



Iredell County Public
Library

Statesville, NC 28687-1810 •

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Dec. 2, 1999

C-Span
400 N. Capitol St N.W.
Suite 650
Washington, D.C. 20001

Gentlemen -

Regarding President Millard Fillmore
Enclosed is a page from the book of
W.M. Watt "My Home Town" published last
year with an interesting aspect of
Alexander Means and President Fillmore.

James Iredell Room

O. AmerPres

Appendix E

LOT NUMBER 40 IN STATESVILLE

This lot was located on the south-east corner of Broad and Tradd Streets where the First Citizen Bank stands today. Records show that Iredell County Commissioners conveyed the lot to Alexander Means on May 17, 1797. Alexander Means was a tailor and married Sarah McLelland White who was the daughter of Nicholas McLelland. Sarah McLelland married James White about 1780 and James White's will in Rowan County of 1781 states a "child to be." James White, Jr. was born in 1782.

It is not known when Alexander Means married the widow Sarah McLelland White. He was in Iredell County in 1791 as the records show the will of James McCulloh was proven by Alexander Means November 22, 1791.

Alexander Means and his wife, who was formerly Sarah McLelland, was issued a state land grant on Buffalo Shoals Creek in 1797.

On lot 40 in 1801 a son was born to Alexander Means and Sarah McLelland. This was Alexander Means, Jr. He grew up in Statesville and it was stated that he went to school under the Rev. John Mushat. In about 1821 Alexander Means, Jr. moved to Georgia and there lived out his life.

The Georgia historians state Dr. Alexander Means was one of the most famous men that lived in Georgia and that he was born in Statesville, North Carolina in 1801. Alexander Means was an ordained Methodist minister, a practicing physician, a distinguished physicist, president of Masonic Female College and Emory College now Emory University, professor of chemistry at Atlanta Medical College, poet and orator.

The National Encyclopedia of America Biography says this about Dr. Means. "He was very like Oliver Wendell Holmes in body, spirit and mind, combining the scientific philosophic and poetic temperaments into one. This man was one of Georgia's great men without doubt." It was also stated he was the type of man as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, an intellect surpassed by few men.

Among Alexander Mean's many accomplishments was a demonstration of the electric light when Thomas Edison was 12 years old. The machine used to produce the light is at Emory University.

Alexander Means prophesied in 1850 that the day would come when electricity would be the motive power of civilization. Although Alexander Means was probably the first person to produce electric light, he did not invent the practical use of the electric light as Thomas Edison did later.

Dr. Means was among the first Americans elected to the Royal Society in London. He visited England and talked with Sir Michael Faraday, the discoverer of electromagnetic induction. He was introduced to Queen Victoria and she presented a bell to Dr. Means which still hangs in Seney Hall at Oxford, Georgia.

Alexander Means was a close friend of President Millard Fillmore and preached his funeral.

Alexander Means and his father were buried in the Oxford cemetery, Oxford, Georgia. The epitaphs are as follows: "Here rests Alexander Means born in Tyrone, Ireland 1767. Died at Oxford, Georgia, January 4, 1845."

"Alexander Means, M.D., D.D., L.L.D. was born in Statesville, North Carolina, February 6, 1801. Died at Oxford, Georgia, June 5, 1883."

Dr. Alexander Means seems to be without a doubt Statesville's most famous native son. Today it would be impossible for a man to have a career as Dr. Alexander Means did over 100 years ago due to the fact we live in an era of specialization. Of note: Hundreds of people in Iredell County and Statesville are kin to the Means. His mother was Sarah McLelland. The descendants of the McLellands are kin to Alexander Means, Jr.