

From the Greensboro Patriot

MEETING OF STOCK HOLDERS

The stock-holders of the N. C. Railroad Company having assembled in the Presbyterian Church, at 10 o'clock on Thursday, the 10th., the meeting was called to order by Dr. F.J. Hill, of Brunswick, and on his motion, the Hon. CALVIN GRAVES, of Caswell, was called to preside over the meeting.

On assuming the chair, Mr. Graves made a few pertinent remarks, calculated to produce a spirit of harmony in the important deliberations then commencing.

...[*minutes of the Stockholders Meeting*]....

Dr. Williamson, of Caswell, brought to the notice of the meeting the programme [sic] of proceedings for tomorrow (the 11th) on the occasion of "breaking ground" on the Railroad. Whereupon Mr. Mebane, of Orange, moved that Calvin Graves be appointed to remove the first spadefull of earth, and putting the question, it was carried by acclamation.

Adjourned until 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Friday Morning.

...[*minutes of the Stockholders Meeting*]....

The meeting, on motion, now took a recess until 3 o'clock this afternoon, in order to attend at the ceremony of

BREAKING GROUND.

On coming down street from the place of meeting, a crowd of people appeared, ready for the celebration, such as we may safely say was never seen before in our town for numbers. —

It was *one universal jam all out of doors*. The young gentlemen who acted as marshals had hard enough work of it to persuade this vast and unwieldy crowd into marching shape;

but they at length succeeded to a degree which at first appeared impossible. The procession was formed on West street;—the Clergy in front, then the stockholders, then the orders of Odd Fellows and Free Masons, who turned out in great numbers and in full regalia; closing with the citizens generally. This immense line moved down South street to a point on the Railroad survey nearly opposite the Caldwell Institute building, where a space of a hundred feet each way was enclosed by a line and reserved for the ceremony of the day. The North side of this space was occupied by the ladies, whose smiles are always ready for the encouragement of every good word and work. The other three sides were soon occupied by the male portion of the assemblage, from *ten to twenty deep* all around. You may imagine, then, the difficulty which the “rear rank” encountered in getting a glimpse of the proceedings within.

Having the misfortune to be among the *outsiders*, our situation was of course unfavorable for hearing, and seeing was impossible. But we did hear nearly every word of Gov. Morehead’s clear sonorous voice as he introduced the Hon. Calvin Graves to the vast assemblage. He did this in terms eloquent and singularly appropriate to the occasion. After alluding to the necessity so long felt by our people for an outlet to the Commercial world—to the inception of the great scheme the commencement of which we had met to day to celebrate—to the vicissitudes of the charter before the two houses of the General Assembly, and the fact that it at last hung upon the decision of the Speaker of the Senate, and that its fate was decided in the affirmative by the unfaltering “*Aye*” of that Speaker, Calvin Graves,—he said that no other citizen of North Carolina could so appropriately perform the ceremony of removing the first earth in the commencement of this work, on which the hopes of the State so vitally depend, as the man who pronounced that decisive “*Aye*.”

It was impossible for us to catch the full connection of Mr. Graves’ speech. Some sentences we heard, glowing with that patriotic feeling which has so long distinguished him as one of the first and best sons of old North Carolina. We could only judge generally of its effect by the waving of parasols

and handkerchiefs along the ladies, and the frequent and hearty applause that arose from the inner ranks of the citizens. We hope, by the way, that we may yet procure a full report of his speech, together with that of Gov. Morehead, to preserve as the most tasteful and eloquent and appropriate introduction that could possibly be made to the great work which we trust is destined to bless successive generations.

At the conclusion of Mr. Graves' speech he "broke ground" on the Railroad, by digging up and depositing in a box prepared for that purpose a few spades of earth.

Gov. Morehead remarked that this earth was deposited in the box to remain a hundred years and then re-opened for our inspection? The crowd laughed at the ludicrousness of the idea and so did we. But it naturally woke a graver thought. Before the tenth of a century shall pass, we dare say that numbers of those present will see the railroad cars swiftly traversing the spot where this interesting ceremony occurred. But a hundred years! Not very long, neither, is the period, to one who has lived the half of it, and looks back over the flitting by-gones. But the car of Time has a steady and swift and noiseless motion, far surpassing the cars of the railroad; and we are all passengers with through tickets sure. And long, long before the hundred years be past, shall this vast assemblage, now instinct with life, and hope, and passion, and all the restless attributes of human nature, be carried away to that great depot at the terminus. Doubtful, friends, extremely doubtful, whether we shall hear the voices of Gov. Morehead and Mr. Graves, or look upon the portly form and cheerful phiz of the Engineer, or exchange greetings with our friends, or look with the ladies, at the opening of said box after remaining closed the destined period.

But the crowd gave evidence of their intention to live as long as they could, by keeping in the use of the ordinary means. Notice was given that dinner was ready, and a general invitation was extended to all to partake of the barbecue prepared for the occasion. We left them gathering the well prepared creature comforts from the extensive tables with a heartiness which became the occasion — and retired ourselves

to scrawl this hasty and imperfect account of proceeding, for which our press is waiting.

—

Not the least attractive part of the proceedings at Greensboro on Friday last was a brilliant party, levee, or something of the kind, given by the Masons and Odd Fellows in the yard and grove of Edgeworth Seminary, in the evening. A person approaching that place at eight o'clock, would have been struck first with the beautiful display of colored lights set up at the gate, all around the promenade and on almost every tree in the grove. — He would have noticed next, that there was a very large number of people present, ladies and gentlemen. And supposing the observer to be a lover of the fair he would, on entering the encloser [sic], have been rivetted to the ground, for a while at least, as bevy after bevy of beautiful girls passed before him. Such a one, a stranger, at that place and hour would hardly have got out of his [trace] until frightened out of them by the fireworks which were introduced about nine o'clock; or attracted by the whistle of the model rail-road locomotive and cars which careered across the yard.

The fire-works consisted of rockets and fire-balis, and passed off very handsomely. The gentleman having charge of that part of the business, sent up a rocket for each county on the line of the Rail Road naming them as he applied the torch—Rowan and Guilford went up together. Guilford took the start, and went off with a perfect whiz, as if intended to penetrate the sky. But Rowan followed close behind; and whilst Guilford, having spent its force, was coming down, bursting and scattering its brilliant sparks of light, like the laughter peals of a merry girl triumphant in some innocent trick, Rowan went up — up — up — and we can't say whether it ever came down!

There were also several very appropriate transparencies set up in the yard indicative of the triumph over all opposition of the North Carolina Rail Road, and of the union of the Eastern and Western sections of the State. These with the hundreds of lights all around, and the dazzling

blaze from the large windows of the Seminary, and bright countenances of all present made up a scene not to be passed by without notice. The rising moon never looked down on a more pleasant one; and a happier finale to the labors of the two preceding days could scarcely have been conceived.