

The following piece was transcribed by Michael L. Marshall from *The People's Press* of March 13, 1884. It was part of a regular "Kernersville Letter" that appeared in that paper, the correspondent being the Rev. C. L. Rights, at the time minister of Kernersville Moravian Church.

Christian Lewis Rights (22 Jan 1820-9 Jan 1891) was a well known Moravian minister. He was the son of Joshua Reuz (Rights) and Elisabeth Reich. Rev. Rights married Elizabeth Balfour Hughes.

He was minister of several Moravian congregations in Stokes (later Forsyth) County: Friedland (1846-1854, 1873-1889), Friedberg (1854-1865), Bethania (1857-1865) and Kernersville (1880-1889). During his tenure in Kernersville, Rev. Rights was affectionately known as "Uncle Rights," and his wife as "Aunt Rights." Their home (the parsonage) was a two story frame house that stood across from the Kernersville Moravian Church. It was taken down some years ago.

In addition to contributing a column to *The People's Press*, Rights also wrote a similar column for the *Kernersville News* (later *News & Farm*). Many of his pieces are very witty and contain not a small amount of sarcasm, a trait well illustrated by the last paragraph in the following item concerning Messrs. Carter & Nelson's drinking saloon.

## KERNERSVILLE LETTER

### STAGE LINES AND KERNERSVILLE

In the last *Kernersville News* I find quite an interesting article taken from the Winston *Sentinel*, describing Kernersville past and present, by "Ben Bounce," and among the rest, describing the passing of the stage coach from Charlotte to Goldsboro. Now I confess that is new to me, and I can recollect back nearly 60 years. The first stage in that direction was inaugurated about the year 1828, by Thomas Wright of Mt. Airy. It had but three horses then, and Dabney Walker, who lived 6 miles above on the Ward's Gap road, near the Patrick line, Virginia, where Mr. Satterfield now lives [was the driver]. This line was from Wytheville via Salem, Kerner's Cross Roads<sup>1</sup> (about 3 houses), Greensboro to Raleigh, a tri-weekly line.

Stage drivers, in those days, were considered a wild set, but on this line wild ones were an exception, in fact, as a general thing, they were model men in the way of sobriety. I remember the Flynt brothers<sup>2</sup>, Allen and Fountain, two of the tallest men I ever knew; they both settled on farms and were excellent citizens; then there was Mr. Levy Rominger<sup>3</sup>, now one of the leading men of Hope, Indiana; Hudson, and the Riches, two brothers, all sober, steady men; then comes "Old Clint Wilson," a wholesoul [sic], good-hearted fellow, but as full of mischief as a dog is full of fleas. Some years ago I met "Old Clint" in Lexington. I had not seen him for twenty years, and when I told him who I was, I thought he would crush my hand in his big paw, and we sat down in King & Hege's store<sup>4</sup> and had a talk for two hours about "old times." I wonder if he is living yet.

Wright sold out to Walker, who was a man of energy; and, as an illustration, I give the following story: The main leading road from this country to the West was by

way of Ward's Gap and Poplar Camp; at the foot of the Ridge lived Mr. Mankin, who kept the stage breakfast house. Coming down the mountain the stage would get there a little after day light and breakfast would always be ready for the passengers. But old Mr. Mankin died and the house passed into other hands, and soon there was complaint that breakfast was not ready and the driver would only wait so long and then go on.

One morning Walker was in the stage and expostulated in pretty strong terms with the landlord, who in turn told him to go to a warm place and get his breakfast. Walker replied, "that is the dearest speech you ever made," and he went to work and hired an engineer and some hands and spent three weeks prospecting up and down the mountain until he found a place where he could get a road, had it opened and built a breakfast house on top of the mountain, and gave it the name of "Good-Spur," and in six months the travel was completely turned away from the old road. Walker in turn sold out to "Bland & Dun," [Bland and Dunn Stagecoach line] and they kept up the route for many years.

There was once a horse mail from Salisbury before Lexington existed, and when Davidson belonged to Rowan, by way of the Cross Roads to Danville, Va. David Woodson, a printer, in Salisbury, with whom I worked in the *Western Carolinian* office, and one of the fastest composers I ever worked with, and J. J. Bruner was our foreman, told me he carried the mail for two years on this route when quite a small boy; he went from Salisbury to Peoplio and back, about 26 miles.

It was, I think in August, 1833, when there was such a hail storm through this country. Fountain Flynt told me he was coming up the Zevely hill, when the hail began to fall, some as big as hen eggs; and right on top of the hill Mr. Zevely's barn stood with the gable end against the road, and he said he wheeled his leaders' heads right square against the barn and held them till the storm was over. He said he had on buckskin gloves and his hands were all bruised through the gloves and his straw hat was cut all to pieces on his head.

The great Southern stage line was from Charlotte via Salisbury, Lexington, ("Mabry House,") Brummell's to Greensboro and on North.

Well, our friend "Ben Bounce" gave Kernersville a pretty fair showing, but he did not tell it all; he entirely left out one of the principal industries of our thriving place, Messrs. Carter & Nelson's<sup>5</sup> "*Drinking Saloon*." It is said it proves to be a mint of money to the proprietors; they are very respectable men, and from the endorsement it has, you can't say a word against it. Of the parties that licensed it, three are leading members in the Methodist church, and one is a preacher in another church, and there is only one sinner among them; in fact, the whole thing is enveloped in an odor of sanctity, and we outsiders must bow in humble submission to the behest. Mr. Bounce congratulates us on our morals, and no doubt this is a means of increasing it; and if any persons at a distance contemplate sending their sons to the Kernersville High School, it may be an additional incentive to know that they can get a drink of beer, wine, whisky or brandy, any time day or night.

C. L. R.  
Kernersville, N.C. March 8, 1884

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<sup>1</sup> Present-day Kernersville.

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<sup>2</sup> Allen and Fountain Flynt were sons of William Flynt who married Elizabeth Ballard 19 Jan 1788. Allen (ca. 1805-1866) married Nancy Kerby, and Fountain Flynt (ca. 1809-1880) married Mary Elizabeth Spainhour in Stokes (bond 29 Oct 1839).

<sup>3</sup> This was Levi J. Rominger, born in Stokes County 5 Jul 1811, son of Philip and Elizabeth (Crater) Rominger. He moved to Haw Creek township, Bartholomew county, Indiana. According to a history of that county, "In 1835 Mr. Rominger returned to North Carolina, where he was engaged as driver of a four-horse mail coach, which work he followed for several years." Rominger, a member of the Moravian church, died 13 Dec 1893.

<sup>4</sup> King & Hege's store is listed in *Thomson's Mercantile and Professional Directory, 1851-1852*, under general dealers in dry goods, groceries, hardware &c., located in Lexington, Davidson County.

<sup>5</sup> This was probably R. Shepherd "Shep" Nelson, a well known fixture in Kernersville.