

Rufus Barringer, of Cabarrus and Mecklenburg.

Rufus Barringer was often head to say, "I believe in but three institutions, the Family, the Church, and the State," and under these heads this sketch will be written.

As to Family, reference is made to a letter of his to Dr. Kemp Battle, written in the spirit of the true American. He says: "So far as I have been able to find, the Barringers, of Germany, laid no claim to noble rank or descent; but I do find that my grandfather, John Paul Barringer, of Wurtenburg, was a man of heroic mould and ever a good man through a long and eventful life."

Rufus Barringer was a firm believer in heredity. Since it is always interesting to note family characteristics, we return to the founder of the Barringer family in North Carolina; John Paul (or Paulus) Barringer. He was born in Wurtenburg June 4, 1721, arrived in Philadelphia September 20, 1743, on the good ship Phoenix, Capt. Wm. Wilson, last from Rotterdam. He married in Pennsylvania Ann Eliza Iseman, and after several years (about 1750) they with their children, Catherine and John, and several fellow countrymen, joined in the exodus to the Piedmont region of North Carolina, where they settled on the fertile lands of Dutch Buffalo, then Anson county, afterwards Mecklenburg, and now Cabarrus, thus living in three counties without moving.

The desolation of the country during the seven years war, added to the desire of being land-owners, is said to have caused this immigration from Wurtenburg.

John Paul's love of family was shown by his sending to the "Old Country" for father, mother, brothers and sisters. The aged parents were buried at sea, but two brothers and three sisters came. George settled at Gold Hill. Mathias married Miss Burhart, settled in Lincoln, and was killed by



GEN. RUFUS BARRINGER.

the Indians in Catawba, where a monument was erected to him in 1891. The sisters were: Catherine married to Christian Overshine, Dolly married to Nicholas Cook, and Elizabeth or Anna Maria, married to Christian Barnhardt. Their descendants are scattered over the South and West, and show the same strong characteristics in Family, Church, and State.

In 1777, John Paul Barringer married his second wife, Catherine, daughter of Caleb Blackwelder and Polly Decker, and raised a large family.

John Paul was of note and influence in his community. He was captain of Queen's Militia, member of Committee of Safety, and was with James Hogg, of Orange, appointed by unanimous consent of the Halifax convention of 1776, Justice of the Peace. He and his brother-in-law, Caleb Phifer, were the first representatives of Cabarrus in the Legislature. It is said that the separation of Cabarrus from Mecklenburg was due to the indignation of John Paul and German friends, at his being ridiculed for giving orders to his company in German or Pennsylvania Dutch. The county was named for Stephen Cabarrus, who aided them to get the act through the Legislature.

John Paul and his father-in-law, Caleb Blackwelder, too old for service, led in defence of the settlement against the Tories, who destroyed crops and carried away slaves. Finally the Fanning gang raided across the Yadkin, destroyed everything and taking these two men prisoners, carried them to Camden. Old Mrs. Blackwelder, nothing daunted, followed them on horseback and ministered to their wants as well as to those of other prisoners, even to the Britishers. Smallpox was raging there and unfortunately, she communicated the disease to her young grandson Paul, who always bore the marks of it. The husband and father were eventually released through her influence and that of a man named Levinstein. The Tory most obnoxious to that neighborhood was named Hagar and was finally run off. Hagar's

mill was confiscated by Tom Polk and came into the possession of the Barringer family.

In religion, John Paul was Lutheran and deeply devotional, though neither sectarian nor fanatic. He used daily a large Luther Bible (date 1747) which is still owned by the family. These German Lutherans, like the Presbyterians, ever had church and school house side by side. He gave a large body of land to the church, was active in church building, president of the council and was made referee in all church disputes. The "Yellow Meeting House" was built at his expense and the congregation voted him a raised seat of honor, moving it to the new church of St. John's when rebuilt. He is said to have lived well after the manner of his day, and "they say" he exchanged a barrel of kraut with the Italian miner, Rivafinoli, for a barrel of imported wine.

Gov. Tryon visited him during his tour in 1768, and was highly gratified with his entertainment. He died January 1, 1807, and was buried at St. John's church. His wife, Catherine, lived till October 29, 1847, aged 92.

GEN. PAUL BARRINGER.

The oldest son of John Paul Barringer and Catherine Blackwelder was born in 1778, on Dutch Buffalo, then in Mecklenburg, now Cabarrus. He was both merchant and farmer.

His father had never mastered the English language, but he gave his children the best advantages of the times and directed his executor to have his minor children educated in the Protestant faith. Realizing the disadvantages he had labored under he sent his sons to Chapel Hill, and his daughters to the best schools. Besides his own children, he helped many other young men to get a start in life.

His wife was Elizabeth Brandon, daughter of Matthew Brandon and Jean Armstrong, of Rowan. Her family were the Lockes, Brandons and Armstrongs. The records

show that many patriotic soldiers were furnished by them during the Revolution. They were married February 21, 1805. Their children were Daniel Moreau Barringer, member of Congress, minister to Spain, aid to Gov. Clark during the Civil War; Paul Barringer, of Mississippi; Rev. William Barringer, of Greensboro; Gen. Rufus Barringer, of Charlotte; Maj. Victor C. Barringer, First North Carolina Cavalry, and Judge of International Court of Appeals in Egypt from 1874 to 1894; Margaret married John Boyd, then Andrew Grier; Mary married Charles Harris, M. D.; Elizabeth, Edwin Harris, and Catherine, William G. Means.

Like his father, Paul Barringer was a devoted patriot. He was an old line Whig and bitterly opposed to nullification at its first inception, as shown in circulars published in a political contest with Charles Fisher in 1832, and in newspaper records of public meetings of the day. He was often prominent as president of the day on the 4th of July and 20th of May anniversaries. He was a firm believer in the authenticity of the Mecklenburg Declaration and seems to have brought up his sons in the same faith. *The Western Carolinian* of May 24, 1839, mentions the orator of the day, D. M. Barringer, and Wm. Barringer was on the Committee of Invitation. Rufus Barringer's journal for May, 1844, refers to a "grand celebration" at which he was present in Charlotte. Cabarrus was, in 1775, a part of Mecklenburg, and many of the "signers" were from that section of the county. August 22, 1842, we find that Gen. Paul Barringer presides at a meeting to present to the Assembly a memorial for the incorporation of the Mecklenburg Memorial Association.

During the War of 1812, December 23, Paul Barringer was commissioned by Gov. Hawkins Brigadier-General of the Eleventh Regiment, North Carolina Troops. He was a member of the House for Cabarrus for ten consecutive terms (1806 to 1815), and of the State Senate in 1822.

In religion he and his wife were devoted members of the

History of Mecklenburg County North Carolina by J. B. Alexander M. D. (1902)

Lutheran Church and both lie buried in that church-yard at Concord.

RUFUS BARRINGER.

Rufus Barringer, fourth son of Paul Barringer and Elizabeth Brandon, was born at Poplar Grove, Cabarrus county, December 2, 1821.

He was prepared for college by R. I. McDowell at Sugar Creek Academy and graduated at Chapel Hill in 1842. He read law with his brother, D. M. Barringer, and then under Judge Pearson, practicing in Cabarrus and neighboring counties. He, like his father, was Whig in politics. He was a member of the House of Commons in 1848, and of the State Senate in 1849, and was a Bell and Everett elector in 1860. Like his father, he was strongly opposed to secession and predicted that it would result in long and bloody war. Seeing that war was inevitable, he warned the Legislature to arm the State and prepare for the support of troops, himself volunteering for the war and meaning it.

His great-grandfather, Caleb Blackwelder, gave six sons to his country during the Revolution. His grand-father, John Paul Barringer, suffered from the Tories; his uncle, John Barringer, was captain of a company; his father volunteered for the war of 1812, and his maternal ancestors were active in defence of the country. Nothing less could be expected of Rufus Barringer than that at the fall of Sumter, he should respond to the call of his country and volunteer for her defence. He enlisted for the war in the Cabarrus Rangers April 19, 1861, and was chosen captain of the company, which became Company F, First North Carolina Cavalry, Ninth State Troops. His commission bears date of May 16, 1861. Under fine drilling and through the excellent discipline of Robert Ransom, its first Colonel, this regiment became the best in the Confederate service. Under Hampton and Fitzhugh Lee, its history was glorious in every campaign.

In an old paper there is found an item headed "Won't Go to Congress." "While others are trying to get out of the army by being elected to Congress, Maj. Rufus Barringer refuses to go to Congress to remain with the army. Maj. Barringer is right, for the country needs all able-bodied men in the field." We copy his letter.

'ORANGE COURT HOUSE, VA., Oct. 17, 1863.

"I have recently received numerous solicitations to become a candidate for Congress in the Eighth District. These solicitations I have uniformly declined. Within the last few days I have learned that many of my friends still propose voting for me, whether a candidate or not. Whilst I am deeply grateful to all who have thus manifested an interest in my behalf and propose giving me this testimonial of their confidence, I deem it due alike to them and to myself to state, that for many reasons I much prefer my name should not be thus used.

"I entered the army from a sense of duty alone, counting the cost and knowing the sacrifices.

"Our great object is not yet obtained and I do not consider it consistent with my obligations here to accept any civil or political office during the war. I think it better for those in service to stand by their colors whilst those at home should all unite in a cordial and earnest support of the authorities in feeding, clothing and otherwise sustaining the gallant men (and their families) who are fighting not only for our rights, but for the safety of our homes and firesides. My chief desire is to see all party bickerings allayed. The army is not faint-hearted and will nobly perform its duty to the country.

"If croakers, grumblers and growlers who torment themselves and all around them with imaginary evils, could only lay aside their fears. If hoarders, speculators and money makers could only be educated to forget their selfish ends for a season. If conscripts, skulkers and deserters could only be got to their commands and all come up to the

History of Mecklenburg County North Carolina by J. B. Alexander M. D. (1902)

work like patriots and men, the army, by the blessing of God, would soon secure us victory and peace. Oh! that those men would reflect upon the error of their way and open their hearts to the call of their bleeding country. My prayers are that all dissensions amongst us in North Carolina may be healed and that headed by our sworn and chosen leaders, President Davis and Governor Vance, the party, appealing alike to our duty, our honor, our interest and our safety would now consecrate themselves to their country."

Among his most prized treasures were letters of commendation from R. E. Lee, Hampton and Fitz. Lee to the "Old First." He was promoted Major August 26, 1863; Lieutenant-Colonel October 17, 1863, and Brigadier-General June, 1864, his brigade consisting of the First, Second, Third and Fifth Regiments. Gen. Barringer was in seventy-six actions and was thrice wounded most severely at Brandy Station. He was conspicuous at the battles of Willis' Church, Brandy Station, Auburn Mills, Buckland Races, where he led the charge, and Davis' Farm, where he commanded. He commanded a division at Reams' Station. His brigade was distinguished at Chamberlain Run, the last decided Confederate victory, where it forded a stream one hundred yards wide, saddle girth deep, under a galling fire, and drove back a division of Federal cavalry, March 31, 1865. On April 3rd, at Namozine Church, he was taken prisoner by a party of "Jesse Scouts" disguised as Confederates. (Among the scouts were Col. Young and Capt. Rowland.) He was taken to City Point with Gens. Ewell and Custis Lee. Lincoln in Congress had desked with his elder brother, D. M. Barringer, and he asked for an interview, stating that he had "never before met a live Confederate general in full uniform." His party was sent to the old capitol prison and after Lincoln's death, transferred to Fort Delaware, remaining in confinement until August 5, 1865.

"His courage, efficiency and military services won him a

place alongside of the foremost cavalry leaders of the day." But he cared for no honors which he could not share with "the brave and self-sacrificing private of North Carolina, the glory of the Confederate Army," as he was wont to say, and he was ever anxious that justice should be given them in history. On one of his last days he pleaded with an honored Confederate captain to write of the brave deeds of his regiment, but was answered, "No, General; I have been thirty years trying to forget the war." This met with the response, "You are wrong, all wrong; it is due to yourself, as to them, that history give them the honor to which they are entitled by their bravery and self-sacrifice."

His whole heart was in the honor of his State in war and in peace. He was eager to have the true record published, but he himself felt unequal to any part of the work. Finally, in November, 1894, Judge Clark plead with him, saying: "You are very busy; only busy men have the energy and talent for the work. Your record as a soldier satisfies me you will not decline this part of duty. I respectfully request that you write the history of the Ninth Regiment, N. C. S. T. (First Cavalry). Please acknowledge your acceptance of this assignment to duty, the last which the Confederate soldier can ask of you." Though on his sick bed, he called for notes, clippings, rosters, etc., and as a labor of love, wrote the article for the Regimental History, dictating to his wife, but correcting the proofs himself.

As Gen. Barringer said, he "staked all and lost all" by the war. He then resumed the practice of law, removed to Charlotte in 1866 and formed partnership with Judge James Osborne, giving the closest attention to business and making his client's interest his own.

He disliked litigation and used his influence with his clients for compromise. For object lesson to this effect, he kept hanging in his office a print of two farmers quarreling over a cow; one had the cow by the tail and the other had her by the horns, while the lawyer sat quietly on his stool getting all the milk. I copy from his journal January,

History of Mecklenburg County North Carolina by J. B. Alexander M. D. (1902)
1844, his first court: "I had one case of some importance. We agreed to leave it to arbitration. I got my client off remarkably well. He had been sued for \$300, but the plaintiff did not get a cent. I got a fee of \$5.00." Seeing that he put his whole soul into the case of his client, one asked him how he felt when he lost a case. "I do the best that is in me for my client, and then accept the consequences." Just so he had done with the result of the war.

Being convinced that it was wisest for the South to accept the reconstruction acts of 1867, he allied himself with the Republican party, and though very sensitive to the opinions of his fellow men, he was tenacious of his principles and no amount of ridicule or opposition could make him swerve from what he considered the part of duty. But "during the most violent and bitter struggle in the State, political difference detracted nothing in the public estimation from the substantial worth of his personal character." And when in 1875, the State Convention was held to amend the Constitution, he was elected as a Republican from the Democratic county of Mecklenburg; and in 1880, though defeated for Lieutenant-Governor, he went far ahead of his party in his own county.

In 1884, Gen. Barringer retired from the active practice of law and devoted himself to his farming interests and to literary pursuits.

He was much interested in general education, made it a point of paying tuition for some needy boy or girl, and was largely influential in establishing the graded school in Charlotte in 1874, advocating an industrial feature in connection with it. He was also a warm advocate for the Agricultural and Mechanical College, and was numbered among the first trustees. He was for years trustee of Davidson College. He and Dr. Hutchison and Col. Myers were for a number of years trustees of the Biddle University, which was included in the home mission work of the Northern Presbyterian Board. He was greatly interested in watching the result of educating the colored man.

place alongside of the foremost cavalry leaders of the day." But he cared for no honors which he could not share with "the brave and self-sacrificing private of North Carolina, the glory of the Confederate Army," as he was wont to say, and he was ever anxious that justice should be given them in history. On one of his last days he pleaded with an honored Confederate captain to write of the brave deeds of his regiment, but was answered, "No, General; I have been thirty years trying to forget the war." This met with the response, "You are wrong, all wrong; it is due to yourself, as to them, that history give them the honor to which they are entitled by their bravery and self-sacrifice."

His whole heart was in the honor of his State in war and in peace. He was eager to have the true record published, but he himself felt unequal to any part of the work. Finally, in November, 1894, Judge Clark plead with him, saying: "You are very busy; only busy men have the energy and talent for the work. Your record as a soldier satisfies me you will not decline this part of duty. I respectfully request that you write the history of the Ninth Regiment, N. C. S. T. (First Cavalry). Please acknowledge your acceptance of this assignment to duty, the last which the Confederate soldier can ask of you." Though on his sick bed, he called for notes, clippings, rosters, etc., and as a labor of love, wrote the article for the Regimental History, dictating to his wife, but correcting the proofs himself.

As Gen. Barringer said, he "staked all and lost all" by the war. He then resumed the practice of law, removed to Charlotte in 1866 and formed partnership with Judge James Osborne, giving the closest attention to business and making his client's interest his own.

He disliked litigation and used his influence with his clients for compromise. For object lesson to this effect, he kept hanging in his office a print of two farmers quarreling over a cow; one had the cow by the tail and the other had her by the horns, while the lawyer sat quietly on his stool getting all the milk. I copy from his journal January,

1844, his first court: "I had one case of some importance. We agreed to leave it to arbitration. I got my client off remarkably well. He had been sued for \$300, but the plaintiff did not get a cent. I got a fee of \$5.00." Seeing that he put his whole soul into the case of his client, one asked him how he felt when he lost a case. "I do the best that is in me for my client, and then accept the consequences." Just so he had done with the result of the war.

Being convinced that it was wisest for the South to accept the reconstruction acts of 1867, he allied himself with the Republican party, and though very sensitive to the opinions of his fellow men, he was tenacious of his principles and no amount of ridicule or opposition could make him swerve from what he considered the part of duty. But "during the most violent and bitter struggle in the State, political difference detracted nothing in the public estimation from the substantial worth of his personal character." And when in 1875, the State Convention was held to amend the Constitution, he was elected as a Republican from the Democratic county of Mecklenburg; and in 1880, though defeated for Lieutenant-Governor, he went far ahead of his party in his own county.

In 1884, Gen. Barringer retired from the active practice of law and devoted himself to his farming interests and to literary pursuits.

He was much interested in general education, made it a point of paying tuition for some needy boy or girl, and was largely influential in establishing the graded school in Charlotte in 1874, advocating an industrial feature in connection with it. He was also a warm advocate for the Agricultural and Mechanical College, and was numbered among the first trustees. He was for years trustee of Davidson College. He and Dr. Hutchison and Col. Myers were for a number of years trustees of the Biddle University, which was included in the home mission work of the Northern Presbyterian Board. He was greatly interested in watching the result of educating the colored man.

One who was intimately associated said: "The one thing about Gen. Barringer that struck me above all others, was his love for his fellow men." He was a man of broad and true thought. We had never had any conversation, but what he spoke of the different classes and how to better their conditions.

"He was always thinking of how to better conditions, and was filled with a high sense of duty. His thoughts went out beyond himself.

"Another thing that impressed me about Gen. Barringer was, that while I never knew him in perfect health, he never grew old.

"He sympathized with the thoughts and schemes of every man. All schemes ecclesiastical and social, he entered into with zeal and interest. He was largely influential in the establishment of the library in Charlotte, and of the Historical Society, contributing freely to both."

I quote from another that knew him well: "Gen. Barringer was a remarkable man in many respects. He was one of the most liberal and generous citizens Charlotte had. His hand was always in his pocket to give to any good cause and his gifts were munificent. He was eminently a just man and was business to the core. He required the last farthing promised or agreed to be paid, not for money's sake, but for the sake of the agreement, and yet the next moment would give freely to some good cause."

He was a student and devoted much time to political economy. He had great faith in the "power of the press," and frequently wrote for the papers on various subjects. He was progressive in his ideas beyond the times.

Besides the history of the First North Carolina Cavalry, he published a pamphlet for the Historical Society on "The North Carolina Railroad," one on "The Battle of Ramsour's Mill," and a series of "Sketches on the Old Dutch Side." These brought him letters from all over the South and West.

One of a large family, happy in each other, he followed in the footsteps of his parents, ruling well his household, in

History of Mecklenburg County North Carolina by J.B. Alexander M. D. (1902)

a firmness of love, believing with Ruskin, "There is a something in a good man's home which cannot be renewed in every tenement that rises on its ruin." A young woman who had been much in his home, said: "When alone in the great crowds of New York battling with poverty, it has rested and comforted me to think of his home and to know that there are such men in the world."

Gen. Barringer was married three times. His first wife was Eugenia, daughter of Dr. Robt. Hall Morrison. To them were born two children, Anna, who died at maturity, and Paul Brandon Barringer, now of the University of Virginia, with a large family of his own.

The second wife was Rosalie Chunn, of Asheville, who had one son, Rufus Barringer. In 1870 Gen. Barringer married Margaret Long, of Hillsboro, who, with her son, Osmond Long Barringer, lives at the home place in Charlotte.

He was a man who lived not only in the present, but in the future, and on the approach of the three score and ten allotted to man, he felt that the world's work were better done by more active men.

Though not shirking any evident duty, he resigned formally from responsibilities as school trustee, bank director, church elder, etc.

In 1894, he felt his health declining and with his usual methodical care and forethought, he "set his house in order," arranged his papers and affairs, and instructed his agent, so that no confusion might arise on account of his death. To the end his mind was clear and strong. He read and kept up with current events in the daily papers to the day of his death, February 3, 1895. He bade his family "Farewell," folded his hands and fell asleep.

Though liberal to all denominations, Gen. Barringer was in faith strongly Calvinistic.

He said: "When a young man and about to connect myself with the church, I resolved to take no man's word, and to search the Scriptures for myself. This I did and to

my mind, the Presbyterian doctrine was plainly set forth in every chapter. I have never seen cause to change my belief or to be troubled by any new doctrine."

He passed through deep waters, but said: "Through it all God sustained me."

On one of his last days, he said to his pastor: "If you can unfold to me any new truth of that better land, do so."

The reply was: "I cannot; all I say is, we shall be satisfied when we awake in His likeness." To this he calmly answered: "It is enough."—*Contributed.*