

The
NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET

*"Carolina! Carolina! Heaven's blessings attend her!
While we live we will cherish, protect and defend her"*

Published by
**THE NORTH CAROLINA SOCIETY
DAUGHTERS OF THE REVOLUTION**

The object of THE BOOKLET is to aid in developing and preserving
North Carolina History. The proceeds arising from its publication
will be devoted to patriotic purposes. EDITOR.

RALEIGH
COMMERCIAL PRINTING COMPANY
PRINTERS AND BINDERS

ADVISORY BOARD OF THE NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET

MRS. HUBERT HAYWOOD.
MRS. E. E. MOFFITT.
MR. R. D. W. CONNOR.
DR. D. H. HILL.
DR. WILLIAM K. BOYD.
CAPT. S. A. ASHE.
MISS ADELAIDE L. FRIES.
MISS MARTHA HELEN HAYWOOD.
DR. RICHARD DILLARD.
DR. KEMP P. BATTLE.
MR. JAMES SPRUNT.
MR. MARSHALL DELANCEY HAYWOOD
CHIEF JUSTICE WALTER CLARK.
MAJOR W. A. GRAHAM.
DR. CHARLES LEE SMITH.

EDITOR:
MISS MARY HILLIARD HINTON.

BIOGRAPHICAL EDITOR:
MRS. E. E. MOFFITT.

OFFICERS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE REVOLUTION 1914-1916

REGENT:
MISS MARY HILLIARD HINTON.

VICE-REGENT:
MRS. MARSHALL WILLIAMS.

HONORARY REGENTS:
MRS. E. E. MOFFITT.
MRS. T. K. BRUNER.

RECORDING SECRETARY:
MRS. L. E. COVINGTON.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY:
MRS. PAUL H. LEE.

TREASURER:
MRS. CHAS. LEE SMITH.

REGISTRAR:
MISS SARAH W. ASHE.

CUSTODIAN OF RELICS:
MRS. JOHN E. RAY.

CHAPTER REGENTS

Bloomsbury Chapter.....MRS. HUBERT HAYWOOD, Regent.
Penelope Barker Chapter.....MRS. PATRICK MATTHEW, Regent.
Sir Walter Raleigh Chapter.....MRS. I. M. MEEKINS, Regent.
General Francis Nash Chapter.....MISS REBECCA CAMERON, Regent.
Roanoke Chapter.....MRS. F. M. ALLEN, Regent.
Mary Slocumb Chapter.....MISS GEORGIE HICKS, Regent.
Colonel Thomas Robeson Chapter.....MRS. ANNIE BUIE, Regent.

FOUNDER OF THE NORTH CAROLINA SOCIETY AND REGENT 1896-1902:
MRS. SPIER WHITAKER.*

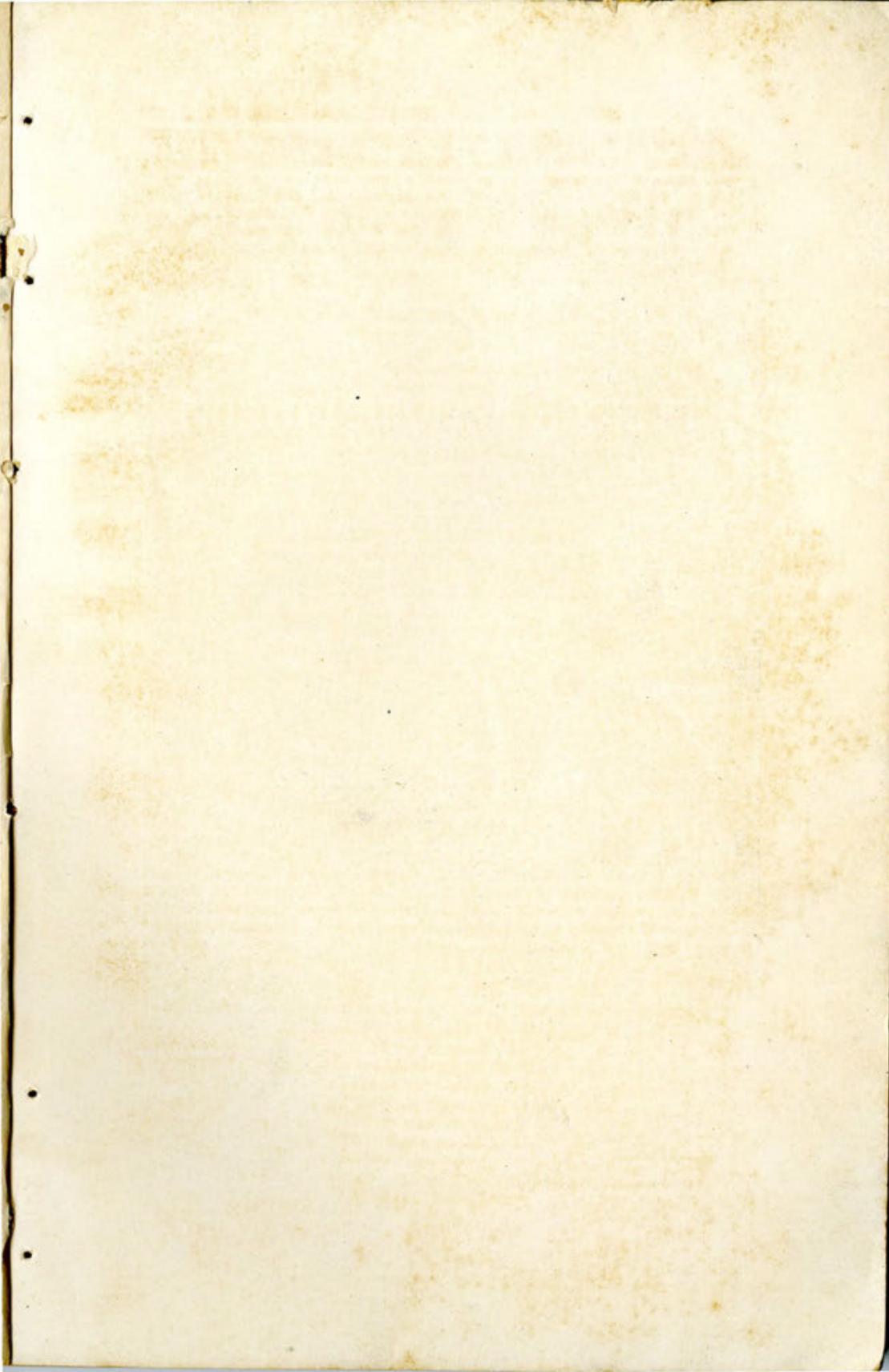
REGENT 1902:
MRS. D. H. HILL, SR.†

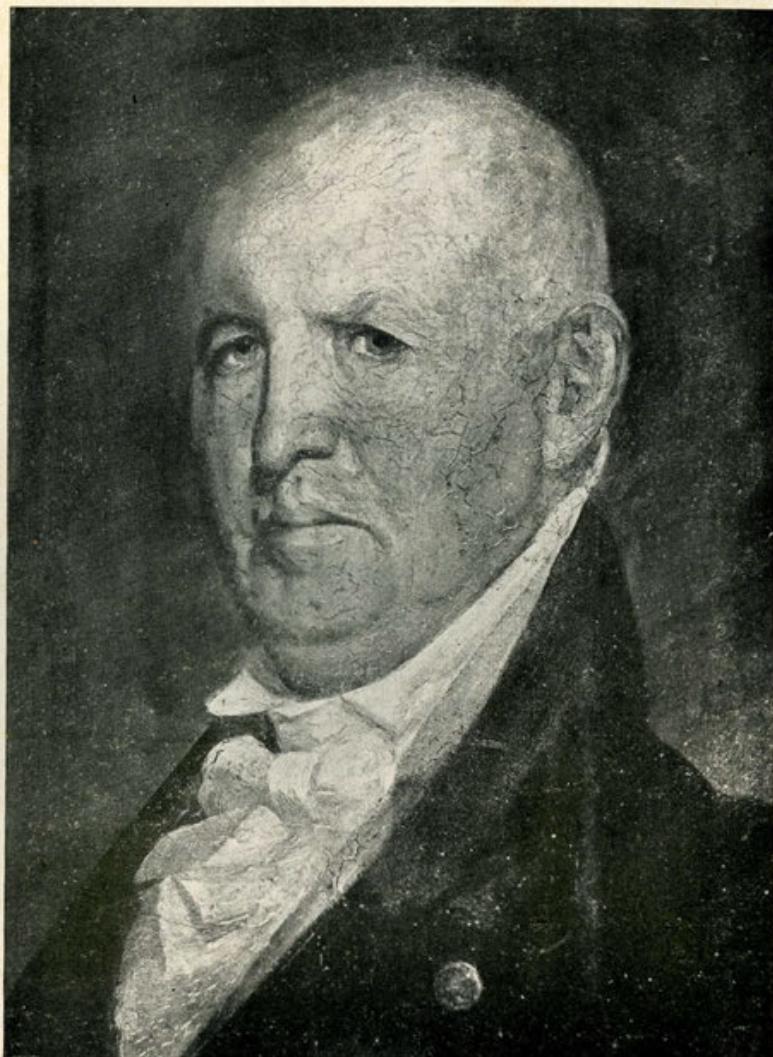
REGENT 1902-1906:
MRS. THOMAS K. BRUNER.

REGENT 1906-1910:
MRS. E. E. MOFFITT.

*Died November 25, 1911.

†Died December 12, 1904.





ISAAC SHELBY

MATTHEW HARRIS JOUETT

From his most famous portrait, never before reproduced, owned by
William R. Shelby, Esq., of Grand Rapids, Michigan

The North Carolina Booklet

Vol. XVI

JANUARY, 1917

No. 3

Isaac Shelby Revolutionary Patriot and Border Hero

By ARCHIBALD HENDERSON.

Among that group of early pioneers whose intrepid daring and superior sagacity, tested in the crucible of border warfare and frontier conflict, were potent agencies in laying the foundation stones of the republic, Isaac Shelby occupies a position of conspicuous leadership in both martial and civil life. Deficient in the vision of a Richard Henderson or the craft of a Daniel Boone, Shelby possessed much of the glorified common sense which distinguished James Robertson. Temperamentally more phlegmatic than his comrade in arms, the impetuous John Sevier, he exhibited in the crucial moments of his career a headlong bravery and an unwavering self-control which marked him as a trustworthy leader of men. In personal bravery the match for his friend, George Rogers Clark, Shelby was a born fighter; and although not endowed with the tactical brilliance of the conqueror of the Northwest, he exhibited such unerring judgment in battle and such poise in leadership as to inspire the confident faith which procures ultimate victory. His contribution to the cause of American independence is an integral part of the history of the Revolution. This chapter which to this very day, in any adequate sense, remains unwritten, the present monograph purposes to supply.

It was from a line of Welsh ancestors that Isaac Shelby derived the phlegmatic temperament and cautious balance which stood him in such good stead throughout his eventful and turbulent career. His father, Evan Shelby, was born in Wales in 1720; and with his father and mother, Evan and Catherine Shelby, he emigrated to Maryland about 1735. The

family settled in the neighborhood of Hagerstown, near the North Mountain, then Frederick County. Strength of character and an iron constitution, reinforced by the qualities of tenacity and approved courage, express the dominant characteristics of this famous border character, Evan Shelby, Isaac's father. In the French and Indian wars which began in 1754, he served with distinction, first it is presumed, as a private soldier; but in 1756 his recognized skill as a hunter and woodsman, acquired in patrolling the border and guarding the frontier, as well as his bravery, led to his appointment as Lieutenant of Maryland troops. It is related that on Forbes' campaign, "he gave chase to an Indian spy, in view of many of the troops, overtaking and tomahawking him."¹ The following letter is like a ray of light flashed into the dim obscurity of the mid-period of the eighteenth century. It is a letter of Governor Sharpe, of Maryland, to General Forbes:²

1ST OF AUGUST, 1758.

To General Forbes:

SIR:—This serves to introduce to you Capt. Shelby, who waits on your Excellency with his company of volunteers to receive your commands. He has served as a Lieut. more than two years in the Maryland troops & has always behaved well, which encourages me to hope that he and his company will be found useful on the present occasion. The expense I have been at in furnishing his men with blankets, leggins, moccasins & camp kettles is £82-3-2 pens currency, & as Capt. Shelby & his lieut., who was likewise an officer in our Troops until the end of May last, found themselves under some Difficulties by not being paid the arrears that were due them, I have let each of them have £15 out of the £510 currency, which, with Your Excellency's approbation, Mr. Kilby is to advance towards paying the Maryland Forces. I most sincerely wish Your Excellency the perfect Recovery of Your Health & a successful Campaign, & I am &c.

Serving as Captain of Maryland troops, in the provincial army destined for the reduction of Fort Duquesne, Evan Shelby was engaged in a number of severe battles in the course of Braddock's war. In 1758, in pursuance of Governor Sharpe's orders, he reconnoitred and marked out the route

¹Draper's *King's Mountain and Its Heroes*, 411.

²Maryland *Calendar State Papers*, ii, 1757-61, 237.

of a road to Fort Cumberland; and following his report to the Governor that "three hundred and fifty men might open such a road as he proposed in three weeks," as it was not more than sixty miles in length, the road was laid out by him with the assistance of the desired quota of men, by order of Governor Sharpe.³ As a soldier he was conspicuous for gallantry in the battle fought at Loyal Hanning (now Bedford), Pennsylvania; and he led the advance guard of General Forbes, when he took possession of Fort DuQuesne in 1758.

Early in the 'sixties, it is reasonable to suppose, he removed with his family to Pennsylvania—perhaps as the result of uncertainty in land titles in consequence of the dispute over territory between Maryland and Pennsylvania. For some years thereafter he engaged in trade with the Indians of the Northwest. During the conferences with the Indians, held in connection with the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, lasting from October 24 until November 6, 1768, an extensive grant of land was made by the Six Nations of Indians to twenty-three Indian traders, most of them from Pennsylvania, to recompense them for very large losses incurred during the war of 1763. In the list of the twenty-three names is found that of Evan Shelby, along with such other well known names as William Trent, David Franks, John Baynton, Samuel Wharton, and George Morgan. This grant included all that part of the present state of West Virginia lying between the Ohio, the Little Kanawha, and the Monongahela rivers, the Laurel Ridge, and the South line of Pennsylvania extended to the Ohio. Trent and Wharton, two of the traders, went to England, to endeavor to obtain a confirmation of the grant, which was named Indiana by those who wished to erect it into a colony; but while there they were induced to throw in their interests with Thomas Walpole, Benjamin Franklin, and others, in securing the grant of Vandalia, which included the

³Cf. Sharpe to Capt. Evan Shelby, June 15, 1758; Maryland *Calendar State Papers*. Letter Book III, 206; Sharpe to Calvert, Letter Book I, 358-9. For Capt. Evan Shelby's report from Frederick, June 25, 1758, cf. also Maryland *Calendar State Papers*, Letter Book III, 212.

grants to the Ohio Company and to William Trent and his associates, and extended to the mouth of Scioto. Although the draft of the royal grant had actually been prepared in the spring of 1775, it ultimately failed of confirmation by the Crown.⁴

During the third quarter of the eighteenth century, ranches, or "cow-pens" were established at many places in the Piedmont region of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The more adventurous farmers, taking advantage of the fertile pastures of the uplands, pressed far beyond the ordinary farmer's frontier, and herded in large flocks of cattle and stock. Many of these were wandering wild upon the country; as a contemporary observer says, "notwithstanding every precaution, very great numbers of black cattle, horses and hogs—run at large, entirely wild, without any other proprietors than those of the ground they happened to be found upon."⁵ In 1771, according to the best authorities, Isaac Shelby, the son of Evan Shelby, was residing in Western Virginia, living the life of the rancher, and engaged in the business of feeding and attending to the herds of cattle over the extensive ranges of the uplands.⁶ And in this same year, as Draper states, the Shelby connection removed to the Holston country, in that twilight zone of the debatable ground between North Carolina and Virginia.⁷ Evan Shelby settled on the site of the present Bristol, Tennessee; and in conjunction with his friend, Isaac Baker, purchased the Sapling Grove tract, of 1946 acres, Robert Preston dividing it equally between them.

⁴Plain Facts, Philadelphia, 1781. *New Governments West of the Alleghanies Before 1780*, by G. H. Alden, Madison, Wis., 1897. Cf. also, Hanna's *The Wilderness Trail*, ii, 59-60.

⁵J. F. D. Smyth: *A Tour in the United States of America*, ii, 143-4.

⁶L. C. Draper: *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 411.

⁷Summers, in his *Southwest Virginia*, 1903, 671-2, states that "in the year 1765 or shortly thereafter, Evan Shelby and Isaac Baker left their homes in Maryland and came to the Holston country." The facts, as stated above, would indicate that the date, 1765, is incorrect, with reference to the migration to the Holston country of Evan Shelby, at least. It may be that Isaac Baker preceded Evan Shelby to the Holston country, and induced him to remove thither.

Isaac Shelby was born near the North Mountain, in the vicinity of Hagerstown, Maryland, on December 11, 1750, being the eldest son of Evan Shelby and his first wife, Letitia Scott, of Fredericktown, Maryland. The intimacy between Evan Shelby and his friend Isaac Baker is shown by the fact that Shelby named one of his sons Isaac and Baker named one of his sons Evan. Endowed, like his father, with an iron constitution, and reared in a martial atmosphere, Isaac early adapted himself to the strenuous life of the pioneer and became expert in the arts of hunting and woodcraft. Even before he reached man's estate he served as Deputy Sheriff of Frederick County, Maryland—a tribute to his self-control and personal prowess.⁸

Despite the fact that the country was continually harrassed with a succession of Indian wars, young Isaac nevertheless succeeded in obtaining the rudiments of a plain English education. After the removal of the Shelbys to Kings Meadows (near Bristol), Evan Shelby and his four sons, Isaac, Evan, Moses, and James, continued to herd and graze cattle on an extensive scale along the Virginia border, about forty miles north of Watauga.⁹

An authentic account of the career of Evan Shelby and his services to the cause of American independence would constitute an extended chapter in the history of Indian battles and border warfare. As indicative of the high estimation in which he was held in his former home, one may cite the following fragment of a letter to Captain Evan Shelby from General William Thompson, bearing the address, "Carlyle, 6th July, 1775."

"Had General Washington been sure you could have joined the army at Boston without first seeing your family (you) would have been appointed Lieut. Colo. (of the) Rifle Battalion and an express sent by you being so-----the

⁸This statement is made on the authority of Cecil B. Hartley, in his sketch of Isaac Shelby, published in 1860, along with *The Life and Adventures of Louis Wetzel*.

⁹James R. Gilmore: *The Rear Guard of the Revolution*, 1903, 64.

general concluded it (would not be—) for you to take the field before seeing your family. I leave for Boston on Monday night."

Upon his Sapling Grove plantation Evan Shelby built a fort named Shelby's Station, where hundreds were sometimes forted during the Revolution. At this fort the Shelbys kept a store, which supplied the pioneers with ammunition, dress stuffs, articles of food and drink. Daniel Boone purchased supplies here in preparation for his ill-timed and ill-fated expedition in 1773. The stout old Welshman, stern though he may have been, was evidently not averse to conviviality; on an old ledger, dated Staunton, Va., Nov. 22, 1773, conspicuous in the account against Evan Shelby are such entries as: "1 Bowl tody," "1 Mug cider," "1 Bowl Bumbo," "To Club in Wine." His first wife, Letitia Cox, died in 1777, and is buried at Charlottesville, Va. Late in life he was married to Isabella Elliott; and the records show that this prudent lady required one-third of his estate to be deeded to her before marriage. In 1794 Evan Shelby died, at the age of 74, and his widow afterwards was married again to one Dromgoole. His remains now repose in Bristol, Tenn., on the lot now occupied by the Lutheran Church, on the corner of Fifth and Shelby streets.¹¹

It was not long after the settlement of the Shelbys at Sapling Grove that they formed the acquaintance of such leading men of the border as James Robertson, John Sevier, Daniel Boone, and William Russell. A little incident indicative of the experience of even the most expert pioneers of the day at the hands of the treacherous and furtive red men is recorded in that valuable repository of historical lore, Bradford's *Notes on Kentucky*. "In 1772," records Isaac Shelby in one of these notes, although we know from other sources that he should have said 1771, "I met Daniel Boone below the Holstein settlement, alone; he informed me that he had spent the two years preceding that time in a hunt on Louisa river

¹¹Cf. Oliver Taylor: *Historic Sullivan*, 1909. Also L. P. Summers: *Southwest Virginia*, 1903.

(now Kentucky), so called by all the Long Hunters; that he had been robbed the day before, by the Cherokee Indians, of all the proceeds of his hunt."

It was at the instance of the Shelbys that Sevier moved to the Holston settlements. In 1772 John Sevier attended a horse race at the Watauga Old Field, and witnessed the theft of a horse by a burly fellow named Shoate. Sevier was about to leave, disgusted by the incident—for the thief pretended that he had won the stolen horse as the result of a wager—when Evan Shelby remarked to him: "Never mind the rascals; they'll soon poplar"—by which he meant, take a canoe and get out of the country. One of the first measures taken by the Watauga settlements was the passage of laws to protect them from horse thieves. The following year the Seviers removed to Keywood, about six miles from the Shelbys, later settling in Washington County.¹²

It was not long before Isaac Shelby, young though he was, came to be regarded as a man of promise in the frontier settlement. In 1774 he was appointed Lieutenant in the militia by Colonel William Preston, the County Lieutenant of Fincastle County. The anecdote is related that, when Isaac thoughtlessly sat down instead of remaining at attention while his commission was being written out by Col. Preston, his father, with characteristically imperious manner, sternly admonished him:

"Get up, you young dog, and make your obeisance to the Colonel!"

Whereupon the young officer, considerably abashed, arose and made the *amende honorable* to his superior officer. In time to come the graceless "young dog" was to prove himself, as soldier and statesman, the superior of his bull-dog father, the grizzled veteran and Indian fighter.

Endowed, like his father, with an herculean frame, though built on a somewhat larger scale, he presents a formidable and impressive appearance in the portraits that have come

¹²Draper MSS.; also cf. F. M. Turner: *Life of General John Sevier*, 1910.

down to us—with firm, compressed lips, heavy chin, massive features, beetling brows over fixed, deep-set eyes—a man of “uncommon intelligence and stern, unbending integrity.”

II.

Daniel Boone’s attempt, without shadow of title, to make a settlement in Kentucky, in September, 1773, had met with a bloody repulse on the part of the Indians. In a letter to Dartmouth, Dunmore said in regard to the “Americans,” the pioneer settlers: “They acquire no attachment to place: But wandering about Seems engrafted in their Nature; and it is a weakness incident to it that they Should for ever Imagine the Lands further off, are Still better than those upon which they are already Settled.”¹³ The continued encroachments of the white settlers upon the Indian hunting grounds fanned to flame the smouldering animosity of the red man. The Six Nations, at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768, had sold to the Crown, through Sir William Johnson, their unwarranted claim to a vast stretch of territory extending as far to the southward as the Kentucky River. The Southern Indians, the aboriginal occupants of the soil, indignantly denied the right of the Six Nations to this Territory. The Indians along the border were aroused to a pitch of excessive hostility by the continued incursions of the whites. A succession of attacks by the Indians upon outlying and scattered settlements soon led to bloody reprisals on the part of the whites. The open letter of Conolly, Governor Dunmore’s agent, calling upon the backwoodsmen to prepare to defend themselves from the attacks of the Shawnees, was issued on April 21, 1774, and the barbarous murder of Logan’s family at the mouth of Yellow Creek on April 30, by one Greathouse and a score of carousing white companions, rendered the conflict inevitable. Yet actual hostilities were slow to commence, and it was not until the summer of 1774 that Daniel Boone and Michael Stoner were dispatched by Dunmore to Kentucky, to conduct

¹³Draper MSS., 15J4-48.

into the settlements the various parties of surveyors scattered about through the Kentucky area. The war was now begun, and Lord Dunmore, hoping to reconcile the differences between the colonists and England by a successful campaign against the Indians, proceeded vigorously to carry the war into the enemy's country.

There were two divisions in Lord Dunmore's army, one of fully twelve hundred men under the command of the earl in person, the other of about eleven hundred strong, under the command of General Andrew Lewis, a stalwart backwoods fighter. For some inexplicable motive, which has been suspected, no doubt, erroneously, as an attempt at treachery to the Americans, Dunmore decided not to unite his force with that of Lewis; and after a long march he took up his position at the mouth of the Hockhocking, erected a stockade styled Fort Gower, and awaited news of Lewis's brigade. The division of Lewis reached the mouth of the Great Kanawha River on October 6 and encamped at Point Pleasant. On the ninth the order came to Lewis from Dunmore to join him at the Indian towns near the Pickaway Plains. The sagacious Cornstalk, the Indian leader, divining the plan of the whites, resolved to hurl his entire force of one thousand warriors upon the sleeping army at Point Pleasant.

Of the several commands under Lewis one was composed of the Fincastle men, from the Holston, Clinch, Watauga, and New River settlements, under Col. William Christian. The Holston men were the advance guard of civilization at this period, the most daring settlers who had pushed farthest out into the western wilderness. In Col. Christian's command were five captains, Evan Shelby, Russell, Herbert, Draper, and Buford; and under Evan Shelby were his sons, Isaac, a lieutenant, and James; and James Robertson and Valentine Sevier, orderly sergeants.

The battle which ensued has been described in such accurate and graphic terms in a letter to John Shelby, by Isaac Shelby,

who played an important part in the fierce engagement, that his letter is given here in full:¹⁴

CAMP OPPOSITE TO THE MOUTH OF GREAT CANAWAY,

October 16th, 1774.

DR. UNCLE:—I Gladly imbrace this opportunity to Acquaint You that we are all three¹⁵ yet alive th(r)o Gods Mercies & I Sinceerly wish that this may find you & your Family in the Station of Health that we left you. I never had anything Worth Notice to quaint you with since I left you till now, the Express seems to be Hurrying that I Cant write you with the same Coolness & Deliberation as I would; we arrived at the mouth (of) Canaway Thursday 6th. Octr. and incampd on a fine piece of Ground with an intent to wait for the Governor & his party but hearing that he was going another way we Contented our selves to stay there a few days to rest the troops &c, when we looked upon our selves to be in safety till Monday morning the 10th Instant when two of our Compys. went out before day to hunt. To wit Val. Sevier & Jas Robison & Discovered a party of Indians; as I expect you will hear something of our Battle before you get this I have here stated this affair nearly to you.

For the Satisfaction of the people in your parts in this they have a true state of the Memorable Battle faught at the mouth of the Great Canaway on the 10th. Instant; Monday morning about half an Hour before Sunrise two of Capt. Russells Compy. Discovered a large party of Indians about a mile from Camp one of which men was killed the Other made his Escape & brought in his intilligence;¹⁶ in two or three minutes affter two of Capt Shelbys Compy. Came in and Confirmed the Account. Colo. Andrew Lewis being Informed thereof Immediately ordered Colo. Charles Lewis to take the Command of 150 men from Augusta and with him went Capt. Dickison. Capt. Harrison. Capt. Willson. Capt. Jno. Lewis from Augusta and Capt. Lockridge which made the first division. Colo. Fleming was also ordered to take the Command of one hundred & fifty more Consisting of Botetourt Finecastle and Bedford Troops Viz. Capt. Buford of Bedford Capt. Love of Botetourt Capt. Shelby & Capt. Russell of Finecastle which made the second Division. Colo. Lewis marched with his Division to the

¹⁴The copy here used is made directly from the original in the Draper MSS., 7 ZZ 2. The text used by Roosevelt (*Winning of the West*) is drawn from a manuscript copy of Shelby's letter, in the Campbell MSS.

¹⁵Captain Evan Shelby and his two sons, Isaac and James.

¹⁶These were Joseph Hughey, of Shelby's company, and James Mooney, of Russell's. The former was killed by a white renegade, Tavenor Ross, while the latter brought the news to camp. Mooney was a former neighbor of Daniel Boone, upon the Yadkin in North Carolina, and had accompanied him upon the disastrous Kentucky hunting expedition of 1769. He was killed at Point Pleasant. Cf. *Dunmore's War*, edited by Thwaites and Kellogg, 271-2.

Right some Distance up from the Ohio. Colo. Fleming with his Division up the banck of the Ohio to the left: Colo. Lewiss Division had not marchd. little more than a quarter of a mile from Camp; when about sunrise, an Attact was made on the front of his Division in a most Vigorous manner by the Uni. d tribes of Indians—Shawnees; Delewares; Mingoes; Taways,¹⁷ and of several Other Nations in Number not less than Eight Hundred and by many thaught to be a thousand; in this Heavy Attact Colonel Charles Lewis received a wound which soon after Caused his Death and several of his men fell in the Spott in fact the Augusta Division was forced to give way to the heavy fire of the Enemy. In about a second of a minute after the Attact on Colo. Lewiss Division the Enemy Engaged the Front of Colo. Flemings Division on the Ohio; and in a short time Colo. Fleming recd. two balls thro his left Arm and one thro his breast; and after animating the Captains and soldiers in a Calm manner to the pursuit of Victory returned to Camp, the loss of the Brave Colonels was Sensibly felt by the Officers in particular, But the Augusta troops being shortly Reinforced from Camp by Colonel Field with his Company together with Capt. M'Dowal, Capt. Mathews & Capt. Stuart from Augusta, Capt. John Lewis, Capt. Paulin Capt. Arbuckle & Capt. M'Clanahan from Botetourt, the Enemy no longer able to Maintain their Ground was forced to give way till they were in a Line with the troops left in action on Bancks of Ohio, by Colo Fleming in this precipitate retreat Colo. Field was killed, after which Capt. Shelby was ordered to take the Commd. During this time which was till after twelve of the Clock, the Action continued Extreemly Hott, the Close underwood many steep bancks & Loggs favoured their retreat, and the Bravest of their men made the use of themselves, whilst others were throwing their dead into the Ohio, and Carrying of(f) their wounded, after twelve the Action in a small degree abated but Continued sharp Enough till after one oClock Their Long retreat gave them a most advantages spot of ground; from whence it Appeared to the Officers so difficult to dislodge them; that it was thought most adviseable to stand as the line then was formed which was about a mile and a quarter in length, and had till then sustained a Constant and Equal weight of fire from wing to wing, it was till half an Hour of Sun sett they Continued firing on us which we returned to their Disadvantage at length Night Coming on they found a safe retreat. They had not the satisfaction of scalping any of our men save One or two straglers whom they Killed before the ingagement many of their dead they scalped rather than we should have them but our troops scalped upwards of twenty of those who were first killed; Its Beyond a Doubt their Loss in Number farr Exceeds ours, which is Considerable.

Field Officers killed Colo. Charles Lewis, and Colo. Jno. Fields, Field Officers wounded Colo. Willm. Fleming; Capts. killed John

¹⁷The Ottawas, a Northwestern tribe.

Murray Capt. Saml. Willson Capt. Robt. McClanahan, Capt. Jas. Ward, Captains wounded Thos Buford John Dickison & John Scidmore, Subbalterns Killed Lieutenant Hugh Allen, Ensign Mathew Brakin Ensign Cundiff, Subbalterns wounded, Lieut. Lard; Lieut. Vance Lieut. Goldman Lieut. Jas. Robison about 46 killed & about 80 wounded from this Sir you may Judge that we had a Very hard day its really Impossible for me to Express or you to Concieve Acclamations that we were under, sometimes, the Hidious Cries of the Enemy and the groans of our wound(ed) men lying around was Enough to shuder the stoutest hart its the general Opinion of the Officers that we shall soon have another Ingagement as we have now got Over into the Enemys Country; we Expect to meet the Governor about forty or fifty miles from here nothing will save us from another Battle Unless they Attack the Governors Party, five men that Came in Dadys (daddy's) Company were killed, I dont know that you were Acquainted with any of them Except March Williams who lived with Roger Top. Acquaint Mr. Carmack that his son was slightly wounded thro the shoulder and arm & that he is in a likely way of Recovery we leave him at mouth of Canaway & one Very Carefull hand to take Care of him; there is a garrison & three Hundred men left at that place with a surgeon to Heal the wounded we Expect to Return to the Garrison in about 16 days from the Shawny Towns.

I have nothing more Particular to Acquaint you with Concerning the Battle, as to the Country I cant now say much in praise of any that I have yet seen. Dady intended writing to you but did not know of the Express till the time was too short I have wrote to Mam(m)y tho not so fully as to you as I then expected the Express was Just going. we seem to be all in a Moving Posture Just going from this place so that I must Conclude wishing you health and prosperity till I see you and Your Family in the meantime I am yr truly Effectionate Friend & Humble Servt

ISAAC SHELBY.

To Mr. John Shelby Holstons River Fincastle County favr. by Mr. Benja. Gray.

This recital, written by the young Isaac Shelby, modestly omits any mention of the very important part which he himself played in the battle. Upon the death of Colonel John Field, Captain Evan Shelby was ordered to the command, and upon so doing he gave over the command of his own company to his son, Isaac, who, while only holding the rank of a lieutenant, acted in the capacity of a captain during about half the battle. Cornstalk, Logan, Red Eagle, and other brave chieftains, fighting fiercely, led in the attack; and above the terrible din and clangor of the battle could be heard the

deep, sonorous voice of Cornstalk encouraging his warriors with the injunction: "Be strong! Be strong!" The Indians led by Cornstalk adopted the tactics of making successive rushes upon the whites by which they expected to drive the frontiersmen into the two rivers, "like so many bullocks," as the chief later explained. So terrific were the onslaughts of the red men that the lines of the frontiersmen had frequently to fall back; but these withdrawals were only temporary, as they were skillfully reinforced each time and again moved steadily forward to the conflict. About half an hour before sunset General Lewis adopted the dangerous expedient of a flank movement. Captains Shelby, Matthews, Arbuckle, and Stuart were sent with a detachment up Crooked Creek, which runs into the Kanawha a little above Point Pleasant, with a view to securing a ridge in the rear of the enemy, from which their lines could be enfiladed. Concealed by the undergrowth along the bank they endeavored to execute this hazardous movement; and John Sawyers, an orderly sergeant, was dispatched by Isaac Shelby with a few men of the company to dislodge the Indians from their protected position. This fierce attack from an unsuspected quarter alarmed the Indians. Cornstalk leaped to the conclusion that this was the advance guard of Christian's party, and giving the alarm hurried his forces to the other side of Old Town Creek. The battle continued in a desultory way until sunset, and no decisive victory had been achieved. But Cornstalk and his warriors had had enough, and withdrew during the night.¹⁸

In this remarkable battle, the most stubborn and hotly contested fight ever made by the Indians against the English, it was the flanking movement of the detachment in which Isaac Shelby took a leading part that turned the tide and decided the victory for the whites. This battle, which brought about

¹⁸Compare the account given by Withers in his *Chronicles of Border Warfare*, edited and annotated by R. G. Thwaites; Cincinnati, 1908. See also Stuart's *Narrative*, in *Virginia Historical Collections*, vol. I. The most exhaustive account of the entire campaign is embodied in *Dunmore's War*, edited by Thwaites and Kellogg, Madison, 1905. An excellent map is found in Avery's *History of the United States*, vol. 5, p. 183.

an early conclusion of peace, was from this standpoint completely decisive in character; and it should not be forgotten that Isaac Shelby, the twenty-four year old captain, thus played an important role in this thrilling scene of warfare preliminary to the great drama of the Revolution. "This action," comments Isaac Shelby in his *Autobiography*, "is known to be the hardest ever fought with the Indians and in its consequences was of the greatest importance as it was fought while the first Congress was sitting at Philadelphia, and so completely were the savages chastised, particularly the Shawnees and Delawares (the two most formidable tribes) that they could not be induced by British agents among them, neither to the North nor South, to commence hostilities against the United States before July, 1776, in which time the frontiers had become considerably stronger and the settlement of Kentucky had commenced."

Indeed it was this victory of the Great Kanawha, with its temporary subjugation of the savages, which made possible Colonel Richard Henderson's gallant advance into Kentucky in March-April, 1775, ultimately eventuating in the acquisition of Kentucky and the vast trans-Alleghany region to the territory of the United States. Shelby's comment is significant in its emphasis, as he was present at the "Great Treaty" at the Sycamore Shoals of the Watauga in March, 1775, and a little later was serving as surveyor in the employ of the Transylvania Company. Without the impetus given to the colonization of the trans-Alleghany region by Richard Henderson and the Transylvania Company, there would have been no bulwark on the west against the incursions of savages from that quarter during the Revolution; and at the conclusion of peace in 1783, the western boundary of the Confederation of States would doubtless have been the Alleghany Mountains and not the Mississippi River. Isaac Shelby was a hero of the first battle preluding the mighty conflict which was ultimately to end victoriously at Yorktown.¹⁹

¹⁹Cf. Hale's *Trans-Alleghany Pioneers*, Cincinnati, 1886, ch. XXXII. Also Todd's *Life of Shelby*, in National Portrait Gallery, I, 1835.

At the close of the campaign, if not immediately following the battle, a small palisaded rectangle, about eighty yards long, with block houses at two of its corners, was erected at Point Pleasant by order of Lord Dunmore. This stockade, entitled Fort Blair, was strongly garrisoned, and the chief command was given to that splendid border fighter, Captain William Russell. The young Isaac Shelby, in recognition of his valued services in the recent bloody battle, was made second in command.²⁰ It was here, says tradition, that the Indian chief, Cornstalk, came to shake the hand of the young paleface brave, Isaac Shelby, who had led the strategic flank movement which stampeded his army.²¹

The following interesting letter, addressed to "Mr. Isaac Shelby, Holston," explains the state of affairs which then existed in that region, and the movements being set on foot. It is a double letter, for at the end of Col. William Christian's letter to Isaac Shelby, which Shelby had forwarded to Colo. William Russell, the latter wrote a supplementary letter, and returned the whole to Isaac Shelby.

DUNKARD BOTTOM, February 18, 1775.

DEAR SIR:—I have lately been at Williamsburg, and applied to his Excellency the Governor to know what was to be done with the garrison at point pleasant. His Lordship has been disappointed in getting the consent of the Assembly for the continuance of the Company, but he desired me to acquaint Captain Russell that he was to return to his post and remain there until the treaty with the Indians, which is to be at Fort Dunmore in may, or until further orders. I think it will be in june before that treaty is finished & also that his Lordship wishes that the garrison could be kept(?) up from a desire he has to serve the Frontiers. I have wrote to Captain Russell to come down in order to take the charge of one of the Shawnee Hostages who was sent up with me. The design of sending him is to satisfy the Indians

²⁰Isaac Shelby's *Autobiography*. Cf. also *Dunmore's War*, p. 310 n; Chas. S. Todd's *Life of Shelby*, National Portrait Gallery, vol. I. Thwaites says that General Lewis, who reached Point Pleasant on October 28, left there a garrison of fifty men under Captain Russell. Cf. Withers's *Chronicles of Border Warfare*, 1908, p. 176n.

²¹*Southern Heroism in Decisive Battles for American Independence*, by Charles Henry Todd, in *Journal of American History*, vol. II, No. 2.

of our friendly intentions, in contradiction to several reports spread among them by pensilvania Traders intimating that we designed falling on them next spring. The reports it was feared might set on foot a general confederacy among the Shawnee & their neighbors.

I expect Captain Russell will contrive to be as far as McGavocks the 7th. of March on his way to the post and I now write to you thinking it may reach you much sooner than Captain Russell could send to you, thereby to give you more time to prepare for joining him.

I saw Jno. Douglass this evening & he thinks that near 50 men of those now on duty will agree to continue & perhaps that will be enough. If you get this letter quickly would it not be well for you to ride over and consult with the Captain what is to be done. It is certain that you or him must set of (off) soon with the Indian, or I think it may (mutilated) to come the time I have mentioned.

A convention of delegates is to be held at Richmond the 20 of March to consist of two members from each county & corporation, what is to be the consequence of the present disputes is yet uncertain, but nothing pacifick is expected. The lowland people are generally arming and preparing themselves.

Please to give my compliments to your Father & tell him that it is most probable that the Committee will meet the day of our Election which is to be the 7 of March & that if he can make it convenient he may as well come up.

I am Sir Your friend & servant,

WM CHRISTIAN

On the next sheet occurs the following, in the handwriting of William Russell:

MY DEAR SIR:

I just Recd. this letter of yours and one of my own. It seems Captain Morgan of the Shawanees is sent up for us, to guard out to the Shawanees Towns upon Business of Importance, therefore request your goodness to meet me on Sunday next at Mr. Souths about Night in order to go together to McGavocks against Tuesday next to a meeting of the Committee either to Proceed from there or to return by my House, if so, you can return Home (mutilated) I start, I am Dear Sir.

Your most obedt Humble

Servt

W. RUSSELL

Tuesday the 27th, 1775.

To Mr. Isaac Shelby Holston.

When Daniel Boone and his friend, Captain William Russell, the leading pioneer in the Clinch Valley, at the head of a party of emigrants, attempted their settlement of Kentucky in

1773, they were driven back by the Indians on September 25, and abandoned the enterprise. For years, in fact since 1764, Daniel Boone had been making exploring expeditions to the westward in the interest of the land company known as Richard Henderson and Company.²² Another explorer for Richard Henderson, who later made hunting tours and explorations in Kentucky, was Henry Skaggs, who as early as 1765 examined the lower Cumberland region as the representative of Richard Henderson and Company and established his station near the present site of Goodletsville, in Davidson County, Tennessee.²³ With the Western country thoroughly disturbed and infested with bands of hostile red men, during 1773 and 1774, Col. Henderson recognized the signal unwisdom of attempting a western settlement on an extended scale. It was Daniel Boone's impatience to reach the West and his determination to settle there, regardless of legal right and without securing the title by purchase from the Cherokees, which led to his disastrous setback at Walden's Ridge in 1773. This entire episode exposes Boone's inefficiency as an executive and his inability to carry through plans made on a large scale. It was not until the remarkable legal mind of Judge Henderson and his rare executive ability were applied to the vast and complex project of western colonization that it was carried through to a successful termination.

Two momentous circumstances now intervened to make possible the great western venture, upon which Judge Henderson, during a decade and more, had staked all his hopes. Correspondence with the highest legal authorities in England assured Judge Henderson that despite the Royal Proclamation in 1763 he would be entirely within his rights, as a British subject, to purchase the western lands from the Cherokees and secure authentic title thereto. The victory of the backwoodsmen over the red men at the Battle of the Great Kan-

²²Compare the author's *The Creative Forces in Westward Expansion: Henderson and Boone*, in the American Historical Review, October, 1914.

²³Albright's *Early History of Middle Tennessee*, Nashville, 1909, p. 23.

which greatly reduced the dangers incident to a visit to the Kentucky wilderness, and in 1775 warranted the bold venture which, in 1773, Boone, upon his own responsibility alone, had found so disastrous. Following the Battle of the Great Kanawha, Judge Henderson, accompanied by his friend and neighbor, Colonel Nathaniel Hart, visited the Indians at their towns and, upon inquiry, learned that the Cherokees were disposed to sell their claims to the Kentucky territory. The agreement was made to meet the entire tribe of the Cherokees in Treaty Council at the Sycamore Shoals, on Watauga River, early in the next year. On their return to the settlements Judge Henderson and Colonel Hart were accompanied by the Little Carpenter, a wise old Indian Chief, and a young buck and his squaw, as delegates to see that proper goods were purchased for the proposed barter. These goods were purchased in December, 1774, at Cross Creek, near Fayetteville, North Carolina, and forwarded by wagons to Watauga.

Since his repulse at Walden's Ridge, in September, 1773, when the sons of both Russell and himself had been slaughtered by Indians, Boone, together with his family, had been residing in a cabin upon the farm of Captain David Gass, seven or eight miles from Russell's, upon Clinch River. He was now summoned to Watauga, instructed to collect the entire tribe of Cherokee Indians and bring them in to the treaty ground. The news of the purposes of the Transylvania Company became public property when Judge Henderson and his associates, in January, 1775, issued their "Proposals for the Settlement of Western Lands," which, in the form of broadsides, were distributed widely along the fringe of settlements upon the Indian border line. News of the proposed treaty quickly reached young Isaac Shelby at Fort Blair; and his pioneering instinct unerringly drew him to the focus of interest, the treaty ground. We are fortunate in having handed down to us, from that early time, a description of the treaty on the part of the young Isaac Shelby, who was an eye-witness. Following the confiscation of the Transylvania Company's claims by the State of Virginia, a series of extended investiga-

tions in regard to the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals were made by order of the Virginia Legislature. The points that were in great need of being settled were: First, whether the deponents were financially interested in lands under the Transylvania Company; second, whether the treaty was conducted with entire fairness; and third, whether the deeds taken by the Transylvania Company were identical, in regard to the metes and bounds of the territory purchased, with the verbal statement of the negotiators of the treaty, made to the Cherokees. As it was subsequently proven, as a result of the investigations of the Virginia Commissioners, that the treaty was conducted with scrupulous fairness by Judge Henderson and his partners, it is interesting to read the following extract from the deposition sworn to on December 3, 1777, before Edmund Randolph and Jo. Prentiss, by Isaac Shelby:

"That in March, 1775, this Deponent was present at a Treaty held at Wattauga between the said Henderson and the Cherokee Indians: that the deponent then heard the said Henderson call the Indians, when the deed by which the said Henderson now claims was going to be signed, and declared that they would attend to what was going to be done: that the deponent believes the courses in the said Deed contained, to be the very courses which the said Henderson read therefrom to the Indians and were interpreted to them. That the said Henderson took the said Deed from among several others lying on a table, all of which appeared to the Deponent to be of the same tenor with that which he read—That at the time of this Treaty, one Read who was there and suspected that the said Henderson intended to purchase some lands which he himself had his Eyes on, desired the said Deed to be read before it was signed, which was accordingly done, and the said Read objected not thereto."

It was doubtless at some time during the course of the treaty—a treaty universally conceded to have been unparalleled for honesty and fair dealing with the Indians on the part of the whites—that Judge Henderson, attracted by the sterling qualities of the young Shelby and by his manifest

eagerness to connect himself with Henderson's plans of colonization, secured the promise of his services in the future, following the expiration of his term of enlistment, as surveyor for the Transylvania Company. The garrison of Fort Blair was not disbanded until July, 1775; and immediately Shelby journeyed to Kentucky and engaged in the business of land surveyor for the proprietors of the Transylvania Company, who had established a regular land office as the result of their purchase of the Kentucky area from the Cherokees. Here he remained for nearly twelve months, surveying numerous tracts of land for the Transylvania proprietors, and likewise making a number of entries of land for himself in Judge Henderson's land office.²⁴ His health finally became impaired, owing to continued exposure to wet and cold, combined with the frequent necessity for going without either bread or salt. On this account he was compelled to return to the settlements on Holston.

In July, 1776, during his absence in Kentucky, Shelby was appointed Captain of a minute company by the Committee of Safety in Virginia. As described by Shelby this was "a species of troops organized for the first emergency of the War of the Revolution, which, however, was not called into actual service from the extreme frontier on which he (Shelby) lived." On December 6th of this year, the General Assembly of Virginia passed an act dividing the county of Fincastle into three distinct counties, to-wit: Montgomery, Washington, and Kentucky. In this act the bounds of Washington County were defined as follows:

"That all that part of said county of Fincastle included in the lines beginning at the Cumberland Mountains where the line of Kentucky county intersects the North Carolina (now Tennessee) line; thence to the east along the said Carolina line to the top of Iron mountain; thence along the same east-

²⁴In his deposition, referred to above, Isaac Shelby stated: "This Deponent has made several Entries for lands in Mr. Henderson's Office, but does not conceive himself to be in any manner interested in the Event of the dispute, between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the said Henderson." *Cal. Va. State Papers*, I, 296-7.

erly to the source of the South Fork of the Holston river; thence northwardly along the highest part of the highlands, ridges, and mountains that divide the waters of the Tennessee from those of the Great Kanawha to the most easterly source of Clinch River; thence westwardly along the top of the mountain that divides the waters of the Clinch river from those of the Great Kanawha and Sandy Creek to the line of Kentucky county and thence along the same to the beginning, shall be one other distinct county and called and known by the name of Washington."

The eastern boundary of Washington County as thus defined was altered by Act of the General Assembly at its session in the month of May, 1777, as follows:

"Beginning at a ford on Holston river, next above Captain John Campbells, at the Royal Oak, and running from thence a due south course to the dividing line between the States of Virginia and North Carolina; and from the ford aforesaid to the westerly end of Morris's Knob, about three miles above Maiden Spring on Clinch, and from thence, by a line to be drawn due north, until it shall intersect the waters of the Great Sandy river."²⁵

The officers of the county commissioned by Governor Patrick Henry on the 21st day of December, 1776, were as follows: James Dysart, sheriff; Arthur Campbell, county lieutenant; Evan Shelby, Colonel; William Campbell, lieutenant-colonel; and Daniel Smith, Major. Among the names of those on the same day commissioned justices of the peace was that of Evan Shelby. The first court assembled at Black's Fort (now Abingdon) on the last Tuesday in January, 1777. On the second day of the court, being the 29th of January, Isaac Shelby was recommended, with others, to be added to the Commission of Peace for the county, and was accordingly commissioned. It may be interesting to record that, when, on February 26, 1777, the court recommended to the Governor of Virginia the militia officers for Washington County, both

²⁵Hening's *Statutes*, 1776.

John Shelby, Sr., and James Shelby were duly commissioned with the rank of Captain. During some portion of this time Isaac Shelby was busily engaged in acting as commissary of supplies, a post to which he was appointed by Governor Henry, for a large body of militia posted at several garrisons for the purpose of guarding the back settlements. Of his activity we have evidence in the great distances which he travelled. For instance, in September of this year, we find him at Harrodsburgh, in Kentucky, swapping horses with the future brilliant and meteoric figure, the conqueror of the Northwest. In Clark's diary one finds the following terse entry:

"Harrodsburgh, September 29.—Bought a horse, price £12; swapped with I. Shelby, boot £10."

I have often wondered who got the "boot"—the phlegmatic Welshman or the mercurial Virginian!

During this same year, Isaac Shelby was likewise instructed to lay in supplies for a grand treaty, to be held at the Long Island of Holston River, in June and July, with the tribe of Cherokee Indians.

"These supplies could not possibly be obtained nearer than Staunton, a distance of near three hundred miles," says Shelby, writing in the third person, "but by the most indefatigable perseverance (one of the most prominent traits in his character) he accomplished it to the satisfaction of his country."

It is necessary for us to recall that in 1772 Colonel John Donelson, of Pittsylvania County, acting as commissioner for Virginia, had established with the Cherokees the western boundary line of that colony, viz: a course running in a direct line from a point six miles east of the Holston River toward the mouth of the Great Kanawha River, until the line struck the Kentucky River, and thence along that river to its junction with the Ohio.²⁶

²⁶A price was agreed upon and promised, but not then paid, for the large section of Kentucky north and east of the Kentucky river thus alienated to Virginia. Considerable doubt still prevails as to whether the price promised by Donelson was ever paid over to the Cherokees.

In 1777 Governor Henry, of Virginia, notified Governor Caswell, of North Carolina, of a treaty to be had with the Cherokees. The object of Virginia was to alter the boundary line as run by Colonel Donelson, and to have the road to and through the Cumberland Gap, the gateway to Kentucky, included in the cession. The commissioners chosen to represent Virginia were Col. William Preston, Col. Evan Shelby, and Col. William Christian, or any two of them. The commissioners chosen to represent North Carolina were Col. Waightstill Avery, Col. William Sharpe, Col. Robert Lanier, and Colonel Joseph Winston. The treaty lasted from the 26th of June until the 20th of July, when it was concluded to the satisfaction of both Virginia and North Carolina. The line established by Donelson in 1772 was not materially altered; but the alteration involved the lands claimed by the Transylvania Company under their purchase from the Cherokees in March, 1775. For reasons of policy and because of lack of instructions from their respective governments the commissioners refused to take account of the memorial presented by Judge Henderson and his associates. The treacherous and wily Indian Chiefs characteristically sought to convince the commissioners that Judge Henderson had treated them hardly in maintaining the provisions of the "Great Treaty" of 1775; but the deposition of Isaac Shelby (already quoted from in part) is conclusive on the point:

"That being present at the late Treaty at Long Island, this deponent remembers to have heard Occunostoto or the Tassel (but which he does not recollect) say that ever since he had signed the paper to Mr. Henderson, he was afraid to sign one, and that Mr. Henderson ever since he had signed the Paper, deprived him of the privilege of catching even Craw fish on the land. That this deponent was present at the time of signing the said Deed at Wattauga, when everything was conducted fairly on the part of the said Henderson, who after signing, desired the Indians to go and take the goods which he designed for them."²⁷

²⁷*Cal. Va. State Papers*, I.

This was a memorable gathering of the leading pioneer figures of the day. Revolution was the burning topic of discussion, and the spirit of independence, so long held in leash, found universal expression. In the characteristic phraseology of the patriotic Putnam:

"Here were Robertson and Sevier, Boone and Bledsoe, Shelby, Henderson, Hart and others—all men of worth, of nerve, of enterprise—'men who feared God, but obeyed no earthly king.'

"They talked freely of the Declaration of Independence, as it had been announced at Mecklenburg, in North Carolina, by Patrick Henry and the Virginians, and by the Continental Congress just twelve months before. They did not think of giving notoriety out there to the Fourth of July; but they all heartily concurred in the renunciation of allegiance to the King of Great Britain, and in the resolution to make 'these States free and independent.'"²⁸

In 1778, as we learn from Shelby's account, he was still engaged in the commissary department to provide supplies for the Continental Army, and also for a formidable expedition by the way of Pittsburg against the Northwestern Indians. This was the expedition of General McIntosh against the Ohio Indians. On Dec. 12, 1778, the Virginia Council issued instructions to John Montgomery "to put on Foot the recruiting of men to reinforce Colo. Clarke at the Illinois and to push it on with all possible expedition."²⁹

George Rogers Clark was in desperate straits for men and supplies in view of the fact that General McIntosh's proposed expedition from Fort Pitt against Detroit had to be abandoned. John Montgomery was given a very free hand in recruiting for Clark; and the following entry shows to what extent Isaac Shelby was relied upon to fit out with supplies various expeditions along the frontier:

As soon as the state of Affairs in the recruiting business will permit you are to go to the Illinois Country and join Colo Clarke. I need

²⁸*History of Middle Tennessee*, 617.

²⁹*Clarks MSS.*, Va. State Archives.

not tell you how necessary the greatest possible dispatch is to the good of the service in which you are engaged. Our party at Illinois may be lost together with the present favorable disposition of the French & Indians there unless every moment is improved for their preservation & no future opportunity if the present is lost can ever be expected so favorable to the interest of the Commonwealth. I therefore urge it on you to exert yourself to the utmost to lose not a moment to forward the great work you have in hand & to conquer every difficulty in your way arising from inclement season, great distances, want of many necessaries, opposition from enemies & others I cant enumerate but must confide in your virtue to guard against and surmount. Capt Isaac Shelby it is desired may purchase the boats but if he cant do it you must get some other person

You receive 10000 £ Cash for Col: Clarke's corps which you are to deliver him except 200 £ for Capt Shelby to build the boats & what other incidental expences happen necessarily on your way which are to come out of that Sum.

I am &c.

A. BLAIR C C30

In the beginning of the year 1779 Isaac Shelby was appointed by Governor Henry of Virginia to furnish supplies for a strong campaign against the Chickamauga Indians. Owing to the poverty of the treasury, not one cent could be advanced by the government and the whole expense of the supplies and the transportation was sustained by his own individual credit. In the spring of that year he was elected a member of the Virginia Legislature from Washington County, for at that time it was supposed his residence was within the chartered limits of North Carolina.

Following the Treaty of Long Island in 1777, already spoken of, it was apparent to the Commissioners from North Carolina that the settlements, having projected so far westward of the point to which the dividing line had been run, it was highly desirable that the line be extended. In a letter from Waightstill Avery and William Sharpe, to Governor Caswell, August 7, 1777, they express the conviction that "the extension of the line between the two States is now become an object worthy the immediate attention of government—it would be the means of preventing many great dis-

³⁰*Clark Papers*, 83.

putes.”³¹ In 1778 the Assembly of Virginia and, a little later, the Assembly of North Carolina, passed similar acts for extending and marking the boundary. The acting Commissioners for North Carolina were Col. Richard Henderson, his cousin, Col. John Williams, of Granville County, and Captain William Bailey Smith. The Commissioners representing Virginia were Dr. Thomas Walker, who had made the remarkable exploration of Kentucky in 1750, and Daniel Smith, the map maker, who was afterwards promoted for his services along the Cumberland. The task of running the boundary line was regarded as a dangerous one, on account of the hostile intentions of the Indians; and each state commissioned a detachment to guard the Commissioners while they were engaged in the arduous enterprise. The Virginia Commission was provided with a military escort of twenty-five men, under the command of Isaac Shelby, commissioned a Major for that purpose by Governor Jefferson.³² As the result of the extension of the boundary line, the county of Sullivan was erected, and Isaac Shelby, who had recently served in the Virginia Legislature and received a military commission from Governor Jefferson, was appointed Colonel Commandant of this new county of Sullivan.

In 1779 a court of commissioners with plenary powers was created by the commonwealth of Virginia to adjudicate without appeal upon the incipient land titles of the country. William Fleming, Edmund Lyne, James Barbour, and Stephen Trigg, citizens of Virginia but not of the county of Kentucky, were appointed as commissioners. This court had alternate sessions at St. Asaph, Harrodsburg, Boonesborough, the Falls of the Ohio, and Bryan's Station. The court was opened at St. Asaph on October 13, 1779; and at Harrodsburg on February 26, 1780, the court announced that its

³¹*State Records of North Carolina*, vol. II, pp. 567-8. Cf. also Summers *S. W. Virginia*, pp. 695-6.

³²Cf. *Journal of Daniel Smith*, edited by St. George L. Sioussat, *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, March, 1915; *Kentucky-Tennessee Boundary Line*, by J. Stoddart Johnston, *Register Ky. State Hist'l. Soc'y.* Sept., 1908.

powers had elapsed and accordingly adjourned *sine die*. Thousands of claims, of various kinds, were granted by the court during its existence. It was quite fitting, and in itself an event worthy of commemoration, that the first claim presented for adjudication was that of Isaac Shelby, among the first on the ground as surveyor under Henderson and Company, and later to become the first governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The entry was as follows:

“Captain John Logan for and in behalf of Isaac Shelby this day produced a claim, and making a Crop of Corn for the same in the year 1778 Lying on a branch that heads at the Knob Lick & about a mile and a half or two Miles from the said Lick a southeasterly course, proof being made satisfactory to the court they are of Opinion that the said Shelby has a right to a settlement & Preemption according to law and that certificates issue for the same.”³³

The amount of land thus granted was fourteen hundred acres; prior to this time it would seem, Isaac Shelby had perfected no claims for western lands. It is worthy of note that in his deposition before Edmund Randolph and Jo. Prentiss, on December 3, 1777, regarding the Transylvania lands, Isaac Shelby states he had “made several entries for lands in Mr. Henderson’s office, but does not consider himself to be in any manner interested in the Event of the dispute, between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the said Henderson.”³⁴ This place, Knob Lick, in what is now Lincoln County, Kentucky, was settled in 1776 by Isaac Shelby while a surveyor under Henderson and Company. In the early spring of 1783, it may be remarked in passing, Shelby built his house upon the very spot where he had camped in 1776, on the tract of land he had preëmpted, and upon which he planted a crop of corn, which he left to be cultivated by a tenant, when he himself went to Williamsburg, then the Capital of Virginia, for his appointment by Governor Patrick Henry as a Captain

³³For this copy I am indebted to Judge Samuel M. Wilson, of Lexington, Ky.

³⁴*Cal. Va. State Papers*, I, pp. 296-7.

of the Provisional Army.³⁵ Upon this preëmption in August, 1786, Governor Shelby built the first stone house ever erected in Kentucky. This was the famous residence known as "Traveler's Rest." It is recorded that the late Col. Nathaniel Hart, of Woodford County, used to say that when it was reported that Col. Shelby had found stone suitable for building purposes, he received many letters from various portions of the United States inquiring if it could possibly be there; as well as many visits to verify the fact, some from as great a distance as Mason County. The real scarcity of stone then seems almost incredible now—in view of the unlimited supply visible on all sides; but was doubtless due to the luxurious growth of cane, and to the heavy foliage which so thoroughly covered the ground when it fell.³⁶

During the summer of 1780, while he was locating and securing his claims made under the Transylvania Company, Shelby with his company spent some time among the Northwestern Indians—Piankeshaws, Pottawattamies, and Miamis. In his *Memoir*, George Rogers Clark makes the following amusing entry:

"The ensuing summer (1780), Captain I. Shelby, with his own company only, lay for a considerable time in the heart of their (the Indians') country, and was treated in the most friendly manner by all the natives that he saw, and was frequently invited by them to join and plunder what was called 'the King's Pasture at Detroit.' What they meant was to go and steal horses from that settlement."³⁷

What a lark that would have been for the staid and phlegmatic Shelby!

While still in Kentucky, in the summer of 1780, Shelby received intelligence (June 16) of the surrender of Charleston and the loss of the army. He made haste to return home (the first part of July), as he himself says, "determined to enter the service of his country, until her independence was

³⁵Draper's *Kings Mountain*, 412; Shelby's *Autobiography*.

³⁶Collins' *History of Kentucky* (1882), I, 514.

³⁷English's *Conquest of the Northwest*, I, 549.

secured; for he could not remain a cool spectator of a conquest in which his dearest rights and interests were at stake." The story of the events which immediately succeeded this determination is best told in his own words:

"On his arrival in Sullivan he joined a requisition from General Charles McDowell, ordering him to furnish all the aid in his power, to assist in giving a check to the enemy, who had overrun the two Southern States and were then on the border of North Carolina. Col. Shelby assembled the Militia of his County, called upon them to volunteer their services for a short period on that interesting occasion, and marched in a very few days with near two hundred mounted riflemen across the Alleghany Mountain.

"Shortly after his arrival at McDowell's camp the army moved to near the Cherokee Ford of Broad River, from whence Col. Shelby and Lieut. Col. Clark of Georgia were detached with five hundred mounted men³⁸ to attack a British Fort, about twenty miles to the South, which was garrisoned principally by Loyalists. Col. Shelby left McDowell's camp late in the evening and arrived at the enemies Post just after daylight the next morning³⁹ which he found to be enclosed by a strong Abbatus (abatis), and everything within, indicating resistance. He however made a peremptory demand of a surrender, when Capt. Patrick Moor, who commanded returned for answer that he would defend the Post to the last extremity.⁴⁰ Our lines were then drawn to within a distance of about two hundred yards around the Garrison, with a determination to storm it. He however sent a messenger a second time to demand a surrender before he would proceed to extremities. To this the enemy agreed to give up the Post, on their being Paroled not to serve again during the war; or until they were regularly exchanged. In it were found ninety-

³⁸Shelby's figures are never conspicuous for accuracy. The detachment in this instance consisted of some six hundred horsemen.

³⁹Sunday, July 30. Cf. Allaire's Diary.

⁴⁰The person sent in to demand the surrender of the post was Captain William Cocke, who made the daring ride for Col. Richard Henderson in April, 1775.

two Loyalists, with one British subbolten (subaltern) officer left there to discipline them, also two hundred and fifty stand of arms, well charged with ball and buckshot and well disposed of at the different port holes. This was a strong post built for defense in the Cherokee war of '76 and stood on a branch of a small river called Pacolet.

"Shortly after this affair and his return to McDowell's camp Shelby and Clark were again detached with six hundred mounted men to watch the movements of the Enemy, and if possible to cut up his foraging parties. Ferguson who commanded the Enemy about two thousand five hundred strong,⁴¹ composed of British and Tories, with a small squadron of British Horse, was an officer of great enterprise and although only a Major in the British line, was a Brigadier General in the royal militia establishment made by the enemy after he had overrun South Carolina, and esteemed the most distinguished partisan officer belonging to the British army. He made several attempts to surprise Col. Shelby, but his designs were always baffled. On the first⁴² of August however, his advance, about six or seven hundred strong, came up with the American Commander at a place he had chosen to fight him, called Cedar Spring; when a sharp conflict ensued which lasted about half an hour; when Ferguson came up with his whole force. The Americans then retreated, carrying off the field of battle about twenty prisoners and two British Subalterns.⁴³ Their killed was not ascertained. The Americans lost eight killed and upwards of thirty wounded, mostly with the sabre officers. The Enemy made great efforts for several miles to regain the prisoners, but by forming frequently on advantageous ground apparently to give them battle the enemy were retarded in their pursuit, so that the prisoners were pushed out of their reach. General McDowell

⁴¹Shelby's original statement in Haywood's *Tennessee* is that the enemy numbered about two thousand; it may have been as small a number as eighteen hundred.

⁴²The date is correctly given in Allaire's *Diary* as August eighth.

⁴³In Todd's Memoir of Shelby the number of prisoners taken is increased from twenty to fifty.

having by some means got information that a party from four to six hundred Loyalists were encamped near Musgrove's Mill, on the South Side of the Enoree River, about forty miles distant; he again detached Col. Shelby, Williams and Clark with about seven hundred horsemen,⁴⁴ to surprise and disperse them. Ferguson with his whole force was encamped at that time on their most direct route. The American commanders took up their line of march from Smith's Ford on Broad river (where McDowell's army was then encamped) just at sundown on the evening of the 18th⁴⁵ August 1780—marched through the woods till after dark, and then took a road leaving Ferguson's camp about three miles to the left. They rode very hard all night, the greatest part of the way in a fast travelling gait, and just at the dawn of day, about half a mile from the Enemy's camp, met a strong patrol party, a short skirmish ensued, and several of them were killed. At that juncture a countryman living immediately at the spot, came up and informed, that the enemy had been reinforced the evening before, with six hundred regular troops (the Queens American regiment from New York) under Col. Ennes, destined to reinforce Ferguson's army; and the circumstances attending this information were so minute and particular, that no doubt was entertained of its truth although the man was a Tory.⁴⁶ To march on and attack the enemy then seemed improper. To attempt an escape from the enemy in the rear appeared improbable, broke down as were the Americans and their horses; for it was well known to them that the enemy could mount six or seven hundred infantry with horses of the Loyalists. They instantly determined to

⁴⁴It is probable that the American forces numbered only from two hundred and fifty to three hundred and fifty. Probably the British originally numbered approximately six hundred.

⁴⁵The weight of authority favors the seventeenth, the battle occurring on the eighteenth.

⁴⁶It is probable that this statement with respect to the number of British was a considerable exaggeration. Gov. Abner Nash, writing Sept. 10, 1780, gives Williams' force as two hundred and the British as four hundred. The name of the commander of the British reinforcement was Innes, not Ennes.

form a breastwork of old logs and brush near the spot, and make the best defense in their power; for by this time the drums and bugle horns of the enemy were distinctly heard in their camp on the high ground across the river, and soon indicated their movements. Captain Inman was sent with twenty-five men, to meet the enemy and skirmish with them, so soon as they crossed the Enoree River Capt. Inman was ordered to fire on them, and retreat according to his own discretion. This strategem (which was the suggestion of the Capt. himself) drew the enemy forward in disorder, believing they had driven our whole party; and when they came up within seventy yards a most destructive fire commenced from our Riflemen who lay concealed behind their breastwork of pine logs and brush, which was near half a mile long.⁴⁷ It was one whole hour before the enemy could force our Riflemen from their slender breastwork. Just as they began to give way in some parts, Col. Ennes was badly wounded; and all the other British officers except one being previously killed or wounded; and Capt. Hawsey a considerable leader among the Loyalists being shot down; the whole of the enemy's line began to give way, the Americans pursued them close, and beat them across the river with slaughter.⁴⁸ In this pursuit Capt. Inman was killed bravely fighting the enemy hand to hand. In this action Col. Shelby commanded the right wing, Clark the left and Williams the center. The Americans returned to their horses and mounted with a determination to be in Ninety-Six (at that time a weak British Post) before night; it being less than thirty miles distant according to information then received. At that moment an express from Gen'l McDowell (one Francis Jones) came up in great haste with a short letter in his hand from Governor Caswell, dated on the battle ground near Camden apprising McDowell of

⁴⁷The Americans had been cautioned to reserve their fire "till they could see the buttons on the enemies' clothes."

⁴⁸William Smith of Watauga, whose bullet had struck down Innes, exultantly exclaimed: "I've killed their commander," whereupon Shelby "rallied his men who raised a regular frontier Indian yell and rushed furiously upon the enemy, who were gradually forced back before the exasperated riflemen." Cf. Draper's *Kings Mountain*, 108.

the defeat of the American grand army under Gen'l Gates, on the 16th near that place, advising him to get out of the way, for that army would no doubt endeavor to improve their victory to the greatest advantage by cutting up all the small corps of the American armies within their reach. It was fortunate that Col. Shelby had some knowledge of Governor Caswell's handwriting and knew what reliance to place upon it; but how to avoid the enemy in his rear, broke down with fatigue as his men and horses were, with upwards of two hundred prisoners (mostly British) taken in the action—was a difficult task. The loss in killed of the enemy was not ascertained owing to the sudden manner in which the Americans were obliged to leave the battle ground, but must have been very great, from the incessant fire that was poured upon them by our Riflemen for considerably more than an hour. Our loss did not exceed nine or ten, as the enemy generally overshot the breast-work.⁴⁹ The prisoners were distributed amongst the companies, so as to make about one to every three men, who carried them alternately on horseback directly towards the mountains. We continued our march all that day, the night following and the next day until late in the evening, without ever stopping to refresh.⁵⁰ This long and rapid retreat saved the Americans, for it is a fact that, De Peyster second in command of Ferguson's army, pursued them with seven hundred mounted men to the place where they had foraged and refreshed themselves in the evening of the second day after the action; and having arrived there half an hour after our departure, at dusk, so broke down by excessive fatigue in hot weather, he gave up the chase.⁵¹ Having seen the party and

⁴⁹Draper says: "four killed and eight or nine wounded." The British loss, according to the same authority, was eighty-three killed, about ninety wounded, and seventy prisoners—a total of two hundred and twenty-three out of between four hundred to five hundred—an unusually high percentage of loss.

⁵⁰This is an admirable illustration of the indomitable persistence and strenuous energy of Shelby.

⁵¹Note B at end of Shelby's Ms. is as follows: "This information Col. Shelby received from De Peyster himself after he was captured at Kings Mountain in October following." Draper pronounces this an error on the authority of Fanning, the Tory annalist, who asserts that on the night after the battle De Peyster accompanied him from Musgrove's Mill to Ninety Six.

the prisoners out of all danger Col. Shelby retreated over the Western waters with his followers, and left the prisoners with Clark and Williams to carry them on to some place of safety in Virginia. So great was the panic after Gen'l Gates' defeat, and Gen. Sumpter's disaster, that McDowell's whole army broke. Some retreated west of the mountains, and others went to the North. This action which lasted one hour and a half and fought so shortly after the defeat of our grand army, is scarcely known in the history of the Revolution.⁵² Ferguson too, made a hard push with his main army to intercept and retake the prisoners before they could reach the mountains, but finding his efforts vain, he took post at a place called Gilbert Town."

News of the disastrous reverse to General Gates and the American army at Camden, on August 16, 1780, and of the defeat of General Sumter which followed shortly afterwards, produced the immediate effect of spreading universal consternation and alarm. The various bodies of Whig Militia were forced to scatter in all directions. From his post at Gilbert Town, Ferguson paroled a prisoner, one Samuel Philips, a distant relation of Isaac Shelby's, and "instructed him to inform the officers on the Western waters, that if they did not desist from their opposition to the British arms, and take protection under his standard, he would march his army over the mountains, and lay their army waste with fire and sword."⁵³ Immediately following the affair at Musgrove's Mill, Shelby, with the approbation of Major Robertson, had proposed that an army of volunteers be raised on both sides of the mountains for the purpose of resisting Ferguson's advance. At the time the concensus of opinion heartily favored Shelby's proposal. As soon as Shelby received Ferguson's threatening

⁵²Shelby elsewhere describes the battle as "the hardest and best fought action he ever was in"—attributing this valor and persistency to "the great number of officers who were with him as volunteers."

⁵³General Joseph Graham's account in *General Joseph Graham and His Revolutionary Papers*, by W. A. Graham, 1904. This account originally appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, September, 1845. Compare, also, Draper's *Kings Mountain*, p. 169.

and insulting message, he set in train a course of events which were the reverse of the result aimed at by Ferguson. The letter instead of having a deterrent and intimidating effect upon Shelby, only fired to immediate execution the determination which he had already reached to arouse the fierce mountain men to action. Without delay, Shelby rode off about forty miles to see John Sevier, the efficient commander of the militia of Washington County, at his home near Jonesborough. Here, after his ride in feverish haste, he found Sevier in the midst of great festivities—a horse race was in progress, and the people in crowds were in attendance at the barbecue. Angered by the insolent taunt of Ferguson, Shelby vehemently declared that this was a time, not for a frolic, but for a fight. Sevier, the daring and adventurous, eagerly seconded Shelby's proposal to arouse the mountain men, to coöperate with other forces that might be raised, and to make an effort to attack, by surprise, and to defeat Ferguson in his camp; if this were not practicable, to unite with any corps of patriots with which they might meet and wage war against the enemies of America; and in the event of failure, with the consequent desolation of their homes, to take water, float down the Holston, Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi rivers and find a home with the Spaniards in Louisiana.⁵⁴ For two days Shelby remained in consultation with Sevier; the Sycamore Shoals of the Watauga was agreed upon as the rendezvous for their forces, and the time of meeting the twenty-fifth of September. A small force of one hundred and sixty men, under Colonel Charles McDowell and Colonel Andrew Hampton, driven before the enemy, had encamped at Watauga on September 18th; and their "doleful tale," as Col. Arthur Campbell expressed it, still further "tended to excite the resentment of the western militia." Sevier undertook to bring this force into the movement; and Isaac Shelby sent his brother Moses, who held the rank of Captain, with a message to Colonel William Campbell, of the neighboring county of Washington,

⁵⁴*Life of General John Sevier*, by F. M. Turner; pp. 108-9. Draper's *Kings Mountain*, p. 170.

urgently requesting his coöperation. Campbell had other plans on foot; but upon the receipt of a second and more urgent message from Shelby, he acquiesced in the latter's plan for the attack on Ferguson. Shelby likewise despatched a messenger, a Mr. Adair, to the County Lieutenant of Washington County, Colonel Arthur Campbell, the cousin and brother-in-law of William Campbell, requesting his coöperation. Arthur Campbell had just returned from a conference with Governor Jefferson, and was in a mood to act, as the Governor had pressed upon him the need for a more vigorous resistance to the enemy. Campbell sent word back that "if the western counties of North Carolina could raise a force to join Col. McDowell's men, that the officers of Washington County would coöperate."⁵⁵

⁵⁵*Kings Mountain—A Fragment*, by Col. Arthur Campbell.