

Lynch, Lemuel ^[1]

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by Mary Reynolds Peacock, 1991

5 Apr. 1808–19 Sept. 1893



Photograph of a sterling silver punch ladle with down-turned, fiddle style handle made by Lemuel Lynch. Item H.1982.221.2 from the collections of the North Carolina Museum of History. Used courtesy of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources.

^[2]Lemuel Lynch, [silversmith](#) ^[3] and watchmaker, was born at Back Creek, the son of Moses and Susan Dickey Lynch. He was trained as a craftsman in the Hillsborough shop of [William Huntington](#) ^[4], one of the best known silversmiths of his day and son of the prominent [Roswell Huntington](#) ^[5]. In the *Hillsborough Recorder* of 30 July 1828, William Huntington recommended Lynch to the public and announced that he had sold his materials and rented his tools to Lynch. Two years later Lynch advertised in the *Greensboro Patriot* ^[6] that he had a shop in that city and was prepared to do all kinds of work in silver. In 1832 he stated in the *Western Carolinian* ^[7] that he was operating a business in Concord. However, by 18 Mar. 1834 the silversmith was back in Hillsborough where he remained for the rest of his life. Other than during a two-year partnership with William Huntington from 1834 to 1836, Lynch operated his shop alone except, perhaps, with the assistance of his sons or apprentices.

Although there is nothing to indicate any exceptional interest in politics, Lynch was a successful businessman and a civic-minded individual. An account book preserved in the [Duke University](#) ^[8] Library reveals that many distinguished residents of Hillsborough were among Lynch's regular customers. In 1841 he was appointed a justice of the peace and thereafter held court in the town. It was he who repaired the famous cupola clock when the courthouse was built in 1844 and who regulated the clock thereafter.

An open letter to [William A. Graham](#) ^[9], published in the Raleigh *Sentinel* on 21 Sept. 1865, was signed by Lemuel Lynch and nine other "neighbors and friends." This letter, preserved in the Graham Papers, the Southern Historical Collection, at the [University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill](#) ^[10], expressed confidence in Graham and the hope that he would be pardoned so he could be elected as a delegate to the state convention. This, of course, referred to the fact that Graham, as a Confederate sympathizer, had to obtain a pardon before he could enjoy the rights of a citizen after the [Civil War](#) ^[11].

On 25 Sept. 1828 Lynch married Margaret W. Palmer, of Hillsborough, a niece of Mrs. Roswell Huntington. There were

three sons who learned the art of silversmithing ^[3] from their father: Thomas M. (1829–81) of Oxford; Seaborn J., who inherited his father's silversmithing tools and worked intermittently as a craftsman; and L. George, who worked with his father.

Lemuel Lynch died in Hillsborough. The extant pieces of silver known to have been made by him are expertly crafted and are obviously the work of a skilled artist.

References:

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Salisbury *Western Carolinian*, 23 Apr. 1832.

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