies. The accompanying picture is that of Yanceyville's Barzillai Shuford Graves, who is the only one left of our natives who was on the grounds when the boys of the "Caswell Greys" were marching away to war, the KKK-slain body of Confederate John Walter Stephens lay in state of infamy, and "Kirk's Federal soldiers" held incarcerated in the county courthouse, then just completed, the flower of the older manhood of the Democratic party of Caswell.

Born on July 5, 1854, the venerable gentleman celebrated a few weeks ago his 85th birth anniversary, with faculties of mind clear and his six-feet-one-and-a-half-inch body straight as an arrow. Time is slowly dimming his eyes and failing his legs, but the veteran is yet acutely interested in politics, vitally aroused over the magnanimities of the administration, and fearful that the taxpayers of the nation are really the ones who are giving the gifts.

He was a delegate to the Democratic national convention in Chicago which first nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt as a presidential candidate, and says now that he regrets he voted for Roosevelt. Incidentally, that was the second time he had the honor of representing the Democratic party in national convention assembled, he having gone to Denver in 1908, and helped to nominate William Jennings Bryan for the third try. "Baz", as we affectionately have called him through the long years, is yet true and loyal to the name and memory of Bryan and his democracy.

Cousin of "Our Bob"

Barzillai Shuford Graves' great-grandfather was the first white child born in North Carolina west of the Blue Ridge. According to Wheeler's History, James M. Smith was a son of Daniel Smith, lately come from Burke county to the beautiful vales along the French Broad. Senator Bob Reynolds' mother and "Baz's" mother were first cousins, and hitherto this kinship has expressed itself in friendly and financial support to "Our Bob". He married a distant cousin, Miss Mallie Graves, one of the belles of Mount Airy and a talented daughter of Judge Jessie Franklin Graves, whose record is second to that of no jurist in love and respect for the letter of the moralistic laws. She is a sister of the late beloved Solicitor Porter Graves, and is herself possessed of elocutionary powers, the divinely-given touch of the piano, and the "meet-me-in-heaven voice" of the sweetness of song. She has for many years been a leading torchbearer of the Daughters of the Confederacy. Her husband is a Baptist, but she is of the feminine laity of the Episcopal church that



BARZILLAI S. GRAVES.

knows no compromise or surrender to plebeian worship.

The subject of this little sketch was first elected sheriff of Caswell in 1878, "during those days which tried men's souls". He served for 12 years, eight of which embraced the duties of county treasurer.

"Baz" was mayor of Yanceyville for 10 years before the village was disincorporated, but he never received any of the perquisites or emoluments of this office. He was a vigilant county commissioner for five or six terms, a magistrate for many years, and in 1922 was elected to the post of clerk of Superior court, where he was diligent for four years. A worthy contemporary of his during much of that period of his activities was Spencer B. Adams, of Greensboro, whose age is likewise beyond the four-score mark.

Time has dealt gently by the old sheriff. He, like the wise squirrel, laid aside a few nuts in the summertime of life, and now, when winter has come, he doesn't have to go out of his own hole, to seek "relief commodities". He owns the oldest \$5,000 paid-up-life-insurance policy in this neck of the woods, and has in his lock box a few North Carolina bonds and some cotton mill stocks—which he tells me he doesn't value much since the passage of the Wagner bill and the threatened imposition of the minimum wage and hour stipulation of 32½ cents per every 60 minutes.

I hope, even now, the Lord will permit me to stay here as long as He permits "Baz" to live.