

# ISAAC SHELBY

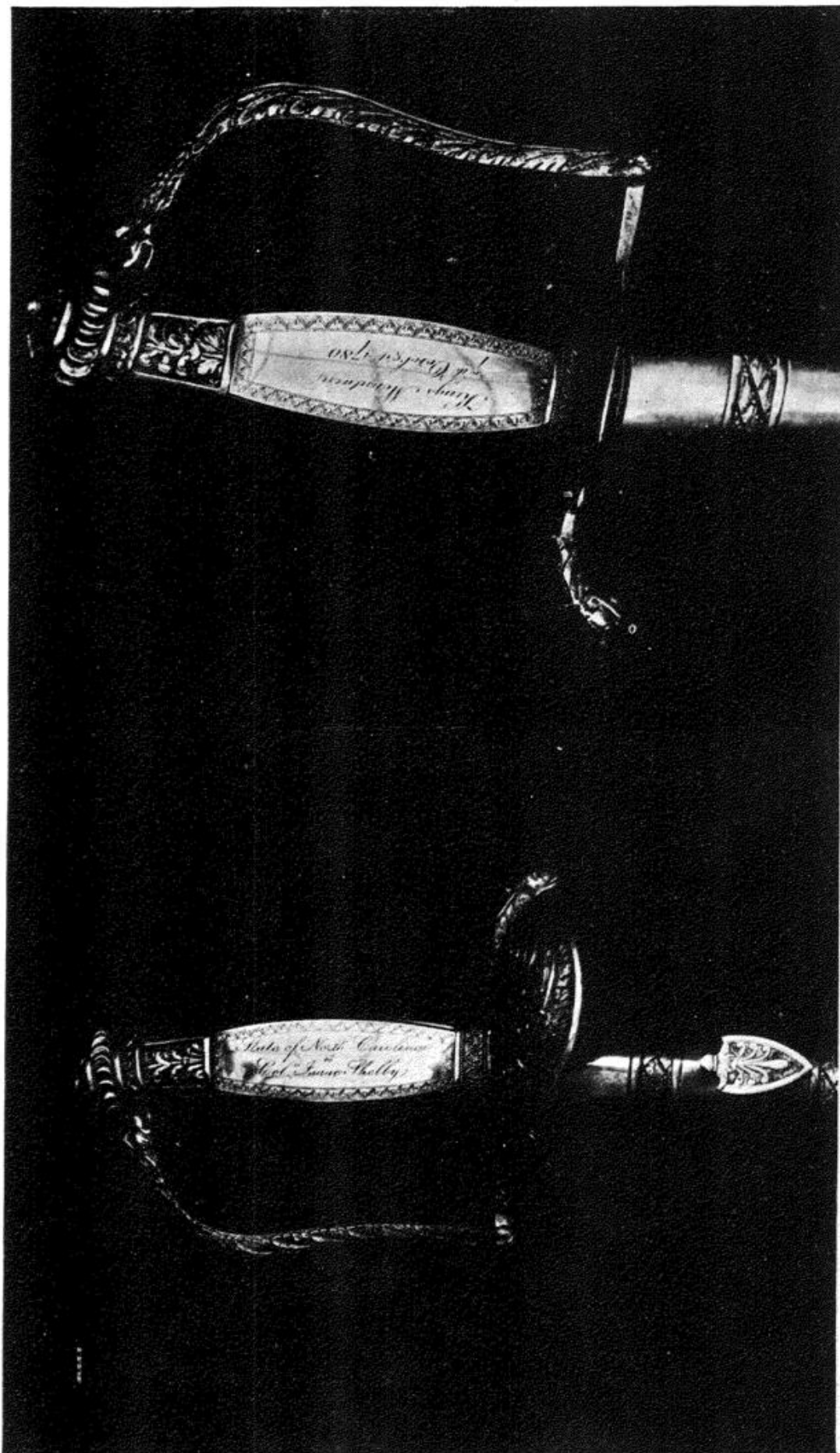
Revolutionary Patriot and  
Border Hero

PART II—1780-1783

BY

ARCHIBALD HENDERSON, A.M., PH.D., D.C.L.

Member American Historical Association, Mississippi Valley Historical  
Association, Ohio Valley Historical Association, Etc.



Elegant Mounted Sword, Presented to Isaac Shelby by the State of North Carolina

*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.                      MISS MARTHA HELEN HAYWOOD.  
MRS. E. E. MOFFITT.                         DR. RICHARD DILLARD.  
MR. R. D. W. CONNOR.                      DR. KEMP P. BATTLE.  
DR. D. H. HILL.                              MR. JAMES SPEUNT.  
DR. WILLIAM K. BOYD.                      MR. MARSHALL DELANCEY HAYWOOD.  
CAPT. S. A. ASHE.                           CHIEF JUSTICE WALTER CLARK.  
MISS ADELAIDE L. FRIES.                   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 1918-1919

MRS. MARSHALL WILLIAMS, Regent, Faison.	MISS GEORGIA HICKS, Historian, Faison.
MRS. E. E. MOFFITT, Honorary Regent, Richmond, Va.	MRS CHARLES LEE SMITH, Treasurer, Raleigh.
MRS. THOMAS K. BRUNER, Honorary Regent Raleigh	MRS GEORGE RAMSEY, <i>Registrar</i> , Raleigh
MISS MARY HILLIARD HINTON 1st Vice-Regent Raleigh	MRS JOHN E RAY, Custodian of Relics Raleigh
MRS. PAUL H. LEE, 2d Vice Regent, Raleigh.	MRS LAURENCE COVINGTON, Executive Secretary, Raleigh.
MRS. GEORGE P. PELL, Recording Secretary, Raleigh.	MRS CHARLES WALES, Genealogist, Edenton.
MISS WINIFRED FAISON, Corre- sponding Secretary, Faison.	MISS CATHERINE ALBERTSON, Junior Director, Elizabeth City.

---

## CHAPTER REGENTS

Bloomsbury Chapter.....	MRS. PAUL H. LEE, Regent.
Penelope Barker Chapter.....	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 GEORGIA HICKS, Regent.
Colonel Thomas Robeson Chapter.....	MRS. ANNIE BUIE, Regent.
Tuscarora Chapter.....	MRS. C. H. HUNTER, 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.

REGENT 1910-1917 :

MISS MARY HILLIARD HINTON.

---

\*Died November 25, 1911.

†Died December 12, 1904.



# The North Carolina Booklet

---

---

Vol. XVIII

JULY, 1918

No. 1

---

---

## ISAAC SHELBY

Revolutionary Patriot and Border Hero

---

PART II—1780-1783

BY ARCHIBALD HENDERSON

### III

At the appointed time. September 25 the several forces united at the rendezvous, already rendered famous by the great treaty held by Colonel Richard Henderson with the Cherokees there in March 1775 the Sycamore Shoals of the Watauga. Hither came Colonel William Campbell with two hundred men, Colonel Arthur Campbell with two hundred men, Colonel Isaac Shelby and Lieutenant-Colonel John Sevier with two hundred and forty men each—uniting with the force of one hundred and sixty men under Colonel Charles McDowell and Major Joseph McDowell, who had been encamped there for some time. An “express” sent by Colonel William Campbell from Washington County, Virginia, had already notified Colonel Benjamin Cleveland of Wilkes County, North Carolina, of the plan; and Cleveland was also urged by an “express” from Colonel McDowell to join the “over-mountain men” on the east side of the mountains with as large a force as he could raise.

The task of raising funds to equip the forces of Shelby and Sevier, and to defray the expenses of the campaign was an extremely difficult problem. The settlers generally had expended their available money for their lands; and so the only available funds were in the hands of the Entry-taker of Sullivan County, John Adair. When Sevier applied to him for

the money needed to defray the expenses of the military expedition, Adair replied:

Colonel Sevier, I have no authority by law to make that disposition of this money. It belongs to the impoverished treasury of North Carolina, and I dare not appropriate a cent of it to any purpose. But, if the country is over-run by the British, liberty is gone. Let the money go too. Take it. If the enemy, by its use, is driven from the country, I can trust that country to justify and vindicate my conduct. Take it.

For this indispensable sum, amounting to twelve thousand seven hundred and thirty-five dollars, Shelby and Sevier pledged themselves to see it refunded or its use legalized by an act of the Legislature; and this recognizance was afterwards scrupulously fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

It seemed to the enemy that the over-mountain men had been assembled as if by magic. "The wild and fierce inhabitants of (the) settlements westward of the Alleghany mountains," said Mackenzie in his *Strictures*, "assembled suddenly and silently. In his letter of October 24, 1780, Lord Rawdon significantly observed. "A numerous army now appeared on the frontier, drawn from Nolachucky, and other settlements beyond the mountains, whose very names had been unknown to us." On September 26, this force of one thousand and forty frontiersmen set forth upon the march. Before leaving the camp at Watauga, a farewell sermon was delivered by the Reverend Samuel Doak, who (according to trustworthy tradition) urged them to do battle valiantly, closing with a stirring invocation to "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon"—a sentiment greeted with a lusty shout of acclaim from the hardy mountaineers. At Quaker Meadows in Burke County, the famous home of the McDowells, which they reached on September 30, there was encamped a force of three hundred and fifty militia—the hardy followers of that fierce and blood-thirsty fighter, Colonel Benjamin Cleveland, "Old Roundabout," who called themselves "Cleveland's Bulldogs"; the stalwart riflemen of Rutherford under Colonel

<sup>1</sup>Ramsey: *Annals of Tennessee*, 226.

Andrew Hampton, and the flower of the militant citizenship of Surry led by a born leader of men, a cousin of Patrick Henry, Colonel Joseph Winston.<sup>2</sup>

Already on September 14 preceding, General William Lee Davidson had ordered Cleveland to unite with other forces to resist Ferguson's advance; and under the present plan the prospects seemed to favor successful resistance. The commanders of the different divisions, all of whom had acted with executive authority, controlled their troops only through voluntary agreement on the part of the privates. In view of petty disorders and insubordination, the commanding officers on the second day (October 2) after resuming the march, held a conference to devise plans for quieting the disturbances, and also for the purpose of choosing a leader. "It was resolved," says Shelby in his *Pamphlet* (1823), "to send to Head-Quarters for a general officer to command us; and that, in the mean time, we should meet in council every day to determine on the measures to be pursued, and appoint any of our own body to put them in execution. I was not satisfied with this course, as I thought it calculated to produce delay, when expedition and dispatch were all important to us. We were then in sixteen or eighteen miles of Gilbert Town, where we supposed Ferguson to be. I suggested these things to the council, and then observed to the officers, that we were all North Carolinians except Col. Campbell, who was from Virginia; that I knew him to be a man of good sense, and warmly attached to the cause of his country; that he commanded the largest regiment; and that if they concurred with me, until a general officer should arrive from Head-Quarters, appoint him to command us, and march immediately against the enemy. To this proposition some one or two said 'agreed.' No written minute or record was made of it."<sup>3</sup> Shelby acknowledges that that he did this to "silence the expectation

<sup>2</sup>A. C. Avery: "Quaker Meadows," in *North Carolina Booklet*, IV, No. 3; W. A. Graham: *General Joseph Graham*, 273-283; G. T. Winston: "The Life and Times of Major Joseph Winston," 1895; J. Crouch: "The Life and Character of Col. Benjamin Cleveland," 1908.

<sup>3</sup>Appendix to L. C. Draper's *King's Mountain and its Heroes*, 564.

of Col. McDowell" to command the expedition. This was a legitimate expectation on the part of Col. McDowell, who was the commanding officer of the district in which the force was operating, and had, as Shelby further admits, "commanded the armies of militia in that quarter all the summer before against the same enemy." The objections urged against McDowell by Shelby were that he was "too far advanced in life" and "too inactive" for the command of an expedition which required extraordinary resources in strength and endurance. The first objection, mentioned by Shelby at the advanced age of seventy-three, is not founded on fact, and was perhaps due to defective memory; for McDowell was a vigorous young man of thirty-seven in 1780. In his narrative,<sup>4</sup> Shelby states merely that McDowell "was too slow an officer" for the enterprise. There was at no time any question of the bravery or patriotism of McDowell.<sup>5</sup>

During the progress of the conference, Campbell took Shelby aside and requested that his name be withdrawn and that Shelby himself take the command. To this, Shelby very correctly replied that he was the youngest Colonel present; and that McDowell under whom he had served, would resent his elevation to the chief command. Shelby probably realized that the over-mountain men, at all times unaccustomed to strict military discipline and somewhat prone to insubordination, would not readily accept the leadership in this meteoric campaign of a militia commander conspicuous neither for rare discretion nor for exceptional efficiency. The selection of Campbell was undoubtedly a temporary expedient, a tactful mode of bridging an awkward situation; yet it is clear that these border leaders would never have agreed to Shelby's suggestion that the chief command be given, even temporarily, to Campbell, had they not recognized in him an efficient leader and known him to be a true soldier. One final conclusion is

---

<sup>4</sup>*American Review*, December, 1848.

<sup>5</sup>Other graver objections to the selection of McDowell as leader of the campaign have been mentioned. In this connection see Draper's *King's Mountain and Its Heroes*, 87-9, and A. C. Avery's "Burke County," 90, in *Western North Carolina* (1890).



irresistible: that Shelby himself, as originator and prime mover in the expedition, more than any other was entitled to the chief command.

Colonel McDowell, who, as Shelby frankly says, "had the good of his country more at heart than any title of command," cheerfully acquiesced in the council's decision; but observed that as he was not to have the chief command, he would volunteer to convey to headquarters at Hillsborough the request for a general officer. On October 4, McDowell started on his errand from the mouth of Cane Creek near Gilbert Town, where the American force was encamped.<sup>6</sup> He bore with him a significant letter, to which the chief historian of the battle did not have access.<sup>7</sup> He left his men under the command of his brother, Major Joseph McDowell. Colonel Campbell now assumed temporarily the chief command, but he was to be regulated and directed by the determinations of the Colonels, who were to meet in council every day. It is noticeable that the list of signatures is not headed by that of Campbell, and does not include that of Charles McDowell, the bearer.

Rutherford County, Camp near Gilberttown

Oct 4, 1780.

SIR, We have now collected at this place about 1500 good men, drawn from the Counties of Surry, Wilkes, Burke, Washington and Sullivan Counties in this State, and Washington County in Virginia, and expect to be joined in a few days by Col. Clarke of Georgia, and Col. Williams of South Carolina, with about 1000 more—As we have at this time called out our Militia without any orders from the Executive of our different States, and with the view of Expelling the Enemy out of this part of the Country, we think such a body of men worthy of your attention, and would request you to send a General Officer, immediately to take the command of such Troops as may embody in this quarter—Our Troops being all Militia, and but little

---

<sup>6</sup>It is worthy of note that, on his way to Hillsborough, McDowell called at the camp of Lacy and Hill, with their South Carolinians, and at that of Williams with the Rowan Corps, at Flint Hill, a dozen miles or so to the eastward of the head of Cane Creek. These forces, being thus notified of the march against Ferguson, formed a junction with Campbell's forces on October 6.

<sup>7</sup>Draper makes no mention of this letter, the original of which is in the Gates Papers, Archives of the New York Historical Society. For a transcript of this letter I am indebted to Mr. Wilberforce Eames, of the New York Public Library, and to Mr. Robert H. Kelby, Librarian of the New York Historical Society.

acquainted with discipline, we could wish him to be a Gentleman of address, and able to keep up a proper discipline, without disgusting the Soldiery—Every assistance in our power, shall be given the Officer you may think proper to take the command of us.

It is the wish of such of us as are acquainted with General Davidson and Col. Morgan (if in service) that one of them Gentlemen may be appointed to this command.

We are in great want of Ammunition, and hope you will endeavor to have us properly furnished with that Article.

Col. McDowell will wait upon you with this, who can inform you of the present situation of the Enemy, and such other particulars respecting our Troops as you may think necessary.

We are Sir, Your most obdt. and very hble. Servts.

BENJA. CLEVELAND,  
ISAAC SHELBY,  
JOHN SEVIER,  
ANDW. HAMPTON,  
WM. CAMPBELL,  
JO. WINSTON.

(Endorsed)  
(Public Service)

The Honorable Major General  
Horatio Gates

Commander in Chief of  
the Southern Army.

By Col. Charles McDowell Major General Smallwood

Letter from

Col. Cleveland &c<sup>a</sup>  
4th October 80.

A memorable incident, indicative of the indomitable determination of the American forces, deserves record here. Before resuming the march on October 3, the Colonels notified the assembled troops of the nature and hazard of the enterprise before them; and the offer was made that any one who so desired, might withdraw then and there from the campaign. Shelby thus laconically addressed the men:

You have all been informed of the offer. You who desire to decline it, will, when the word is given, march three steps to the rear, and stand, prior to which a few more minutes will be granted you for consideration.

<sup>a</sup>*Cf. N. C. State Records*, xiv, 663-4. A photographic facsimile of the signatures to this letter, made at my order from the original letter, shows that, contrary to the testimony of Mr. Roosevelt, who spells it "Cleavland," the correct spelling is "Cleveland."

After a pause the order was given that "those who desired *to back out* would step three paces to the rear," but not a man withdrew. Shelby then addressed the men in words which convey a vivid impression of the spirit of the movement and the character of the campaign:

I am heartily glad to see you to a man resolve to meet and fight your country's foes. When we encounter the enemy, don't wait for the word of command. Let each one of you be your own officer, and do the very best you can, taking every care you can of yourselves, and availing yourselves of every advantage that chance may throw in your way. If in the woods, shelter yourselves, and give them Indian play; advance from tree to tree, pressing the enemy and killing and disabling all you can. Your officers will shrink from no danger—they will be consistently with you, and the moment the enemy give war, be on the alert and strictly obey orders.<sup>9</sup>

The taunt of Ferguson, by which he had hoped to intimidate the men of the back-country, evoked a retort he little expected. Ferguson's principal object at this time was to strike a crushing blow at the small band of partisans under Captain Elijah Clarke, who about the middle of September was threatening Augusta, Georgia, and was still hovering dangerously near the Carolina line. Ferguson was hoping for and expecting the return of furloughed loyalists in large numbers under Gibbes, the militia under Cruger at Ninety-Six, or Tarleton's Legion ordered thither by Cornwallis. Two deserters from the camp of the Americans came in on September 30 to warn Ferguson of the approach of the frontier army. Had Ferguson struck straight for Charlotte and a junction there with Cornwallis, he might have eluded Campbell's force. But he was confronted with the danger of permitting the union of the forces of Clarke and Campbell; the necessity of recalling numerous Tories, absent on furlough belonging to his own force; and the danger of disaffection to the loyalist cause on the part of the people of that region. Perhaps Lieutenant-Colonel Cruger had a deeper insight into the nature of the situation than had Ferguson; for in his reply (October 3, 1780) to Ferguson's dispatch of September 30th, with its

---

<sup>9</sup>Testimony of John Spelts, called "Continental Jack," who was present.



alarming news of "so considerable (a) force as you understand is coming from the mountains," Cruger makes these eminently sane observations: "I Don't see how you can possibly (defend) the country and its neighborhood that you (are) now in. . . . I flattered myself they (the Tory militia) would have been equal to the mountain lads, and that no further call for the *defensive* would have been (made?) on this part of the Province. I begin to think our views for the present rather large. We have been led to this, probably, in expecting too much from the militia."<sup>10</sup>

Aware of some of the dangers incident to the situation, Ferguson despatched messengers to Cornwallis, asking for assistance; but these, being pursued, were delayed by reason of the circuitous route they were forced to take, and so did not reach Charlotte until the day after the battle at King's Mountain. Ferguson scorned to seek protection by making a forced march in order to effect a junction with Cornwallis at Charlotte. He preferred to make a stand, and, if possible, to dispose once for all of this barbarian mountain horde. From his camp Ferguson issued the following inflammatory and obscene appeal to the people, well calculated to arouse their bitter hostility to the approaching band, which he characterized as murderers of men and ravishers of women.

Denard's Ford, Broad River,

Tryon County, October 1, 1780.

GENTLEMEN :—Unless you wish to be eat up by an inundation of barbarians, who have begun by murdering an unarmed son before his aged father and afterward lopped off his arms, and who by their shocking cruelties and irregularities, give the best proof of their cowardice and want of discipline; I say if you want to be pinioned, robbed, and murdered, and see your wives and daughters, in four days, abused by the dregs of mankind—in short, if you wish or deserve to live, and bear the name of men grasp your arms in a moment and run to camp.

The Back Water men have crossed the mountains; McDowell, Hampton, Shelby, and Cleveland are at their head, so that you know

<sup>10</sup>This letter was found on Ferguson's dead body, after the battle of King's Mountain. See Ramsey: *Annals of Tennessee*, 241-2.

what you have to depend upon. If you choose to be p—d upon by a set of mongrels, say so at once, and let your women turn their backs upon you and look out for real men to protect them.

PAT. FERGUSON,  
*Major 71st Regiment.*<sup>11</sup>

Loitering on his march, presumably in the hope of striking Clarke, Ferguson did not reach King's Mountain until October 6. On reaching Gilbert Town (near Rutherfordton, N. C.) on October 4, the Americans discovered that Ferguson had retired. "Having gained a knowledge of his design," related Shelby, "it was determined in a council of the principal officers to pursue him with all possible dispatch. Accordingly two nights before the action the officers were engaged all night in selecting the best men, the best horses and the best rifles, and at the dawn of day took Ferguson's trail and pursued him. . . . The mountain men had turned out to catch Ferguson. He was their object, and for the last thirty-six hours they never alighted from their horses but once to refresh at the Cowpens for an hour (where they were joined by Col. Williams of South Carolina, on the evening of the 6th with about 400 men), although the day of the action was so extremely wet that the men could only keep their guns dry by wrapping their bags, blankets and hunting shirts around the locks, which exposed their bodies to a heavy and incessant rain."<sup>12</sup>

In this connection, there is need of further detail in regard to the force under Williams. The account given by Draper is at once imperfect and distorted; and his estimate is grievously warped by the prejudiced account written by South Carolinians who held Williams in detestation. James D. Williams was not a South Carolinian; he was born in Hanover County, Virginia, in November, 1740. Since childhood he had lived in Granville County, N. C., whither the Williams

<sup>11</sup>*Virginia Gazette*, November 11, 1780. The barbarous atrocity alluded to at the beginning of this letter is unsupported by evidence of any kind.

<sup>12</sup>*Autobiography* of Isaac Shelby, an exact transcription of which I procured from the late Colonel R. T. Durrett, of Louisville, Kentucky. The valuable Durrett Collection of Manuscripts on Western History is now owned by the University of Chicago.

family removed at an early date; and here he remained until 1772, when he went to South Carolina and settled on Little River in Laurens County. At the battle of Musgrove Mill, as related by Shelby himself, Williams<sup>13</sup> commanded the American center, while Shelby and Clarke commanded the right and left wings, respectively. The most reliable authorities state that Williams held the chief command in this battle.<sup>14</sup> On his arrival at Hillsborough whither he conducted the prisoners taken at Musgrove Mill, Williams conveyed the news of this victory to Governor Rutledge of South Carolina, then a refugee from his own State. In recognition of the victory at Musgrove Mill, achieved by the force commanded by Williams, Governor Rutledge commissioned him as a brigadier general in the South Carolina militia.<sup>15</sup> On September 8, Governor Abner Nash of North Carolina instructed General Williams to go to Caswell and other counties and recruit a corps of volunteer horsemen, not to exceed one hundred, for active service against the enemy.<sup>16</sup> This force, about seventy in number, Williams enlisted chiefly while encamped at Higgins' plantation in Rowan County. These recruits were brave and reliable soldiers; and they came from a county noted for its patriotism and its hostility to England. "It was evident and it had frequently been mentioned to the King's Officers," says Banastre Tarleton in his *Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces*, "that the counties of Mecklenburg and Rowan were more hostile to England than any others in America."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Cf. "Isaac Shelby," I, p. 140, *North Carolina Booklet*, January, 1917.

<sup>14</sup>A *Sketch of the Life and Career of Col. James D. Williams*, by Rev. J. D. Bailey (Cowpens, S. C., 1898).

<sup>15</sup>The official report, which in itself constitutes proof that Williams was in command at Musgrove Mill, was drawn up and signed by Williams; and this is the only contemporary report of the battle from the field. On September 5, 1780, Williams' official report was forwarded by General Gates to the President of Congress. The full report was published in the *Pennsylvania Packet* on September 23, and doubtless earlier in North Carolina newspapers; but the substance of the report, doubtless communicated by Governor Rutledge, appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* as early as September 13. Compare also *North Carolina University Magazine*, March, 1855.

<sup>16</sup>For a copy of the original order, see Schenck, *North Carolina, 1780-1781*, 143n.

<sup>17</sup>The slur cast upon these Rowan recruits by the venomous Colonel Hill in his Manuscript Narrative only reflect upon their author. The Legislature of North Carolina, in November, 1788, acting upon a report submitted by Mr. Thomas Person, resolved: "That the estate of James Williams, deceased, late

The number chosen from the over-mountain men to go forward from the ford of Green River on the night of October 5, was about seven hundred; and at the Cowpens, as accurately stated by Shelby, they were reinforced by four hundred men under Williams.<sup>18</sup> Here a second selection of nine hundred and ten horsemen was made; and Colonel Campbell was retained in the chief command—the urgency of the pursuit making it inadvisable to await the coming of the general officer for whom Col. Charles McDowell had gone to Hillsborough. This force, closely followed by some eighty-odd footmen (“foot-cavalry”) pushed forward from the Cowpens on the night of October 6, in pursuit of the elusive Ferguson.

So heavy was the fall of rain during the forenoon and so weary and jaded were the men, that Campbell, Sevier and Cleveland urged a halt; but to this proposal the iron Shelby, intent upon the capture and destruction of the men who had threatened to hang him, gruffly replied with an oath: “I will not stop until night, if I follow Ferguson into Cornwallis’ lines.” As they approached King’s Mountain, they encountered three men who reported that they were just from the British camp, which was posted upon the plateau, and that there was a picket guard on the road not far ahead. “These men,” says Benjamin Sharp in his account, “were detained lest they should find means to inform the enemy of our approach, and Col. Shelby, with a select party, undertook to surprise and take the picket; this he accomplished without firing a gun or giving the least alarm; and it was hailed by the army as a good omen.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup>On October 2, Brigadier General Williams reported to Major-General Gates that the number then with him in Burke County was “about four hundred and fifty horsemen.” Cf. *N. C. State Records*, xv. 94. He was in error as to his location, which was actually in Lincoln County.

<sup>19</sup>*American Pioneer*, February, 1843.

---

of the State of S. C. be released and acquitted from the payment of \$25,000 advanced to the said deceased in his lifetime (1780) by this state for the purpose of raising men for the defense of this and the United States, it having been manifested to this Assembly that he was in action at the Battle of King’s Mountain where he headed three or four hundred men and in which action he gloriously fell, a sacrifice to liberty.” See W. A. Graham: *Gen. Joseph Graham and His Revolutionary Papers*, 282-3. In speaking of “our march to the Yadkin,” Cornwallis calls the Rowan section “one of the most rebellious tracts in America.”



## IV

The remarkable battle which ensued presents an extraordinary contrast in the character of the combatants and the nature of the strategy and tactics employed. Each party ran true to form—the heroic and brilliant Ferguson repeating Braddock's suicidal tactics of opposing bayonet charges to the deadly fusillade of riflemen, carefully posted, Indian fashion, behind trees and every shelter afforded by the natural inequalities of the ground. In the army of the Carolina and Virginia frontiersmen, composed of independent commands recruited from many sources and each solicitous for its own credit, each command was directed in the battle by its own leader. Campbell, like Cleveland, Shelby, McDowell, Sevier, and Hambright, personally led his own division; but the nature of the fighting and the peculiarity of the *terrain* made it impossible for him, though the chosen commander of the expedition, in actuality to play such a role. The tactics agreed upon in advance by the frontier commanders were simple enough—to surround and capture Ferguson's camp on the high plateau. The more experienced Indian fighters, Sevier and Shelby, unquestionably suggested the general tactics in accordance with their experience, which in any case would doubtless have been employed by the frontiersmen: to give the British "Indian-play," namely, to take cover anywhere and fire from natural shelter. Cleveland, a Hercules in strength and courage, who had fought the Indians and recognized the wisdom of Indian tactics, ordered his men, as did some of the other leaders, to give way before a bayonet charge—but to return to the attack after the charge had spent its force.

My brave fellows, we have beaten the Tories and we can do it again. . . . If they had the spirit of men, they would join with their fellow-citizens in supporting the independence of their country. When you are engaged, you are not to wait for the word of command from me. I will show you, by my example, how to fight; I can undertake no more. Every man must consider himself an officer and act from

his own judgment. Fire as quick as you can, and stand your ground as long as you can. When you can do no better, get behind trees or retreat; but I beg you not to run quite off. If we are repulsed, let us make a point of returning and renewing the fight; perhaps we may have better luck in the second attempt than in the first.

The plateau upon which Ferguson was encamped was the top of an eminence about six hundred yards long and about two hundred and fifty from one base across to the other; and its shape was that of an Indian paddle, varying from one hundred and twenty yards at the blade to sixty yards at the handle in width. Outcropping boulders upon the outer edge of the plateau afforded some slight shelter for Ferguson's force; but, unsuspecting of the coming attack, Ferguson had made no *abatis* to protect his camp from the attack to which it was so vulnerable from the cover of the timber surrounding it on all sides. In taking their positions, the center to the North-East was occupied by Cleveland with his Bulldogs, Hambright with his South Fork Boys, from the Catawba (now Lincoln County, North Carolina), and Winston with his Surry Riflemen; to the South were the divisions under Joseph McDowell (brother of Charles) who was in touch with Winston, Sevier and Campbell; while the South Carolinians under Lacey, who was in touch with Cleveland, the Rowan levies under Williams, and the Watauga borderers under Shelby were stationed upon the North side. Ferguson's force consisted of Provincial Rangers, one hundred and fifty strong, and of well drilled loyalists, between eight and nine hundred, seriously weakened by the absence of a foraging party of between one and two hundred who had gone off on the morning the battle occurred. Shelby's men, before getting into position, received a hot fire, the opening shots of the engagement—which inspired Campbell, who now threw off his coat, to shout encouraging orders to his men, posted on the side of the mountain opposite to Shelby's force. When Campbell's Virginians uttered a series of piercing shouts, De

Peyster, second in command, remarked to his chief: "These things are ominous—these are the damned yelling boys."

The battle, which lasted some minutes short of an hour, was waged with terrific ferocity. The loyalist militia, wherever possible, fired from the shelter of the rocks; while the Provincial Corps, with fixed bayonets, steadily charged the frontiersmen, who fired at close range and rapidly withdrew to the very base of the mountain. After each bayonet charge, the Provincials coolly withdrew to the summit, under the accumulating fire of the returning mountaineers, who quickly gathered in their rear. Owing to their elevation, the British, although using the rapid-fire breech-loading rifle invented by Ferguson himself, found their vision deflected, continually firing high; and thus suffered nature's handicap, refraction.<sup>20</sup> The militia, using sharpened butcher knives which Ferguson taught them to utilize as bayonets, charged against the mountaineers; but their fire, in answer to the deadly fusillade of the expert squirrel shooters, was belated, owing to the fact that they could not fire so long as the crudely improvised bayonets remained in their pieces. The Americans, continually firing upward, found ready marks for their aim in the clearly delineated outlines of their adversaries; and felt the exultation which animates the hunter who has tracked to his lair and entrapped wild game at bay.

The leaders of the various divisions of the mountaineers bore themselves with impetuous bravery, recklessly exposing themselves between the lines of fire and with native eloquence, interspersed with mild profanity, rallying their individual commands, from end to end, once more to the attack. Campbell scaled the rugged heights, encouraging his men to the ascent. Cleveland resolutely facing the foe, rallied his bulldogs with the inspiring words: "Come, boys, let's try 'em again. We'll have better luck next time." The most deadly charge, led by De Peyster himself, fell upon Hambright's South Fork boys; and Major Chronicle, waving his military

---

<sup>20</sup>F. Brevard McDowell: *The Battle of King's Mountain*.



hat, fell dead, the command, "Face to the hill!" dying upon his lips. These veteran soldiers met the shock of the charge; a number of their men were shot down or transfixed, and the remainder, reserving their fire until the charging column was only a few feet away, poured in a deadly volley before retiring. William Lenoir, independently fighting in Winston's column, was in the forefront of the hottest battle, his reckless bravery making him a veritable target for the enemy. He received several wounds and his hair and his clothes were riddled with bullets. The ranking American officer, Brigadier General James Williams, was mortally wounded on the "very top of the mountain, in the thickest of the fight"; and as he revived for a moment, an eye-witness relates, his first words were: "For God's sake, boys, don't give up the hill." Hambright, sorely wounded, his boot overflowing with blood and his hat riddled with three bullet holes, declined to dismount, but pressed gallantly forward, exclaiming in his "Pennsylvania Dutch": "Huzza, my prave poys, fight on a few minutes more, and te pattle will be over!" On the British side Ferguson was supremely brave, rapidly dashing from one side to the other, oblivious to all danger. Wherever the shrill note of his silver whistle sounded, there the fighting was hottest and the British resistance deadliest. His officers fought with the characteristic steadiness of the British soldier, and again and again charged headlong against the wavering circle of the frontiersmen.<sup>21</sup>

Ferguson's authentic boast—that "he was on King's Mountain, that he was king of the mountain and that God Almighty could not drive him from it"—was doubtless prompted, less by belief in the impregnability of his position, than by a desire to inspire confidence in his men. His position was admirably chosen for defense against attack by troops employing regulation tactics; but never dreaming of the possibility of sudden investment, Ferguson had erected no defenses for

---

<sup>21</sup>Forerunners of the Republic: "Isaac Shelby," *Neale's Monthly*, March, 1913.

his encampment. The disesteem in which he held the mountaineers found expression in the passionate declaration: "I will never surrender to such damned banditti as the mountain men." His frenzied efforts on the battle-field seem like a mad rush against fate; for his position was indefensible against the peculiar tactics of the frontiersmen. While the mountain flamed like a volcano and resounded with the thunder of the guns, a steady stricture was in progress; the lines were drawn tighter and tighter around the trapped and frantically struggling army; and at last the fall of their commander, riddled with bullets, proved the mad futility of further resistance. The game was caught and bagged to a man. When Winston with his fox-hunters of Surry dashed recklessly through the woods, says a chronicler of the battle, and "the last to come into position:

'Flow'd in, and settling, circled all the lists,'

then

'From all the circle of the hills  
Death sleeted in upon the doomed.'"<sup>22</sup>

## V

In reviewing the details of the battle, especial interest attaches here to everything which concerns Isaac Shelby. In a contemporary letter to his father, he gives the following terse account of the battle:

That Providence who always rules and governs all things for the best, so ordered it that we were around them before we were discovered, and formed in such position, so as to fire on them nearly about (sic) the same time, though they heard us in time to form and stood ready. The battle continued warm for an hour; the enemy finding themselves so embarrassed on all sides, surrendered themselves prisoners to us at discretion.

They had taken post at that place with the confidence that no force could rout them; the mountain was high, and exceedingly steep, so

<sup>22</sup>J. W. de Peyster: "The Affair at King's Mountain." Reprinted from *The Magazine of American History*, Dec., 1880. Cf. also the same writer's sketch: "The Battle or Affair of King's Mountain," 1881. These give the extreme British view.

that their situation gave them greatly the advantage; indeed it was almost equal to storming a battery. In most cases we could not see them until we were within twenty yards of them. They repelled us three times with charged bayonets; but being determined to conquer or die, we came up a fourth time, and fairly got possession of the top of the mountain.<sup>28</sup>

The final general order to the mountain men, before the engagement, was eloquent of the general determination: "Fresh prime your guns, and every man go into battle firmly resolved to *fight till he dies!*"

"The enemy," says Robert Campbell, "annoyed our troops very much from their advantageous position. Col. Shelby, being previously ordered to reconnoitre their position, observing their situation, and what a destructive fire was kept up from those rocks, ordered Robert Campbell, one of the officers of the Virginia Line, to move to the right with a small company to endeavor to dislodge them, and lead them on nearly to the ground which he had ordered them, under fire of the enemy's lines and within forty steps of the same; but discovering that our men were repulsed on the other side of the mountain, he gave orders to advance, and post themselves opposite to the rocks, and near to the enemy, and then returned to assist in bringing up the men in order, who had been charged with the bayonet. These orders were punctually obeyed, and they kept up such a galling fire as to compel Ferguson to order a company of regulars to face them, with a view to cover his men that were posted behind the rocks. At this time a considerable fire was drawn to this side of the mountain by the repulse of those on the other, and the Loyalists not being permitted to leave their posts. This scene was not of long duration, for it was the brave Virginia volunteers, and those under Col. Shelby, on their attempting rapidly to ascend the mountain, that were charged with the bayonet. They obstinately stood until some of them were thrust through the body, and having nothing but their rifles by which to defend themselves, they were forced to retreat.

<sup>28</sup>Virginia Gazette, Nov. 4, 1780.

They were soon rallied by their gallant commanders, Campbell, Shelby, and other brave officers, and by a constant and well-directed fire of their rifles, drove them back in their turn, strewing the face of the mountain with their assailants, and kept advancing until they drove them from some of their posts."<sup>24</sup> Shelby's men, by his own statement, actually reached the summit of the mountain which "was covered with flame and smoke and seemed to thunder."<sup>25</sup>

The regiments of Shelby and Campbell began the attack; and the enemy first fired upon Shelby's men before they were in position. This galling fire distressed the mountaineers, who were heard to mutter that "it would never do to be shot down without returning the fire." To which the intrepid Shelby coolly replied: "Pass on to your places, and then your fire will not be lost."<sup>26</sup> Bancroft says: "Shelby, a man of the hardest make, stiff as iron, among the dauntless singled out for dauntlessness, went right onward and upward like a man who had but one thing to do, and but one thought—to do it." Brave as he and his men were, says Draper, they, too, had to retreat before the charging column, but firing as they retired. When, at the bottom of the hill, Shelby wanted to bring his men to order, he would cry out—"Now, boys, quickly reload your rifles, and give them another hell of a fire."<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the entire battle, Shelby's inspiring battle-cry was: "Never shoot until you see an enemy, and never see an enemy without bringing him down."<sup>28</sup>

Shelby was in the very front line of the fight from the outset of the engagement to its very close. "When the British were loudly calling for quarters, but uncertain whether they would be granted," says Benjamin Sharp, "I saw the intrepid Shelby rush his horse within fifteen paces of their lines, and commanded them to lay down their arms, and they should have quarters. Some would call this an impru-

<sup>24</sup>*Annals of the Army of Tennessee*, Oct., 1878.

<sup>25</sup>*Haywood's Tennessee*.

<sup>26</sup>*Foote's Sketches of North Carolina (Graham's Sketch)*, p. 268.

<sup>27</sup>MS. statement of Gen. Thomas Love, derived from Captain David Vance.

<sup>28</sup>*Nile's National Register*, iv. 403.



dent act, but it shows the daring bravery of the man."<sup>29</sup> As the demoralized Tories continued to cry "Quarters! Quarters!" Shelby fiercely shouted: "Damn you! If you want quarters, throw down your arms!" In a letter written by John Sevier to Isaac Shelby (Aug. 27, 1812), we read: "You were in the heat of the action. I frequently saw you animating your men to victory. At the surrender, you were the first field officer I recollect to have seen. . . . I perfectly recollect on seeing you at the close of the action, that I swore by — they had burnt off your hair, for it was much burnt on one side."

Owing to the volley fired upon the victors by a returning foraging party of the British, a fire which killed the daring General James Williams, the incensed Americans under Campbell's orders returned the fire, though the British had already surrendered. This created a very alarming situation, and Shelby, who feared that the enemy might yet, perhaps, snatch up their arms in self-defense and resume the battle, exclaimed: "Good God! What can we do in the confusion?" "We can order the prisoners from their arms," said Captain Sawyers. "Yes," responded Shelby, "that can be done"; and the prisoners were accordingly marched off, and placed under a strong guard.

Ferguson was mortally wounded near the close of the action; and as he was being carried off, the exultant Shelby rode up and with incredible callousness said to him, though doubtless life was then totally extinct: "Colonel, the fatal blow is struck—we've Burgoyned you."<sup>30</sup> In the division of Ferguson's effects, the foot-long silver whistle, the piercing note of which had been heard again and again above the clamor and din of the battle, fell to Shelby's lot.

According to expert military opinion, the plan of attack employed by the Americans was probably the only method of assault by which the British could have been defeated. Impartial examination of all the evidence available, which

<sup>29</sup>*American Pioneer*, Feb., 1843.

<sup>30</sup>Related by Thos. H. Speits and Thomas H. Shelby, a son of the Colonel.

includes much material not accessible to Draper, leads to the conclusion that the chief credit for inaugurating the entire campaign belongs to Shelby. The nominal leadership was conferred upon Campbell; and among the reasons, not already mentioned, assigned for giving him the chief command, were that he commanded the largest division of the forces and had come from the greatest distance. In the battle the conditions of combat enabled him to do little more than lead the men of his own division; and this he did with conspicuous bravery and gallantry. It is scarcely to be doubted that the very tactics pursued in the battle, the only tactics it would seem which could have been successful, were outlined, not by Campbell, but by Shelby himself. The following significant lines, from a letter written to Shelby by Colonel John Sevier, from Marble Springs, Tennessee, August 27, 1812, are eloquent on the point:—

As to the plan of attacking the enemy, yourself was the only person that named the mode to me, and the same was acceded to unanimously. No doubt you recollect we argued on the manner of attack immediately after Ferguson's spies were taken, while we were a little in front of our army, and as we were returning back to Campbell and the other officers.<sup>21</sup>

## VI

A digression from the continuity of the narrative is necessary at this point, in order to bring to light valuable documents, hitherto unpublished, which throw into truer perspective the role played by Shelby in the King's Mountain campaign. They tend to correct some of the false impressions fostered by Roosevelt and, to a lesser degree, by Draper.

On February 11, 1781, the North Carolina State Senate, in session at Halifax, placed the following on record:—

Resolved, That the Speaker of this House be requested, with the Speaker of the Commons, to transmit to Colonel Campbell, of Vir-

<sup>21</sup>"Hero of Three Wars," by C. H. Todd, in *Journal of American History*, 2nd number, 2nd volume, 1908. These lines from Sevier's letter have been omitted generally by historians, even by Draper in *King's Mountain and Its Heroes* (pp. 575-6). Such an omission is almost inexplicable.

ginia, Colonel Cleveland, Colonel Shelby, and the brave Officers and Soldiers under their command the following address, to wit :

GENTLEMEN :

The General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, impressed with a deep sense of your eminent services during the last Summer's Campaign have unanimously resolved that the Speakers of the two Houses should transmit to you their warmest acknowledgments for your spirited and vigorous Exertions against the formidable body of British Forces under Major Ferguson at King's Mountain. The alacrity with which you stepped forth uncalled for by Authority, your Vigilance in Marching to, and your conduct in, the attack of the Enemy, deserve the highest Encomiums, and strongly mark Patriotism and Heroism united in the same persons. To these Virtues, which you, Gentlemen, so happily possess, your Country is indebted for the important Victory which frustrated the schemes of the enemy, awed many of the disaffected into submission, and rescued the western parts of this State from devastation and ruin and the horrors attendant on a War directed by Tyranny and pursued with vindictive Resentment.

We do therefore in obedience to the order of the two Houses and with the highest satisfaction to ourselves transmit to you the thanks of your country by its representatives in General Assembly.

Ordered that the foregoing Address with the following Message be sent the Commons for concurrence.

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN :

We send for your approbation an address proposed by this House to be presented the officers who distinguished themselves in the capture of the British, commanded by Major Ferguson, at King's Mountain.

Resolved, that an elegant mounted sword be presented to each of the following officers, that is to say, Colo. Cleveland, of Wilkes County, Colonel Campbell of Virginia, Colonel Shelby of Sullivan County, Lieutenant Colonel Sevier of Washington County, Lieutenant Colonel Hambright of Lincoln County, Major Winston of Surry County and Major Shelby of Sullivan County for their voluntary and distinguished services in the defeat of Major Ferguson at the battle of King's Mountain.

An extraordinary series of blunders, which to this day have remained unexplained, now took place in connection with the "resolution" above-mentioned. The original journal of the assembly, as well as the printed copy, contains a message from the House to the Senate, approving of the "address"



above-mentioned; but nowhere in the original journal is record or even mention made of any action taken by the House upon the Senate "resolution" concerning the swords. That no steps were taken to procure and present the swords mentioned in the resolution was doubtless due to the fact that the journal contained no record of the joint concurrence of House and Senate in this "resolution"; and consequently no committee was appointed to carry out the terms of the "resolution." Shelby and Sevier both believed that the swords had been voted them by the Assembly.<sup>32</sup>

The question which remains unanswered until the present day is: "Did the Legislature of North Carolina in February, 1781, vote the swords to Shelby, Sevier, Winston, and the others mentioned in the 'resolution'?" The original manuscript of the "resolution" itself, still preserved, and now in the Archives of the North Carolina Historical Commission, conclusively shows that the swords were thus voted. Upon it are inscribed the following:—

In the H Commons 11 Feby 1781  
Concurred with

By order  
Jno Hunt C H C

and the endorsement:

11th Feby laid over til Tomorrow morning.

The "resolution" was "laid over" until February 12, awaiting action upon the "address"; and the "address," bearing the approval of the House, was received by the Senate on February 13. The explanation of the blunder is probably due to the careless reading of the secretary who compiled the journal in failing to note, and so, to record, that the "address" and the "resolution" were two different things and that *both* had been concurred with by the House.

<sup>32</sup>*N. C. State Records*, xvii, 696-7, 704, support the statements made above. In his *Annals of Tennessee*, 248, Ramsey is in error in stating that the General Assembly of North Carolina in 1781 "passed a resolution that a sword and pistols should be presented to both Shelby and Sevier." As printed in the *N. C. State Records*, xvii, 697, "Lewis" is a misprint for "Sevier."

Shortly after the battle of King's Mountain, the General Assembly of Virginia "ordered that a good horse, with elegant furniture, and a sword" be presented to William Campbell.<sup>33</sup> Singularly enough, Virginia like North Carolina was inexplicably dilatory in carrying out the will of the General Assembly. At the instance of friends of the late William Campbell, the General Assembly of Virginia in 1809, it appears, caused a handsome and costly sword, purchased in France, to be presented to William Campbell Preston, William Campbell's grandson.

When this information reached Shelby in 1809, it produced, as he acknowledges, "some feelings of emulation and solicitude, and a sense that equal justice had not been done to all who participated in that memorable achievement." Accordingly, he engaged in private correspondence with John Sevier on the subject; and years afterwards frankly acknowledged that the object of the letters was "to concert with him (Sevier) the means of reminding North Carolina of her ancient promise, and of obtaining those swords which thirty years before had been voted to us, as the honorable memorials of our good conduct, and our country's approbation." Shelby confessed to his very natural sense of the injustice in the recognition of Campbell, while Sevier and himself remained unrecognized.<sup>34</sup>

## VII

During the political campaign of 1812, when Shelby was making the race for the governorship of Kentucky, falsehoods were freely circulated against him, minimizing the part he played in the King's Mountain campaign. To meet these charges, an article signed "Narrator" appeared in the *Kentucky Reporter*, July 25, 1812, giving undue credit to Shelby as leader of the King's Mountain campaign and casting unworthy aspersions upon the bravery of Colonel Campbell. The article was replied to in the same paper, of June 20,

<sup>33</sup>Summers: *Southwest Virginia*, 337-9.

<sup>34</sup>See Governor Shelby's pamphlet: "Battle of King's Mountain."

1813, by William C. Preston, who made a spirited vindication of the charge of cowardice preferred against his grandfather.

Nine years later, the controversy broke forth anew, when Colonel George Washington Sevier caused to be published in the *Nashville Gazette* four private letters written to his father, John Sevier, by Isaac Shelby. In one of these letters, (January 1, 1810), Shelby makes the damaging charge:

It is a fact well known, and for which he (Campbell) apologized to me the day after the action, that he was not within less than one quarter of a mile of the enemy at the time they surrendered to you and myself.

This brought forth from William C. Preston another statement in the newspapers of the day, entitled "Colonel Campbell and Governor Shelby," claiming the chief honors of the victory at King's Mountain for his grandfather, and vehemently repelling the insinuation of cowardice contained in Shelby's private letter to Sevier, lately given to the public by G. W. Sevier.

An elaborate survey and investigation of the whole question was then made by Shelby and published as a pamphlet in 1823.<sup>35</sup> Extended replies to this pamphlet were made: by William C. Preston in the *Telescope* of Columbia, S. C., May 10, 1823, and by General John Campbell in the *Enquirer* of Richmond, Va., June 24, 1823. This prolonged and regrettable controversy had certain important consequences, and resulted in establishing certain cardinal facts touching the conduct of Campbell, Shelby and Sevier. Campbell's fame remained entirely undimmed by the charges of Shelby, who, clearly, had misinterpreted a remark made by Campbell on the battle-field; and furthermore Shelby was utterly misled, through the fact that Campbell's body servant rode his horse during the battle, into the belief that Campbell remained in the rear during the action. The credit for initiating the campaign, it was clearly established, belonged to Shelby, who acted in concert with Sevier. There is no reason

---

<sup>35</sup>Appendix to Draper's *King's Mountain and Its Heroes*, 560-582.

to doubt that Shelby was entirely honest in believing the charges, however unworthy and untrue, which he preferred against Campbell.

In his article in the *Telescope*, Wm. C. Preston published an affidavit of Colonel Matthew Willoughby, in which he discredited the testimony of Moses Shelby, brother of Isaac, who had testified in the Shelby pamphlet (1823) that during the latter half of the battle of King's Mountain, Campbell remained stationary near the foot of the mountain, in plain sight of him. Colonel Willoughby deputed that "the statement of Moses Shelby would not, perhaps, be credited, from the character he bore about the time and after the battle, as he, with others, was engaged in plundering in the Carolinas, both Whigs and Tories, and running the property so plundered to this side of the mountains."

The following letter from Isaac Shelby to John J. Crittenden, famous Kentuckian, who had been Shelby's Aide-de-camp on the Canadian campaign in the War of 1812, is important as giving valuable evidence, not only concerning the character of Moses Shelby, but also in regard to the battle of King's Mountain. It was evidently not seen by Draper, or by Roosevelt, who accepts, apparently without question, the charges against Moses Shelby.

Danville, June 16th, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR,—You have no doubt before this seen the replies of both General Preston and his son to my publication. Colonel Preston proposes to establish for his own father the merit of planning the expedition which led to Ferguson's defeat.

I have examined the subject in my own mind in every point of view, and cannot in the remotest manner discover wherein General Preston could have had any agency in this exploit. I lived nearly one hundred and twenty miles from him, in a different State, and had no kind of communication with him on the subject, and from every recollection, I am convinced that the statement I gave you is indisputably true. I recollect, however, that Major Cloyd, with three hundred men from the county of Montgomery, commanded by Colonel Preston, fought an action with the Tories at the shallow ford of the Yadkin River, nearly one hundred miles north of King's Mountain, about two weeks after the defeat of Ferguson. It has always been a mystery to me as to Cloyd's destination, or that of the enemy whom



he encountered. I have only understood that they met accidentally in the road, and that the enemy was composed of the enemies in the neighborhood, and of the Bryants, of Kentucky, some of whom were killed in the fight.

If Ferguson was Cloyd's object, he was too weak to effect anything, and besides, Lord Cornwallis, with the British army, lay directly in the route between them. My convictions are so clear on this point I have no fear that General Preston can render my statement doubtful. He proposes, too, to invalidate the testimony of Moses Shelby. I will, for your own satisfaction, give you a short sketch of his history. Moses was in his nineteenth year when he left his father's house to join the expedition against Ferguson and had never before, to my knowledge, been more than forty miles from home. It is well known that our march was too rapid for a youth of that age to trespass in any manner, the army having marched two or three hundred miles, and fought the battle in twelve days, three of which we were detained on the road from different causes. Moses was severely wounded at the Mountain, and the bone of one thigh being fractured, he could be carried but a short distance from the battle-ground, where he lay on his back nearly three months, and was only able to ride out a few days before General Morgan came up into the district of Ninety-Six. He joined Morgan but a day or two before the battle of the Cowpens, on the 17th of January, 1781. Here he was wounded more severely than at the Mountain, and lay, until March or April, under the hands of a surgeon. When Colonel Clarke, of Georgia, came on with his followers to commence the siege of Augusta, his wounds were still sore and open, but at the warm solicitations of Clarke, Moses joined the expedition, and was appointed Captain of horse. It is well known that the siege lasted until May or June following, in which Moses was actively engaged, and Clarke asserted to many that he made several charges on the enemy, who sallied during the siege, which would have done honor to Count Pulaski. Moses returned home shortly after the siege, and never crossed the mountains again during the war. The next year, 1782, he, with other adventurers, went to the new settlements, then forming where Nashville now stands, where he continued off and on until he married, two or three years afterwards. As the settlements progressed down the Cumberland, he was always among the foremost of the pioneers. He finally settled in what is now called Livingston County, Kentucky, where at the unanimous solicitation of the inhabitants, he was appointed colonel of the new county, about the year 1793. He had the command for a number of years. And after the acquisition of Louisiana, he removed to that territory, and now resides on the west side of the Mississippi, two miles below New Madrid, covered with the scars of thirteen deep wounds, received in defence of his country, for which he is too proud to receive a pension, always disdaining to apply for one. In his youth he was of a warm and ardent disposition,

always ready to risk his life for a friend, and profuse of his property (of which he had a considerable inheritance), even to a fault. It would exceed the bounds of a letter to give you a statement of the many hair-breadth escapes and imminent dangers through which he passed. Soon after his marriage, he became impressed with religious sentiments, joined the Methodist Church, liberated his slaves, and, so far as I know and believe, has always supported a good character in that county.

It is possible, while at the South, in 1780-81, from his ardent disposition and the prevailing excitement of the times, that he may in some cases have acted imprudently. The war between the Whigs and Tories was carried on with the utmost rancor and malice, each endeavoring to do the greatest injury to the other.

Colonel Willoughby, whose affidavit has been published, swears to no point. He lived three hundred miles from the scene of action, and his information may have been very erroneous.

If, however, General Preston proves apparently anything more, he shall be answered.

I have made this hasty sketch for your own satisfaction.

I remain, dear Sir, very respectfully, your friend,

ISAAC SHELBY.

JOHN J. CRITTENDEN.<sup>56</sup>

## VIII

After their exchanges of letters in 1810, Shelby and Sevier, throwing conventional modesty to the winds, prepared a joint memorial to the General Assembly of North Carolina. This was presented by the Senator from Surry, Joseph Winston, on December 15, 1812, of which the following record is found:

Mr. Winston presented the memorial of Issac (*sic*) Shelby and John Sevier, setting forth that in consideration of public services rendered during our revolutionary war, and particularly for their conduct at the battle of King's Mountain, the Legislature of the State of North Carolina, in the year 1781, did vote each of the memorialists an elegant sword and pair of pistols, which they have not heretofore applied for or received; and they pray that this testimonial of the approbation of the state for their conduct be now complied with. This memorial being read, was referred to the committee of Propositions and Grievances, and sent to the House of Commons.<sup>57</sup>

The matter was later referred to a special committee consisting of Messrs. Porter and W. W. Jones on the part of the

<sup>56</sup>Mrs. C. Coleman: *The Life of John J. Crittenden*, v, 56-8 (1871).

<sup>57</sup>Senate Journal, 1812.

House, and Messrs. Atkinson and Gaston on the part of the Senate. On December 22, 1812, Mr. Gaston submitted an extended report after investigation, in which it is stated:

Your committee find, upon an examination of the journal of the House of Commons, that the proposed address obtained the approbation and concurrence of the house; but they do not find any determination relative to the second resolution of the Senate, nor any minute that such resolution had been received by them. Your committee, however, have been informed, and so believe, that the House of Commons did concur with the Senate in this latter resolution, as well as in that for presenting to their patriots and heroes the thanks of the Legislature.<sup>28</sup>

In order to pay what Gaston describes as "the long procrastinated debt of gratitude and honor," the House and Senate unanimously passed the following:—

Resolved, That his Excellency the Governor be requested to procure three elegant swords, such as in his estimation is (*sic*) not unworthy of North Carolina to bestow, on those who have distinguished claims on the gratitude of her citizens; and that he cause them severally to be presented, in the name of this State, to General Isaac Shelby, of Kentucky, General John Sevier of Tennessee, and Colonel Joseph Winston of this State, the three surviving chiefs of the gallant band who fought and conquered at King's Mountain, on the memorable 7th of October, 1780.<sup>29</sup>

In carrying out the resolution, Governor William Hawkins enlisted the services of the Hon. James Turner, at that time representing North Carolina in the United States Senate. At the instance of Mr. Turner, the swords were purchased in New York by Mr. Robert Walker of Petersburg, assisted by Colonel Swift. The swords thus procured, according to instruction, were "in point of elegance inferior to none that can be procured." The sword presented to Shelby, with which the others were identical save for name, bore upon

<sup>28</sup>Senate Journal. It seems extraordinary that a man of Gaston's legislative experience should have omitted to examine the original manuscript of the Senate resolution of February 11, 1781, which would have resolved all his doubts.

<sup>29</sup>It is a source of lasting regret that another regrettable oversight was made at this time. A fourth leader in the King's Mountain campaign whose name was included in the original resolution, was Lieutenant Colonel Hambright, of Lincoln County, who survived until March, 1817. Grave injustice was done, in that no sword was presented to Lieutenant Colonel Hambright in 1813.



one side of the hilt the inscription: "King's Mountain—October 7, 1780," upon the other: "State of North Carolina to Colonel Isaac Shelby." Writing to Governor Hawkins from Warren County on September 19, 1813, the Hon. James Turner says concerning these swords: "The one for Col. Shelby was forwarded through the politeness of Mr. Clay, the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The one for Col. Savier (*sic*) was delivered to him by myself (he being in Washington). The one for Col. Winston was forwarded to him by Mr. Yancey, one of the members of Congress from this State. The letters of the Gentlemen was (*sic*) delivered and forwarded by the same Gentlemen who took charge of the swords."<sup>40</sup>

The following letter, just referred to, was sent to Isaac Shelby, then Governor of Kentucky, by Governor William Hawkins of North Carolina.<sup>41</sup>

Executive Office, N. C.

Raleigh 17th, July 1813.

SIR, In compliance with a resolution of the General Assembly of this State passed at their last Session I have the honor of tendering you the sword which this letter accompanies as a testimony of the distinguished claim you have on the gratitude of the State for your gallantry in achieving with your brothers in arms the glorious victory over the British forces commanded by Colo. Ferguson at the battle of King's Mountain on the memorable 7th of October 1780. This tribute of respect though bestowed at a protracted period, will not be considered the less honorable on that account when you are informed that it is in unison with a resolution of the General Assembly passed in the year 1781, which from some cause not well ascertained, it is to be regretted was not complied with.

Permit me Sir, to make you an expression of the high gratification felt by me at being the favored instrument to present to you in the name of the State of North Carolina, this testimonial of gratitude—this meed of valour, and to remark, that contending as we are at the present time with the same foe for our just rights the pleasing hope may be entertained that the valorous deeds of the heroes of our

<sup>40</sup>Governor Hawkins' *Letter Book*, 1812-3, 429. For assistance in making these researches, I am indebted to Mr. R. D. W. Connor, Secretary of the N. C. Historical Commission.

<sup>41</sup>An exact transcript of the same letter was likewise transmitted to General John Sevier, of Tennessee, and Colonel Joseph Winston, of North Carolina. Cf. Ramsey's *Annals of Tennessee*, pp. 248-254, and "The Life and Times of Major Joseph Winston," by G. T. Winston (Guilford Battleground Company, 1895).

Revolution will animate the Soldier of the existing War and nerve his arm in laudable emulation to like achievements.

I beg you to accept an assurance of the great consideration and respect with which,

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your obedient Servent,

WILLIAM HAWKINS.<sup>42</sup>

This recognition on the part of North Carolina, fitly enough, came with dramatic emphasis at a moment of crisis in the career of Governor Shelby and of the State of Kentucky. In his memorable oration, delivered at Lexington, Kentucky, on August 15, 1826, the Hon. William Taylor Barry thus described the event:

Colonel Shelby was at his residence in Lincoln County, enjoying in affluence, the sweets of domestic life, when he was again called upon to assume the helm of State. At the advanced age of 63, had he wanted an apology, this was an ample one; but his mind was characterized by constancy and invincible firmness. He saw his beloved country, for whose independence he had fought in his youth, again in imminent danger, assailed by the same inveterate foe. The fire of patriotism rekindled in his bosom, he did not hesitate, but abandoning the allurements of ease, and listening only to the voice of honor, we see him again with youthful ardour, entering upon the executive duties, boldly hazarding his reputation in the contingencies of a war, the glorious results of which were yet in the womb of time. The volunteers from Kentucky who had gone forth to battle, notwithstanding the bravery and good conduct of their officers, had met with sad reverses. The dreadful defeats at the River Raisin, and the Rapids of the Miami, had deprived our State of many gallant and patriotic citizens, and filled the country with mourning; the cruelties practised by the savage allies of England, and countenanced by the British officers, was the cause of deep and powerful excitement; the public indignation was aroused and our militia, anxious to revenge their slaughtered countrymen, were impatient to be led to battle. Shelby thought the time had arrived to put an end to the contest in that quarter, and resolved to take the field in person. As he was preparing for the campaign, a happy incident occurred. The delivery of the sword voted him by the Legislature of North Carolina in 1781, had, from some cause, been delayed, and was handed to him

<sup>42</sup>From the Letter Book of Governor William Hawkins, 1812-1813, pp. 291-2. Collections of the North Carolina Historical Commission. For a copy of this letter I am indebted to Mr. R. D. W. Connor, Secretary of the N. C. Historical Commission. The letter to General Sevier, the duplicate of the present letter, is printed in Ramsey's *Annals of Tennessee*, 249.

just in time to be used in acquiring fresh laurels. Proud emblem of victory—glorious remembrancer of the gallantry and heroism of two wars.<sup>43</sup>

In the march to Lake Erie and Canada, the famous hero of the Revolution not without deep emotions of pride and religious fervor, "wore upon his thigh a sword just presented to him by Henry Clay, in the name of the State of North Carolina, in testimony of appreciation of his services in the old war for independence."<sup>44</sup>

With the sword was tendered the following letter to Shelby from Henry Clay:

Lexington, 22d August, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have seen by the public prints that you intend leading a detachment from this state. As you will want a sword, I have the pleasure to inform you that I am charged by Governor Turner and Mr. Macon with delivering to you that which the State of North Carolina voted you in testimony of the sense it entertained of your conduct at King's Mountain. I would take it with me to Frankfort, in order that I might personally execute the commission and at the same time have the gratification of seeing you, if I were not excessively oppressed with fatigue. I shall not fail, however, to avail myself of the first safe conveyance, and if any should offer to you, I will thank you to inform me. May it acquire additional lustre in the patriotic and hazardous enterprise in which you are embarking!

Your friend,

H. CLAY.

The bearer of the letter and the sword was a common friend, William T. Barry, quoted above, who delivered them to Governor Shelby at Frankfort.

The venerable soldier, with his characteristic energy once again taking the field in defense of the liberties of his country, in acknowledgment of the gift of North Carolina wrote the following interesting letter, hitherto unpublished, to the Governor of North Carolina.

<sup>43</sup>"On the Death of Adams, Jefferson and Shelby," in *Year Book, 1913, of Kentucky Society Sons of the Revolution*. Barry had been Secretary and Aide-de-Camp to General Shelby on the expedition to Canada in 1813; and afterwards became very distinguished in the public life of Kentucky. At one time he was Postmaster General in President Jackson's cabinet.

<sup>44</sup>B. J. Lossing: *Field Book of the War of 1812*, 544-5.

Government House Frankfort Kentucky.

August 26th, 1813.

SIR, On the 23d inst. I had the honor of receiving your letter of the 17th ulto. tendering to me, a Sword which accompanied it, bestowed by North Carolina as a testimony of the flattering sentiments which she entertained in relation to my conduct in the affair of the 7th of October 1780 on King's Mountain.

Engaged as my beloved country then was in a struggle for every thing dear to man, she had a right to expect the zealous exertions of her citizens in her behalf. Devoted to the cause of my country, impelled by a high sense of the obligations, I owed her, and by an utter aversion to the tyranny which was endeavouring to oppress her, I freely participated in those exertions which lead to, & that conflict which terminated so favorable to our arms, & evidently gave a favorable turn to the Revolutionary War, and in relation to which the Legislature of North Carolina have been pleased to express themselves in a manner the most flattering to my feelings.

If the freeborn sons of America wanted any stimulus to draw them forth in defence of her rights, other than a conviction that upon their exertions depended the continuance of those rights—it might be found in the heartfelt satisfaction derived from the consolation of having meritted and received the applause of a grateful [country] for the toils and dangers encountered in her behalf.

Having lived ten years of the happiest part of my life in North Carolina and having received repeated marks of the partiality of my fellow citizens in that Government during my residence amongst them, I have ever entertained the warmest feelings of fraternal affection, and good will for them. And I now accept with veneration & respect this honorable pledge of a continuance of their affection.

With considerations of high respect and Esteem

I have the honor to be

Most respectfully

Your Ob Servant

ISAAC SHELBY.

His Excellency

WILLIAM HAWKINS

Governor of North Carolina.

---

<sup>45</sup>From the Letter Book of Governor William Hawkins, 1812-3, pp. 414-5. Collections of the North Carolina Historical Commission. For this copy I am indebted to Mr. R. D. W. Connor, Secretary of the N. C. Historical Commission.



## IX

The battle of King's Mountain was decisive in its effect—shattering the plans of Cornwallis which till then appeared certain of success, and putting a full stop to the invasion of North Carolina, then well under way. Cornwallis abandoned his prepared campaign and left the State. The initiative of the borderers, the loyalty of the militia, the energy of the pursuit, the perfection of the surprise, all reinforced by ideal tactics to meet the given situation, were the controlling factors in this overwhelming victory, and pivotal contest of the Revolution. The pioneers of the Old Southwest—the independent and aggressive yeomanry of North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina—had risen in their might; and without the authority of blundering State governments, had created an army of frontiersmen, Indian fighters, and big game hunters which found no parallel or equal on the continent since the battle of the Great Kanawha.\*

The survey of the situation as given by Shelby is interesting as coming from a participant in the events:

This battle happened at the most gloomy and critical period of the Revolutionary War, and was the first link in the great chain of events in the South that established the independence of the United States. It was achieved by raw and undisciplined riflemen without any authority from the Government under which they lived. It completely dispirited the Tories and so much alarmed Lord Cornwallis, who then lay at Charlottstown with the British grand army that on being informed of Ferguson's total defeat and overthrow by the riflemen from the west, and that they were bearing down upon him, three thousand strong, he ordered an immediate retreat, marched all night in the utmost confusion and retrograded as far back as Winstanbury seventy or eighty miles, from whence he did not attempt to advance until reinforced by General Leslie from the Chesapeake with 2,000 men, three months afterward. In the meantime the militia of North Carolina assembled in considerable force at New Providence on the borders of South Carolina under General Davidson. General Smallwood with General Morgan's light corps, and the Maryland line

---

\*Narratives of the King's Mountain campaign, which have proved of value in this research, are the accounts of General Joseph Graham (*Southern Literary Messenger*, September 1845), General William Lenoir (*Wheeler's Sketches of North Carolina*, ii, 105-108) and Captain David Vance (*Greensboro, N. C.*, edited by D. L. Schenck, 1891).

advanced to the same point. General Gates with the shattered remains of his army collected at Hillsborough also came up and the new levies (?) from Virginia under General Stephens of 1,000 men came forward. At the same time, (to wit) the second or third of December, General Green came up and took the command, and thus was dispelled the dismal gloom which had pervaded the Southern States.

Following the battle of King's Mountain, the patriot force hanged nine Tory prisoners. This act has been severely condemned; but it is scarcely to be doubted that nothing short of such drastic action would have had a decisively deterrent effect upon future Tory murderings and depredations. Shelby's own account of this seemingly inexcusable and ruthless act is quoted here, both as a picture of the times and as a recital of Shelby's own part in the matter:

The prisoners were marched back on the trail that the army had advanced upon, as well to join the men who were left behind with weak horses and on foot, as to avoid Lord Cornwallis who they believed to be only thirty or forty miles to the North (incoherent) after meeting the footmen and took a circuitous route towards the Mountains by Gilbert town, where we met an American officer paroled from Ninety six only the day before, who informed, that he had seen eleven American citizens hung at that place within a few days past, merely for their attachment to the cause of their country. This very much exasperated the American officers, at the same time a Representative from Assembly which just set at Hillsborough came into camp and had with him the manuscript of a law, authorizing two justices within the State of North Carolina, to cause to be apprehended any citizen or loyalist who might be found in arms against his country, and if found guilty of treason to order him to immediate execution without any pleading in the case. The army with the prisoners were by this time in Rutherford County in North Carolina, a Sheriff of which, as well as several Justices of the Peace of the said County, were also in camp. Our Commander called a Council of officers to deliberate on the subject, who determined unanimously to try several of the prisoners under the aforesaid act of Assembly. The 8th day after the action they commenced trying them early in the morning beginning with the most atrocious offender first who had committed murder deliberately in cold blood, and who had otherwise murdered and destroyed the families of the Whigs, burned down houses, etc., and committed the most atrocious crimes. They continued to try them until they had condemned 36 to be hung, and at two o'clock in the night following commenced hanging them, after they

had hung nine of them, three at a time, and the fourth parcel of them was just about to be turned off the scaffold it was agreed on by Sevier, Cleveland and Shelby upon a motion of the latter, that they would put a stop to any further execution, and addressed Campbell on the subject, who readily came into their views, and released the three men that were then under the gallows to be executed, one of whom informed that Tarlton would be upon us next morning, that a woman had come into camp in the evening, and gave the information to the British officers, who communicated it to the Tories. The Americans immediately all mounted their horses, and were ready to march as soon as it was light enough to see for the night was excessively dark; as soon as they could see the way they started directly toward the mountains, got into level valley that lead immediately toward the North. We had not marched a mile before DePeyster rode up to Col. Shelby and enquired "which way was that they were going," to which the Col. replied, that they were going up into their native element, the mountains. When DePeyster cried out, "you smell a rat," Shelby replied that they knew all about it. It commenced raining just after daylight, and was I believe, the wettest day I have even seen since; so heavy was the rain that many parts of the valley became waist deep. The Americans continued their march until two o'clock that night, although it was dark as pitch, and the road could be seen by the continued flashes of lightning, when they came to the Catawba River which they supposed to be rising very fast from the quantity of rain that had fallen. The prisoners were forced into the water in a column of six deep as they usually marched, and ordered to hold fast to each other as the current was very strong. Our march that day and night was 36 miles and the river next morning had risen 10 feet. This escape excited feelings of the deepest gratitude in the breasts of the Americans, after they had reached a place of safety. It was a well known fact to all men who lived in that day, that the execution of these nine prisoners, put a stop to the hanging of any more American citizens at Camden and Ninety-six, where several hundred persons had been previously executed at those two places, purely for their attachment to the American cause. The prisoners taken at King's Mountain were given up by the Mountaineers to the militia assembled at Moravian Town to receive them, and afterwards marched to Salisbury where they were crowded into the jail and other houses prepared to receive them.

No account with any pretensions, either to accuracy or consecutiveness, has ever been given of the relation of Shelby, Sevier and the western leaders, to the cause of the Revolution subsequent to the Battle of King's Mountain. The histories teem with inaccuracies and inexplicable confusions of

names and dates. The recent discovery of letters and documents, bearing on this period, make it possible for me to give for the first time, I believe, a reliable and consistent account of the rolé played by Shelby and some of the other frontier leaders in the closing years of the Revolution.

There is an interesting revelation of vanity in Shelby's *Autobiography*, in which he claims the credit, usually ascribed to General Nathaniel Greene, for the plan of campaign which eventuated in Morgan's defeat of Tarleton. This passage gives us an account also of Shelby's movements, following the delivery of the prisoners taken at King's Mountain to the authorities at Salem:

When the British had gotten possession of the posts of Ninety Six and Augusta, they had an open communication with the Southern Indians, and furnished them with arms and ammunition by which means the Cherokees were enabled to wage a constant war against the new settlements forming on the western waters of North Carolina. Col. Shelby had long viewed this evil without being able to devise any means to prevent it. But after the prisoners taken at King's Mountain were disposed of at Moravian town, he set out from there to go to Headquarters, to solicit the Commander-in-Chief to send Gen. Morgan with his light troops into the upper country, to subdue those two posts. He knew from his own knowledge that Morgan would be strongly reinforced by the mountain men, and many others who had left their homes in the upper parts of Georgia and South Carolina rather than submit to the enemy. He found headquarters at a place called New Providence on the border of South Carolina, and under the command of Maj. Gen. Smallwood. He first communicated the object of his visit to camp to Gen. Morgan who seemed highly pleased and gratified at the suggestions made to him, readily entered into his views, saw at once the probable chance of success and said it was just what he had wanted, a separate command. He also made these suggestions to Gen. Smallwood, thinking he might possibly order Morgan on but although he highly approved the measure, he would not take upon himself the responsibility, as Gen. Gates would be in himself in a few days, and advised him to wait his arrival. He waited in camp upwards of a fortnight, when it was announced that Gen. Gates was near at hand. He set out next morning with six or eight officers to go to him and meet him about seven miles from camp with the remains of his army collected at Hillsborough. On Gates' arrival at camp he invited Shelby to dine with him the next day. He was proud to have an opportunity to make his communications, and went before the usual hour.



Gen. Gates gave him a cordial reception and invited him in. Col. Shelby replied that he had some important communications to make to him, that he had come early for that purpose, and would be glad if he would afford him an opportunity to do so. Gates pointing to a log a few rods from his door proposed to sit down on it. Before he heard all that Shelby had to say, he saw the practicability and importance of the measure proposed and observed, that if the board of war of North Carolina then sitting at Charlottstown would aid him with five hundred militia, he would send Morgan up with his light corps immediately. Gen. Gates was accordingly on horseback next morning before sunrise, and as he passed with his guards by Davidson's marked where Shelby lodged; he joined him, and they arrived early at Charlotte. Gates opened the subject to the board of war—which consisted of Alexander Martin alone (who was then or shortly after Governor of the State) who very soon saw the propriety of the measure and requested Shelby to stay until next morning, and take some communications to the Northern counties of the State, which was on his way home where the men must be raised, which he did; for the counties around Charlotte had been drained to form the camp at New Providence which then opposed the enemy. Col. Shelby set out the next morning, from Charlotte, which was about the 2d or 3d of December, 1780, and met Gen. Green about three miles from town, going forward to take command of the Southern army. Shelby had no idea that Tarlton, or any force would be sent up to oppose Morgan in that distant upper county, he only contemplated the reduction of the two posts, Ninety Six and Augusta. And if Gen. Green is entitled to any credit for the defeat of Tarlton by Morgan, it is merely that he permitted the enterprise to go on which led to that event, and which had been planned and ordered by Gen. Gates (on the suggestion of Shelby before he was superseded, and before Green took the command) Col. Shelby was at a loss to determine why so much time had elapsed from Green's taking the command on the 17th of January unless it was owing to the tardiness of the militia orders by the board of war as before stated, to John Morgan, or to the scarcity of provisions. For he can say of his own knowledge that there was never more than two days provisions at any one time while he stayed in the camp near three weeks; the country at that time being drained of supplies.

## X

The value which was universally set upon the services of the over-mountain men and their leaders, Shelby and Sevier, following the overwhelming victory of King's Mountain is fully attested in documents of the period. The following

letter, taken in conjunction with the above-quoted passage from Shelby's *Autobiography*, is significant:

Camp New Providence, 23d November, 1780.

Sir: Colo. Shelby have been in camp for some time, waiting to lend his Aid, should anything go on offensive, but apprehending not much will be done this winter. And his domestick business call for him, and he having no command, is now on his way home. I have been speaking to him to raise about three hundred good rifle men this winter for the campaign, & join me early in the spring. He says he would willingly undertake it, provided he had a sanction for it. How far the Assembly of North Carolina would be disposed to countenance such a thing I don't know, but I assure you that a Number of such men would be a valuable Corps when annex'd to the Light Infantry, which must be made equal if not superior to Tarlton's Legion before this country can be defended. If you think proper to countenance a matter of this kind, you'll be kind enough to signify your approbation to Colo. Shelby and point out the mode.

I have the Honor to be, with much

Esteem, your obedt. servt.

DANL. MORGAN.

The Honble. M. Genl. Gates.

The greatest contemporary tribute to the leaders of the King's Mountain campaign, showing the high estimation in which their services were held and the need generally felt for the assistance to the American cause they could render, is found in the following action taken by the North Carolina Assembly at Halifax on February 13, 1781:

*Resolved.* That Colonel Isaac Shelby of Sullivan County and John Sevier, Esqr., of Washington County, be informed by this Resolve being communicated to them that the General Assembly of this State are feelingly impressed with the very generous and patriotic services rendered by the Inhabitants of the said Counties, to which their influence had in great degree contributed and earnestly urge that they would press a continuance of the same active exertion; that the State of the Country is such as to call forth the utmost powers immediately in order to preserve its freedom and Independence, and that we may by the assistance of our friends in Virginia, as they have occasionally by us, as emergencies induced them, availed of it, we suggest our wishes that Colonel Arthur Campbell and Colonel William Preston of Virginia, thro' the Gentlemen mentioned, may be informed that their spirited conduct heretofore in favor of the

Southern States affords us the most perfect assurance that they will make every active and effectual exertion at the present critical moment in favor of this State.

At this same time, Ex-Governor Richard Caswell, an intimate acquaintance of Isaac Shelby, "depicted to him the melancholy circumstances of his own State. The Tories were in motion all over North Carolina, and their footsteps were marked with blood, and their path was indicated by the most desolating devastations. Governor Caswell conjured him to turn to the relief of his distressed country."<sup>46</sup> The Continental Congress, through their laudatory resolution of November 15, 1780, and the general officers of the American army, including Gates, Greene and Morgan, having ascertained the military value of the fighting frontiersmen, the inevitable result was that General Greene, on January 30, 1781, wrote to "the famous Colonel William Campbell," reminding him of the glory he had already acquired, and urging him "to bring, without loss of time, a thousand good volunteers from over the mountains."<sup>47</sup> The difficulties which the frontiersmen were experiencing with the Indians at this period, in a succession of campaigns, put out of the question the sending of any large force to assist Greene in his North Carolina campaign. No sooner had Sevier returned from the King's Mountain campaign than he was called upon to lead three hundred horsemen from Watauga, in conjunction with three hundred from Sullivan County, and one hundred from Washington County, Virginia—the whole under the command of Colonel Arthur Campbell, County-Lieutenant of Washington County, against the Cherokees. Upon the return of Colonel Campbell from this expedition, which was entirely successful, the first of January, 1781, he immediately communicated with General Nathaniel Greene, the Commander of the Southern Department, who accordingly, on February 6, 1781, appointed Arthur Campbell, William

<sup>46</sup>Haywood: *Civil and Political History of Tennessee*. In slavishly following Haywood, Ramsey (p. 251) falls into the error of stating that Caswell, instead of Abner Nash, was Governor of North Carolina in 1781.

<sup>47</sup>Draper: *King's Mountain and its Heroes*, 391; Summers: *South West Virginia*, 327-360 *passim*.

Preston, William Christian and Joseph Martin, of Virginia, and Robert Lanier, Evan Shelby, Joseph Williams and John Sevier, of North Carolina, commissioners to meet commissioners from the Cherokees to treat on the subject of boundaries, to arrange for an exchange of prisoners and terms of peace, and to invite the Indians to appoint a commission to visit Congress.<sup>48</sup>

The treaty was set for March 24, 1781, at the Long Island of Holston River. On that day Colonels Campbell, Martin, Shelby and Sevier assembled there, and sent off one of the Indians captured in the recent campaign to the Indian nation proposing peace and fixing June 10th following as the date for the conference. The date was again postponed until July 20, 1781.<sup>49</sup> Continued depredations by the hostile Indians earlier in the year seriously hampered the Tennessee and Virginia borderers at this time; and Col. John Sevier, suspecting that "the perpetrators of this mischief came from some hostile towns in the mountain gorges," had resolved to lead an expedition against them.

In March of this year Colonels John Sevier and Isaac Shelby undertook an expedition against the Chickamauga Indians, and to assist in this undertaking 200 of the militia of Washington county joined Colonel Isaac Shelby and marched to the Big Island in the French Broad River, where the troops were rendezvoused, from which point they marched for the sources of the Mobile River, and after the third day they crossed the Tennessee river at Scitico, at which point they held a council with the friendly Indians. On the 6th day they encamped on the Hiawassee river, and on the 7th day they crossed the river and passed into the territory of the hostile Indians, Colonel Sevier with his forces, marched immediately against Vann's Towns, which he reduced to ashes, and thence to Bull Town, at the head of Chickamogga Creek. After the destruction of this town they marched to the Coosa river, where they killed a white man by the name of Clements from whom it was ascertained that he was a sergeant in the British army, and it was believed that he instigated the Indians in their depredations against the frontiers. The army then proceeded to Spring Frog Town, thence up the Coosa river to Estanola and Indian Town which they destroyed. After thus destroying the

<sup>48</sup>Weeks: *General Joseph Martin and the War of the Revolution in the West*, 429-433; Haywood: *Civil and Political History of Tennessee* (1823); Summers: *Southwest Virginia*, 348.

<sup>49</sup>*Calendar Virginia State Papers*, II, 199.



Indian towns and killing all the Indian Warriors they could find, the troops returned to Chote, where a council was held with the friendly Indians, at the conclusion of which the troops were disbanded and returned to their homes.<sup>50</sup>

Although neither Shelby nor Sevier could lead a force of mountain men to the relief of Greene, Captain Charles Robertson raised a company of about one hundred and fifty volunteers and took a creditable part in the battle of Guilford Courthouse on March 15, 1781.<sup>51</sup> With equal patriotism, Colonel William Campbell raised a company of one hundred men of the militia of Washington County, and on February 25, 1781, set out to join the militia of Botetourt and Montgomery counties, on their march to join General Greene's army. "A large number would have gone," says Arthur Campbell in a letter to Governor Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, of date February 28, 1781, "were it not for the daily apprehension of attacks from the northward and southern Indians." About March 3, Colonel Campbell with sixty followers in his immediate command, effected a junction with Greene's army; but the total number of the combined forces of William Campbell and William Preston, who reached Greene about the same time, was upwards of four hundred.<sup>52</sup> These forces fought with staunchness and bravery at Guilford Courthouse, fully justifying Greene's description of the "back country people" as "bold and daring in their make."<sup>53</sup>

## XI

Following the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, Greene devoted his attention to reducing the British posts in South

<sup>50</sup>This account is taken from Summer: *Southwest Virginia*, 360-1. Cf. also Ramsey: *Tennessee*, 268-9; Weeks: *Joseph Martin*, 432. In his Autobiography, Shelby makes no mention of having taken part in this expedition.

<sup>51</sup>Ramsey: *Annals of Tennessee*, 251; cf. monograph, *Major Charles Robertson, and Some of His Descendants*, by Mrs. Charles Fairfax Henley. Cf. also Schenck's *North Carolina*, 1780-1, 302.

<sup>52</sup>*Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, 542; Johnson's *Greene*, i. 455. Draper is in error in giving the citation to Johnson, i, 438, in support of the statement that there were "four hundred mountaineers" under Campbell; the allusion is to the "400 regulars, under Colonel Richard Campbell," who had been organized and despatched to Greene's relief by the Baron Steuben. (Schenck's *North Carolina*: 1780-81, 272.)

<sup>53</sup>Cf. Ramsey's *Annals of Tennessee*, 251-2, for comments upon the probable results of that battle, had Shelby and Sevier led the over-mountain men to Greene's assistance.

Carolina and Georgia. After the fall of Augusta, on June 25, only Ninety-six remained in British hands; but Greene was foiled in his attack upon that post on June 18 and 19. From the "Camp at Bush River, in the District of Ninety-six, June 22, 1781," Greene once more appealed for aid to the Watauga riflemen in a letter to Isaac Shelby, hitherto unpublished. In this important letter he says:

We have been upon the eve of reducing all the enemies interior posts in South Carolina and Georgia. Ninety-Six was the last and four days more would have completed its reduction, when, unfortunately, we were compelled to raise the siege, the enemy having been reinforced at Charlestown. Lord Rawdon marched out in force and is now in our neighborhood. To secure the advantages of our past success it is necessary we should drive the enemy into the lower country. To enable us to effect this I beg you to march to our assistance a thousand good riflemen, well armed and equipped fit for action. If you can join us in a few days with such a force you will render an important service to the public in general, to the State of South Carolina in particular, and lay me under very particular obligations. I feel myself deeply interested in this application.

At the time when this letter reached Shelby, the military leaders of Virginia and Tennessee were busily concerned in the negotiations for peace with the Cherokees. Isaac Shelby attended the treaty at the Long Island of Holston from July 20 to July 29, 1781. The despatches from the Commissioners to General Greene, reporting the results of this treaty, were entrusted to Shelby for delivery, as it was known that he had promised General Greene to raise a force and march to his aid. The following letter, hitherto unpublished in any history, exhibits in detail the efforts made by Shelby and Sevier to raise and to march a force to coöperate with Greene.

Camp on Wattauga Washington County

North Carolina 3d August 1781.

HOND. SIR: In answer to your request of the 22d June last I rote you by the Express, that I should March by the 15th July with what force cou'd be rais'd in this quarter, but the Cherokee Treaty not being over found it impracticable to draw any force from here untill that important Business (to this frontier) was finally ratified, which was done the 29th July, and immediately every step taken to rein-

force you; about 700 good riflemen well mounted were now in motion toward you & should have been down in as short a time as possible but an Express arrived in camp last night from General Pickens that informed us of the Enemys retreat to Orangeburg and perhaps to Charles Town, that distance being so very great for us, the warm season of the year & the men not prepared for so long a Towar, had induced Col. Severe of this county and myself from proceeding on our march, until one hear farther accounts from that quarter tho the men are ordered to hold themselves in readiness to march on the shortest notice, and as our country is now in a state of peace and tranquillity, have no doubt but we can furnish you with a large proportion of good men from here whenever you may find necessary to require us.

I have the honour to be with. respect

Your Mo. Obt. Humble Servt.

Endorsed :

ISAAC SHELBY.<sup>54</sup>

From Colo. Shelby  
Augt. 3d., 1781.

After Shelby and Sevier concluded not to march, Shelby returned the despatches for Greene, mentioned above, to the Commissioners who had negotiated the treaty with the Cherokees.<sup>55</sup> Greene had been greatly depressed by the failure of Shelby and Sevier to march their seven hundred riflemen to his assistance; and throughout July he was frequently heard to exclaim: "What can detain Shelby and Sevier?"<sup>56</sup> Writing to Colonel Lee from Camden on August 25, Greene despondently says: "We are thus far on our way to join Colonel Henderson, but the tardiness with which everybody moves who was expected to join us, almost makes me repent that I have put the troops in motion. Near two hundred of the North Carolina Regulars, who ought to have been here four days past, are not likely to be here for four or five to come. Colonel Shelby, I believe, had gone back, if he ever set out, which I much doubt. General Pickens had not been heard of, and I fear will not have it in his power to bring any con-

<sup>54</sup>Original MS. letter owned by Arthur M. Rutledge, of Louisville, Kentucky. Draper is in error in stating that Greene's letter to Shelby miscarried. (*King's Mountain and its Heroes*, 413) Johnson erroneously cites Sevier as the author of Shelby's letter above (*Greene*, ii, 210).

<sup>55</sup>*Shelby's Autobiography*. The details of the treaty, it seems, have never been published. G. W. Greene clearly is in error in giving the date of Shelby's letter to Greene as August 6 (*Life of Nathaniel Greene*, iii, 374n). Cf. also Johnson: *Greene*, ii, 184-5.

<sup>56</sup>Johnson's *Greene*, ii, 210.

siderable reinforcements; nor do I expect Lieutenant-Colonel Henderson will be able to do much more. The State troops I am told (are) all getting sickly, as is the North Carolina Regulars. Not more than one-half the militia from North Carolina are arrived, and the whole that are here don't exceed four hundred. You know I never despair, nor shrink at difficulties, but our prospects are not flattering."<sup>57</sup>

Greene continued to rely upon receiving reinforcements from Watauga; and after his victory at Eutaw Springs, he despatched to Shelby the following letter, which was to have momentous consequences. This letter was not received by Shelby before the last of September or first of October, as it "came through Virginia, was found in Henry County by a neighbor, and brought out at his leisure."

Head Quarters,  
High Hills of Santee  
Sept. 16, 1781.

DEAR SIR:

I have the pleasure to inform you that we had an action with the British Army on the 8th in which we were victorious. We took 500 prisoners and killed and wounded a much greater number. We also took near 1000 stand of arms, and have driven the enemy near to the gates of Charleston. I have also the pleasure to inform you that, a large French fleet of nearly thirty sail of the line, has arrived in the Chesapeake bay, with a considerable number of land forces; all of which are to be employed against Lord Cornwallis, who it is suspected will endeavor to make good his retreat through North Carolina to Charleston. To prevent which I beg you to bring out as many riflemen as you can, and as soon as possible. You will march them to Charlotte, and inform me the moment you set out, and of your arrival.

If we can intercept his lordship it will put a finishing stroke to the war in the Southern states.

Should I get any intelligence which may change the face of matters I will advise you. I am with esteem and regard, your most obedient & humble Servant,

NATH. GREEN.

Col. Shelby, back parts of North Carolina.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup>H. Lee: *Campaign of 1781 in the Carolinas* (1824), 455-6.

<sup>58</sup>Letter of Isaac Shelby to C. S. Todd, June 28, 1822. This letter was first given publicity by Shelby in his *Memoir* because of the unwarranted charge brought by Judge Johnson in his biography of Greene (ii, 258) against Sevier and Shelby for having "deserted" Greene.



Upon the receipt of this letter, Shelby immediately communicated its contents by express to Sevier, who lived fifty miles away, and proposed a rendezvous of their men early in October. In making the enlistments, Shelby assured the volunteers that they should not be absent from their families for more than sixty days.

I made great exertions, and collected the men in a few days thereafter, many of them had not received more than 24 hours notice and lived more than 100 miles from the place of rendezvous—but were willing to go as the call was made for a special purpose—to wit, to intercept Lord Cornwallis who it was suspected would endeavor to make good his retreat through N. Carolina to Charleston and Gen. Green thought and so did I that if we could intercept him, it would put an end to the war in the S. states. To effect this important object, the people on the western waters were induced to volunteer their services—it was for this purpose that they were prevailed upon to leave their homes 500 miles from the scene of operations to defend a Maritime district of country surrounded with a dense population and in comparative quiet, while their own firesides were daily menaced by the Chicamauga Indians, who as you know had declared perpetual war against the whites and could never be induced to make peace. I was far advanced on my road when I received vague information of the surrender of Cornwallis in Virginia and hesitated whether to proceed. But as the men appeared to be willing to serve out a tour of duty which at the time of their entering the service I repeatedly assured them should not exceed 60 days absence from their homes, I proceeded on more leisurely to Green, who observed to me that such a body of horse could not remain in the vicinity of his camp on account of the scarcity of forage and requested me to serve out the tour with Marion, to which I consented, however, with some reluctance as the men would be drawn 70 or 80 miles further from their homes.<sup>59</sup>

Shelby quickly raised upwards of five hundred mounted riflemen; and Sevier with equal despatch raised two hundred mounted riflemen in Washington County. These two bodies, totalling some seven hundred, joined Marion at his camp on the Santee. The hint was given to Marion that “if he would keep them he must keep them busy.”<sup>60</sup>

It was with considerable reluctance that Shelby and Sevier

---

<sup>59</sup>Shelby's *Autobiography*.

<sup>60</sup>Greene Mss., cited in Greene's *Greene*, iii, 419.

consented to being attached to Marion's command. "Their men were called out upon a pressing emergency which no longer existed. They had been, moreover, enrolled only sixty days. Much of that time had already expired, and the contemplated service under Marion would take them still further from their distant homes. Besides Shelby was a member of the General Assembly of North Carolina, from Sullivan County, and its session at Salem took place early in December."<sup>6†</sup>

Almost at once they were engaged in very active service. The account of the ensuing events is contained in Shelby's *Autobiography*, here reproduced as written:

The enemies main Southern army, it was said, lay at that time near a place called Fergusson's Swamp on the great road bearing directly to Charleston. Gen'l Marion received information several weeks after our arrival at his camp that several hundred Hessians at a British Post near Monk's Corner, eight or ten miles below the enemies main army were in a state of mutiny, and would surrender the post to any considerable American force that might appear before it; and consulted his principal officers on the propriety of surprising it, which was soon determined on, and Shelby and Sevier solicited a command in it. Marion accordingly moved down eight or ten miles, and crossed over to the South side of the Santee River, from whence he made a detachment of five or six hundred men to surprise the post, the command of which was given to Colonel Mayhem. The detachment consisted of Shelby's mounted riflemen with Mayhem's Dragoons, about one hundred and eighty, and about twenty or thirty lowland mounted militia, the command of the whole was given to Colonel Mayhem. They took up their march early in the morning, and traveled fast through the woods until late in the evening of the second day, when they struck the great road leading to Charleston, about two miles below the enemy's post, which they intended to surprise. They lay upon their arms all night across the road with a design to intercept the Hessians in case the enemy had got notice of our approach and had ordered them down to Charleston before morning. In the course of the night which was as dark as pitch an orderly Sergeant rode into the line amongst us, and was taken prisoner. No material papers were found upon him before he made his escape except a pocket book which contained the strength of the enemy's main army and their number then on the sick list, which was very great.

---

<sup>†</sup>Ramsey: *Annals of Tennessee*, 254.

As soon as daylight appeared, we advanced to the British Post, and arrived there before sunrise. Col. Mayhem sent in one of his confidential officers with peremptory demand for a surrender of the garrison, who in a few minutes returned and reported that the officer commanding was determined to defend the post to the last extremity. Col. Shelby then proposed that he would go in himself and make another effort to obtain a surrender, which Mayhem readily consented to. Upon his approach he discovered a gap in the Abbacies, through which he rode up close to the building, when an officer opened one leaf of a long folding door. Col. Shelby addressed him in these words, "Will you be so mad as to suffer us to storm your works, if you do rest assured that every soul of you will be put to the sword, for there was several hundred men at hand that would soon be in with their tomahawks upon them"; he then inquired if they had any artillery. Shelby replied, "that they had guns that would blow them to pieces in a minute." Upon which the officer replied, "I suppose I must give up." Mayhem seeing the door thrown wide open, and Shelby ascend the high steps to the door, immediately advanced with his dragoons, and formed on the right. It was not until this moment we discovered another strong British Fort that stood five or six hundred yards to the East, and this is the first knowledge we had of that post, the garrison of which immediately marched out, about one hundred infantry and forty or fifty cavalry came around the North Angle of the fort all apparently with a design to attack us; they however soon halted as we stood firm and prepared to meet them. We took a hundred and fifty prisoners, all of them able to have fought from the windows of the house, or from behind Abbacies. Ninety of them were able to stand a march to Marion's camp that day which was near sixty miles; and we paroled the remainder most of whom appeared to have been sick, and unable to stand so hard a march. Information soon reached Marion's camp that the post had been burnt down immediately on our leaving it; but it was always the opinion of Col. Shelby that the enemy had abandoned it, and burnt it themselves, for Mayhem and Shelby were the two last men that left the place, and at that time there was not the least sign of fire or smoke about it. This it is most probable they would do, as they had previously destroyed, and burned down almost every building in that part of the country. This post was an immense brick building, calculated to hold a thousand men, and said to have been built by Sir John Gollitin a century before that period as well for defense as comfort; and was well enclosed by a strong abbacies. In it were found, besides the prisoners three or four hundred stand of arms, and as many new blankets. The American detachment left this post between nine and ten o'clock of the same day, and arrived at Marion's camp the night following at three o'clock. Gen. Stewart who commanded the Enemy's main army, eight or ten miles above made great

efforts to intercept us on our return. And it was announced to Marion before sunrise next morning that the whole British army was in the old field about three miles off at the outer end of the causeway that led into his camp. Shelby was immediately ordered out with the mountain men to meet him at the edge of the swamp, to attack the enemy if he attempted to advance and retreat at his own discretion, to where Marion would have his whole force drawn up to sustain him at an old field. Shortly after his arrival at the edge of the open plain, he observed two British officers ride up to a house equidistant between the lines, after they retired he rode to the house to know what inquiries they had made; a man told him that they had asked him when the Americans detachment had got in, what was their force, and of what troops it was composed; he replied that the detachment had come in just before day, that he had supposed as they went out they were six or eight hundred strong; and were composed chiefly of Shelby's and Sevier's mounted men, with Mayhem's Dragoons. The enemy then being in the edge of the woods, silently withdrew out of sight, and retreated back in the utmost disorder and confusion. A small party sent out to reconnoiter the enemy, reported that many of them had thrown away their knapsacks, guns and canteens. A few days afterwards Gen'l. Marion received intelligence that the British commander had retreated with his whole force to Charleston. Marion's sole design in moving from the camp when the mountain men first joined him, and crossing the Santee River below, was to get within striking distance of the before mentioned post, to make the said detachment, and be able to protect and support them on their retreat if hard pushed by the enemy. After this the enemy kept so within their lines that little or no blood was spilt, and all active movements appearing to be at an end, Shelby made application to Gen'l Marion for leave of absence to go to the Assembly of North Carolina, of which he was a member, and which was to meet about that time at Salem, and where he had private business of his own of the first importance. The mountain men had then but a day or two to stay, to complete their tour of duty, of sixty days, and he verily believes that they did serve it out, as he never heard to the contrary.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup>In a conversation with C. S. Todd, May 16, 1826, Shelby said concerning the affair at Monk's Corner:

"When we arrived on parade with the detachment against the British post near Monk's Corner, I did not know who was to command but I expected I was—as I had been informed that Marion was only a Lt.-Col. When I understood the command had been assigned to Marion I made objections and refused to march, as I was the superior officer. The detachment stood still until Marion himself came from a distance of one-half mile who entreated me in the most friendly language to yield to the arrangement he had made. That Marion was well acquainted with the country through which we were to pass and with the immediate neighborhood of the post we were to attack. I submitted to his request because I was to stay but a short time in camp and I thought Marion to be much of a gentleman and so he treated me. Indeed, throughout the expedition he gave me no orders but consulted me on all occasions. These mountaineers were poor men who lived by keeping stock in the range beyond the mountains, they were volunteers and neither expected nor received any compensation



## XII

On November 25, having virtually filled out their term of enlistment, the mountaineers set off homeward in a deep snow. About November 28th, Shelby applied to Marion for leave of absence to attend the session of the Assembly of North Carolina, which was to meet at the Moravian Town (Salem). Shelby had been elected a member of the legislature from Sullivan County and was charged with a "Memorial to be laid before that body in relation to a subject of deep importance." According to Shelby's own statement, General Marion "readily granted my request and addressed a letter by me to General Green which I was permitted to see directed to him at the High Hills of Santee where he expected General Green was still encamped. In this letter I have a distinct recollection that he spoke in the highest terms of the conduct of the mountaineers and gave me my full share of the credit for the capture of the British Post."<sup>63</sup>

Shelby attended the North Carolina Assembly at Salem in December, 1781, which adjourned without action. On returning to Holston, as stated by Draper, Shelby "was engaged during the spring in preparing for an expedition against the Chickamauga band of Cherokees, and the hostile Creeks at the sources of the Mobile, in which enterprise he was to have been joined by two hundred men from Washington County, Virginia; but on account of the poverty of that State, the authorities discouraged the scheme, and reaching Big Creek, thirty miles below Long Island of Holston, the expedition was relinquished."<sup>64</sup> Having again been elected a member of the North Carolina Assembly, Shelby attended the session at

<sup>63</sup>Shelby's statements effectually dispose of Judge Johnson's malicious charges (*Greene*, ii, 258ff), repeated by G. W. Greene (*Greene*, iii, 419). The whole matter has been thoroughly traversed by Ramsey in his *Annals of Tennessee* (1853 edn.) 253-261ff.

<sup>64</sup>In this connection, cf. *N. C. State Records*, xvi, 696-7-8, for plans for the expedition.

except liquidated certificates worth 2*s.* in the pound. Gen. Greene had no right nor ought to have expected to command their services. For myself for the whole services of 1780 and 1781 both in camp and in the assembly I received a liquidation certificate which my agent in that county after my removal to Kentucky sold for six yards of Middling Broadcloth and I gave one coat of it to the person who brought it out to me—indeed I was proud of receiving that."

Hillsborough in April, 1782.<sup>65</sup> At this session he took an active part in the proceedings, and was engaged busily on important committees. At this session was passed the liberal "Act for the relief of the Officers and Soldiers in the Continental line, etc.," rewarding the revolutionary soldiers for their patriotic services—to every soldier who should continue in the ranks until the end of the war 640 acres of land; to every officer a larger quantity according to his rank, a colonel receiving 7,200 and a brigadier 12,000 acres; and to General Greene 25,000 acres. Section VIII of this act reads as follows:

*And be it further enacted, That Absalom Tatom, Isaac Shelby, and Anthony Bledsoe, Esquires, or any two of them, are appointed commissioners in behalf of the State, to examine and superintend the laying off the land in one or more tracts allotted to the officers and soldiers, and they shall be accompanied by one or more agents, whom the officers may appoint, to assist in the business; and in case any commissioner so appointed shall die, or refuse to act his Excellency the Governor shall fill up the vacancy.*<sup>66</sup>

Full instructions were given the commissioners by Governor Alexander Martin,<sup>67</sup> and, accompanied by a guard of one hundred men, they arrived at Nashborough and the Cumberland in January, 1783. Under the provisions of the act above, the commissioners were instructed to settle the pre-emption claims of those who had settled on the Cumberland River prior to June 1, 1780. Under conditions of grave danger from the Indians, who killed various members of the Cumberland settlements, including one of their own party, the commissioners satisfactorily concluded their task in the early spring of 1783.<sup>68</sup> Their visit marks the beginning of prosperity and moderate security from the Indians, for the exposed settlements along the Cumberland.

<sup>65</sup>Cf. *N. C. State Records*, xvi, 68, 101, 109, 128, *passim*. For a long and laborious, yet imperfect sketch of Isaac Shelby, compare *National Portrait Gallery*, 1 (1834). This sketch, by his son-in-law, Charles Stewart Todd, once Minister to Russia, is reproduced, with a number of alterations, in G. W. Griffin's *Memoir of Col. Chas. S. Todd* (1873), 157-174.

<sup>66</sup>*State Records of N. C.*, xxiv, 421.

<sup>67</sup>*N. C. State Records*, xvi, 713; Martin to the Commissioners.

<sup>68</sup>Putnam: *History of Middle Tennessee*, 162-3, 172, 177, contains a description of the work of the commissioners.

On January 13, 1783, Isaac Shelby, Joseph Martin, and John Donelson were appointed commissioners on behalf of the State of Virginia to treat with the Cherokees, Creeks and Chickasaws for peace. Shelby did not attend the treaties subsequently held with the Chickamaugas at the Long Island of Holston on July 9, 1783; and with the Chickasaws at the French Lick on November 5 and 6, 1783.<sup>69</sup>

In fact, more important business now occupied his attention; for in April he was married to the young woman whom he had long loved—Susanna Hart. She was the daughter of Colonel Nathaniel Hart of North Carolina, a prominent member of the Transylvania Company. Isaac Shelby courted his sweetheart at the famous fort of Boonesborough, in the neighborhood of which her father had been slain by the Indians the preceding year.<sup>70</sup> No doubt he wore at the time that memorable "suit of middling broadcloth," which was his recompense for his service to his country in the King's Mountain campaign. In the union of the names of Hart and Shelby, and in the associations which cluster about them, may be recognized a living symbol of the greatness of Kentucky for more than a century and a quarter.

The marriage, appropriately solemnized as the Revolution came to a triumphant close, marks the end of the era. Of Shelby's future career—as first Governor of the Commonwealth, general eminent citizen—a new study must be projected.<sup>71</sup> A fitting summary of the virtues of this distinguished American, whose honored name is forever linked with the history of North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, and the nation, is contained in these words of Governor James T. Morehead, in his address at Boonesborough (May 25, 1840) ↓

"Great men," said Mr. Burke, "are the guide posts and landmarks in the State." The life of Isaac Shelby is a signal example of un-

<sup>69</sup>Weeks: *Joseph Martin*, 435-6.

<sup>70</sup>Cf. Mrs. Ellet's *Pioneer Women of the West*, 19-22, in sketch of Mary Bledsoe; Address of George Blackburn Kinkead, delivered at Boonsborough Fort, Oct. 5, 1907; Taylor's *Historic Sullivan*, 36-7.

<sup>71</sup>In this connection compare the address of Mrs. Mary Shelby Wilson at the unveiling and presentation to Memorial Continental Hall of the marble bust of Isaac Shelby, April 19, 1811.

blemished personal integrity and enlarged public usefulness, which may be safely imitated by all those who aspire to become benefactors of their country. Starting into active life without the aid of fortune or education, he pursued the gradations of military rank from the lieutenancy of a militia company to the command of a regiment—he rose from the humble station of a surveyor among the pioneers to the governorship of a great Commonwealth—and was distinguished in all the posts to which he was called. His mind like his body was strong and vigorous: boldness, energy, decision, were its leading characteristics. Capable of thinking for himself, he investigated every important subject that came within the range of his private or public duties, with candor and deliberation; and having formed his opinions, he followed them with unshaken firmness. He spoke and wrote as he thought—with great force and vigor—always expressing his opinions with manly frankness, and a lofty disdain of personal consequences. His manners—derived from the school in which he was brought up—were plain and simple, and commanded, without any affectation of dignity, the universal deference of his associates. He was sincere but not profuse in his professions of attachment—faithful and steadfast to his friends when those attachments were once formed. Elevating himself in the discharge of his official duties above the influence of private considerations, he sought and rewarded merit for his country's sake. If such was his character as a public man, he maintained all the relations of life with equal credit and success.



## APPENDIX

The present research, dealing with the career of Isaac Shelby down to the close of the Revolution, is a fragment of a larger study, a detailed biography. In the preparation of these two papers, I have been materially assisted by my friend, Judge Samuel M. Wilson, of Lexington, Kentucky. He has placed at my disposal original and unpublished material, as well as interesting contributions to the history of Kentucky and the West which have remained hidden in inaccessible publications. I am also indebted to Mr. William R. Shelby of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and to Colonel Samuel King of Bristol, Tennessee-Virginia, for transcripts of valuable documents throwing light upon Shelby's career.

There are a few statements to be made here, which are the results of more intensive study and purport either to correct or to modify statements already made.

In regard to the parents of General Evan Shelby, to wit: Evan Shelby, Sr., and Catherine Davies, it is certain that they were natives of Wales, with a large percentage of Welsh blood. Evan and Davies are characteristic Welsh names. Those best informed in regard to the family's early history, however, believe that the name was originally Selby, and that the Shelbys were of English extraction.

The records at Upper Marlboro, the county seat of Prince George's County, Maryland, reveal many transactions in which the Shelbys figure as residents of said county prior to the creation of Frederick County (not carved out of Prince George's County until 1748). It is probable that the immigrant ancestors of the Shelby family settled in Maryland nearer 1730 than 1735. Ultimately, by the formation of Washington County, the residence of Evan Shelby, near the North Mountain, was found to be in Washington County. (See Part I, 109-110.)

The earliest surveys and grants to Evan Shelby, Senior and Junior, make it reasonably certain that the Shelbys resided continuously in Maryland from 1739 or earlier to 1771 or 1772. In particular, see Scharf's *History of Western Maryland*, ii, 982-6. (See Part I, 112-3.)

Isaac Shelby's mother was Letitia Cox (correctly given in Part I, p. 114, inadvertently given as "Scott" on p. 113). There is strong documentary evidence that she was born, not in Frederick Town, but somewhere in Prince George's County, Maryland. She was married to Evan Shelby probably in August, 1744.

Isaac Shelby was not the eldest son of Evan Shelby, being the second son and third child. Susannah Shelby, born about 1746, was the first born child and John Shelby, born about 1748, was the second child and eldest son. Evan Shelby brought to Virginia five

sons: John, Isaac, Evan, Moses and James. A younger daughter, Catherine, was married to Captain James Thompson. (Part I, 113.)

Within recent years the remains of General Evan Shelby have been removed from his original grave and re-interred in East View Cemetery, Bristol. (Part I, 114.)

In Part I, 133, twelfth line from bottom should read (in part):  
“ . . . it was *not* supposed . . . ”

In Part I, 134, the last two lines should read: “opened at St. Asaph’s on October 13, 1779; and again at St. Asaph’s, on April 26, 1780, after various sessions at Harrodsburg and elsewhere, the court announced that its.”

In Part I, 135, line 11, “1778” is a misprint for “1776.”

There is good reason to believe that the “Captain I. Shelby” referred to in Clark’s *Memoir*, is not Isaac, but James Shelby. The “J” was misread “I.” At this time, Isaac Shelby was a Major, under commission from Governor Jefferson of Virginia. It is uncertain whether this James Shelby was a brother or a cousin of Isaac Shelby. (Part I, 136.)

In Part I, 141, foot-note 49, line 2, “eighty-three” is a misprint for “sixty-three.”

## NEGRO SOLDIERS

BY CHIEF JUSTICE WALTER CLARK

In view of the enlistment of negroes as soldiers in the present war, it may be of interest to note the part that they have taken as soldiers in our previous wars.

In the Revolutionary War there was no small number of negroes who served as soldiers. These were mostly free negroes, but no small part of them were slaves, who served, usually, but not always, as substitutes for their owners under promise of freedom at the end of the war. This promise was usually kept, but not always. An act of the Virginia Legislature passed in 1783, recites that every slave who had enlisted upon the faith of a promise of freedom from his master should be declared free accordingly, and directed the Attorney-General of that State to institute proceedings in all cases where the promise had not been complied with, and that the court on proof, should enter a decree of emancipation. It is greatly to the credit of that State that such act should have been passed.

In North Carolina it does not appear that such act was necessary, however, as the only statute is one enfranchising a certain negro, Ned Griffin, of Edgecombe, whose master, William Kitchen, had promised him his liberty on condition of service in the Continental line of this State for twelve months, which he had done, and the act declared him a free man. Laws 1784, ch. 70. Laws 1779, ch. 12, validated the freedom of all slaves who had served in the army under the promise of being free.

These negroes, whether freemen, or slaves, enlisting under a promise of freedom, did not serve in separate organizations, but in the ranks with the white soldiers. This appears in the diary of Hugh McDonald of this State, and also in other memoirs and diaries of those times.

In the first collision between the Americans and the British soldiers in Boston the leader of the popular revolt was Crispus

Attucks, a free negro, who was killed by the soldiers, and whose statue today stands on the Boston Commons.

At the battle of Bunker Hill, Peter Salem, a negro slave who had volunteered on promise of freedom, behaved with conspicuous courage, and it was he who shot Major Pitcairn in reply to a summons to surrender. Bancroft says that "In the forces under Washington the free negroes had representatives in various companies and regiments, and their names are preserved on the pension list of the nation." At that time slavery existed in all the Colonies and, the draft laws covering only "free persons," no slaves were drawn except those who went on promise of freedom or as substitutes for their masters. These served usually in the ranks with the other soldiers, but it is recorded that Major Samuel Lawrence of Groton, Mass., raised a command composed entirely of free negroes. The Continental Congress passed an act forbidding the acceptance or retention of such as were "still held in bondage," and thereupon the practice obtained of conferring freedom upon those slaves who served as substitutes for their masters, or voluntarily.

Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina, on one occasion moved Congress that "all negroes be dismissed from the Continental armies." This was overwhelmingly defeated and, when later, Congress issued an order directing that negro soldiers who were slaves should be rejected, General Washington replied that the negroes "are very much dissatisfied at being discarded, and, as it is apprehended that refusal to use them may induce them to seek employment from the enemy, I have taken the liberty to suspend your resolution concerning them." Congress thereupon reconsidered and repealed the resolution.

After the battle of Monmouth Washington's army returns showed 755 colored soldiers present for duty, being about a tenth of the army. In 1778 Rhode Island passed an act enlisting all men of color of the draft age with a provision that those who were slaves should be free from the time of joining. This was followed by Massachusetts and New



York. Sir Henry Clinton, the British Commander-in-Chief, issued a proclamation offering bounties to all negroes who would desert to his standard, which was also done by Cornwallis and Tarleton in the South. Mr. Jefferson wrote that this action had cost Virginia 30,000 able bodied slaves in one year. To meet the British offer, Madison, Generals Greene and Lincoln, and other leading patriots advocated a general recruiting of the Continental forces by offering emancipation to the slaves. This was not, however, generally done, but there was a considerable number of slaves who obtained freedom by serving as substitutes for their owners or their sons in the army.

In the War of 1812 there were a great many colored men who served in the ranks, thruout the country, but there is no available record that at that time any slaves in the South were admitted as substitutes or otherwise on condition of freedom. There were a good many who went over to the enemy on condition of freedom, and two battalions of negroes served at New Orleans under Jackson. In New York two regiments of "freemen of color" were raised to receive the same pay and allowance as whites, and there was a proviso that "any able bodied slave" in that State might enlist "with the written assent of his master and mistress who were to receive his pay," while the negro was to be set free on his honorable discharge. After the battle of New Orleans General Andrew Jackson, in his proclamation, bore emphatic testimony to the part borne by negro troops in that great victory and their bravery and good conduct during their service under him. The British had two regiments of West India negroes in that battle.

During the Civil War 180,000 negroes served in the Union Army. Some of these were from the North, and served either under the draft or as volunteers, but by far the greatest part of them were fugitive slaves who served in northern regiments, either as substitutes, or upon payment of bounties given

by townships and counties in the North to fill up their required quotas under the draft.

The Confederate government was asked by General Lee in the fall of 1864 to conscript slaves as soldiers, offering them freedom, but this was opposed by President Davis and others, and the act did not pass till February, 1865, and only a few companies were raised. We often conscripted free negroes, and sometimes slaves, to build forts and breastworks. Those surrounding Raleigh were thus built.

It is believed that with very rare exceptions the colored Union troops in the Civil War served as separate organizations, as now, tho officered by white men. This was true during our Spanish War in 1898. This State, however, which sent two regiments of white soldiers to that war, sent one regiment of colored troops, officered entirely by colored officers, from its Colonel, James H. Young, down.

In the United States Regular Army, ever since the Civil War, there has been several regiments of colored troops, but these have been officered entirely by white men, as only one colored man has ever graduated at West Point.

In the present war there are probably 200,000 colored troops in the United States Army, most of whom have white officers, tho there are some company officers of color. The British and French have many colored troops, of whom the Senegalese are exceptionally brave. It is related that when some American colored troops landed at a French port they were delighted to see colored troops ashore, and commenced talking to them in English, supposing that all negroes spoke our tongue. They proved, however, to be troops from French Africa.

The conduct of the negro troops has generally been good in peace, as well as in war. There was a painful exception in the emeute at Brownsville, Texas, some years ago, and also in the recent riot in a colored regiment at San Antonio, for which some thirty or forty of the colored soldiers were hanged

by the government for mutiny. It seems that on both occasions whiskey was at the bottom of the trouble.

The history of our wars shows that colored men, when well led by competent officers, have always shown up as brave soldiers. The two instances named of misconduct seem to be exceptions to their general good conduct and orderly behavior in time of peace.

What is said above refers only to colored slaves. Those acquainted with our Colonial history know, however, that there were many Indian slaves in the Colonies, especially in New England, and some of them in North Carolina, and not a few white slaves. The latter were usually sent to this country from Great Britain to serve out a sentence for crime and sometimes for debt. Among these white slaves was the Lieutenant Colonel of a North Carolina regiment, who on his march to Germantown, with his regiment in 1777 was humiliated by being recognized and claimed in Maryland as a slave, he having escaped thence to North Carolina where he had served an honorable career and risen in life. Massachusetts sold most of her Indian slaves in the West Indies, bringing in return cargoes from Guinea of Africans, who they said were better adapted for work. Among those who, after the Pequot War, Massachusetts sold to the West Indies, were the wife and son of King Philip, the former being the daughter of Massasoit, who had been the best friend whom the Colonists of that Province had ever had, and who had rendered the whites notable service.

Probably the most distinguished colored soldier was General Thomas Alexandre Dumas who served under Napoleon, and at one time was commander in chief of the army of the Eastern Pyrenees. He was the son of a West India negro mother, and to his son Alexandre Dumas the elder, the famous novelist, we are indebted for the famous novels "Monte Cristo," the "Three Musketeers," with its famous trio Porthos, Athos, and Aramis, and the greatest of all D'Artagnan,

“The Forty-five Guardsmen,” and others. Hannibal and his Carthaginians were not negroes, though from Africa.

The free negroes voted in North Carolina till 1835, and under the Federal Constitution three-fifths of the slave population was taken as a basis in the apportionment for members of Congress. Republican disgust at finding that by emancipation, which made negroes freemen, the basis was changed and twenty new members of Congress had been given to the South, is said to have been a strong motive for passing the XV Amendment.



## NORTH CAROLINA'S DEAD

At the unveiling of the monument and statue to the Confederate dead at Morganton, 22 January, 1918, the address was delivered by Chief Justice Clark. The following extract from his speech is of more than passing interest:

As against 2,850,000 men in the Union line, the South, first and last, was able to send to the front about 650,000. Of these North Carolina sent 125,000, or nearly one-fifth of the whole number. Of these, 43,000 of our best and bravest, being one-third, came not home again.

They sleep where the silver Shenandoah sweeps along; some rest on the heights at Gettysburg; some sleep by the sounding sea at Charleston; others at Vicksburg,

“By the great inland river, whence the fleets of iron have fled,  
And the green grass quivers above the ranks of the dead”;

on the plains of Chickamauga and where the Georgian pines are bare; around Petersburg, in the swamps of the Chickahominy and where Potomac's “breezes answering low sooth many a soldier's endless sleep.”

Across the fields of yesterday they come back to us, as we knew and remember them, in all the splendor of their young manhood. Age has not withered them. Time and trouble have not touched them. The Roman poet said that it was “sweet to die for one's country.” It was glorious for them to pass in the prime of their powers, with the sunlight of victory on their faces and fronting the morning. They died in the full assurance and confident hope of our ultimate success. They saw not the torn and tattered battle flags furled forever at Appomattox. The bugle did not ring out for them, as for you, the final call to stack arms. No drums beat for them the retreat. Their ears caught only the sound of the reveille. They live in immortal youth.

## OTHER NORTH CAROLINA HEROINES

BY MARY HILLIARD HINTON

During these exciting and troublous times of the world's existence when woman is constantly engaged in the service of her country, helping in ways heretofore unknown, giving freely of her time in unstinted service and keeping her purse ever open, it will be interesting, perhaps, to look backward thru the pages of history and gather notes of the spirit of patriotism and heroism of our brave and loyal women patriots, whose deeds have been recorded, and whose sufferings show what our foremothers endured, that they may inspire us to bear nobly whatever trials may be in store. While they were subjected to innumerable privations their lot seems incomparable with the barbarities imposed by "the fiery Hun" upon the weaker population of grief-stricken Belgium and the devastated regions of Northern France and Poland. It was with the British and Tories we were waging a civilized war, not barbarians whose hearts hesitate at no cruelties. That struggle for independence fortunately took place one hundred and forty-eight years ago, during which period the United States of America have developed into one of the leading world powers, whereby she is now able to express to her splendid ally—France—the gratitude of an appreciative people and to render to her mother country the duty of a worthy offspring.

North Carolina's record of her heroic women is indeed meager, and many of her heroines are known by name only with sparse local tradition as proof their bravery. Of quite a number just one brave incident can be cited, which can be accepted as indicative of their conduct during the Revolutionary War. Among the latter can be found the names of Mrs. Elizabeth Forbis, Mrs. Mary Morgan, Mrs. Rachel Denny, Mrs. Sarah Logan, Mrs. Elizabeth McGraw, Miss Ann Fergus, Mrs. Margaret Caruthers and Miss Margaret McBride.

Caruthers, in *The Old North State in 1776*, has preserved their records from oblivion, but since that rare volume has long since been out of print and few copies are to be found, to give these noble women further recognition, this brief sketch is presented thru the columns of THE BOOKLET.

Among the staunch and brave patriots who were mortally wounded at the Battle of Guilford Court House was Colonel Arthur Forbis. In that same engagement, under his command, was his brother-in-law, Thomas Wiley, also a brave, unwavering Whig, who was wounded. Possessing similar loyalty to the patriotic cause, Elizabeth Forbis, née Wiley, wife of Colonel Forbis, bore with fortitude and patience her severe and continued trials and sufferings. Coming from such stock, it is no marvel that she displayed unusual traits of character, of which the following is illustrative.

Several days after the Battle of Guilford Court House Thomas Morgan, who lived a mile and a half west of the Forbis home, found wandering on his premises two horses whose "bobbed tails" showed that they were the property of the British and Tories, since the horses of the American cavalry were distinguished from that of the enemy by having long tails. These he felt he had a right to appropriate, for the British and Tories had seized all available property of the Whigs.

Mr. Morgan, knowing that Mrs. Forbis was now in dire need of a horse and in a destitute condition, presented her with one the morning following. Colonel Forbis was either dead or dying of his wounds; the Tories had cleared the plantation of almost all cattle, provisions, grain, etc.; her eldest boy was a mere lad of thirteen or fourteen years and could only plough a gentle animal, her sole means of making a crop. This gift she accepted thankfully and immediately put her son to the plough handle. However, on the next day as he was turning furrows in a corn field and the mother was dropping corn after the plough and covering it with a hoe, two

young men appeared on the scene and demanded the return of the horse then in the plough, one claiming it was his own. Mrs. Forbis did not dream the men were from the British Army, then thirty or forty miles south of that locality on the way to Wilmington. With this demand she flatly refused to comply. It was repeated two or three times, she still refusing to obey, when he ordered the lad to take the horse from the plough. She forbade her son to do so, he standing resolute, looking from her to the enemy, respecting the one and fearing the other, but obeying the mother. Thereupon the man stepped forward to unfasten the traces himself, and instantly she sprang in front of him, with a hoe raised high above her head, and with a firm expression and determined manner, declared that if he touched the horse "she would split his head with the hoe." This act produced the desired effect—the horse remained in her plough and was never molested again.

Mrs. Forbis lived to enjoy the independence of her country many years, attaining an honorable old age, noted for her cheerful disposition and as a warm-hearted Christian character.

Of Colonel Forbis' sister and near neighbor, Mrs. Mary Morgan, wife of Thomas Morgan, this daring feat is related:

At the time the British Army was encamped on the south side of South Buffalo Creek, the same side on which Thomas Morgan lived, on the plantation of Ralph Gorrell, Esq., and from this camp one day a party sallied forth bent on plunder, taking in Colonel Paisley's plantation and later the Morgan home, in the absence of the owner, only Mrs. Morgan and her little brood being present. As the place had frequently experienced visitations of marauding soldiers but little could be found. Still they ransacked the dwelling from cellar to garret, as well as the kitchen and smoke-house, corn-crib and barn, leaving naught in their wake. In the interval Mrs. Morgan's active mind was at work and the thought occurred to her to retaliate by removing the valise from the saddle of



the commanding officer and dropping it in an inside corner of the fence among the tall weeds, a few panels below the horse from which it was taken. As they prepared to leave the sun had nearly reached the horizon, and five or six miles lay between them and their camp, there was considerable hurry and confusion which caused the officer in command to overlook the loss of his valise. On opening it, Mrs. Morgan found it to be filled with fine linen shirts, collars, cravats, and other articles which in value far exceeded that which she had lost.

The true Irish wit displayed by Mrs. Rachel Denny has amused many a listener. She was the wife of Walter Denny, a strict elderly Scotch-Irish Presbyterian, who dwelt far down on North Buffalo Creek, as staunch in his Whig principles as true to his religious faith and highly esteemed throughout the neighborhood. During his absence from home when the British Army was near by, a foraging party under command of the proper officer invaded his home, pillaging every repository of his possession. During this trying ordeal the old lady, his wife, sat by utterly helpless in the presence of the commanding officer, who sat near amusing himself with her. Thus she saw flour, meat and meal as well as blankets she had made with her own hands seized by ruthless hands. The officer began by asking her where her husband was, to which she replied she did not know. If she did know would she tell, was the next question. Kindly she said "No, and no gentleman of honorable feelings would ever ask or expect such a thing." When asked if she was not afraid that he would be caught and hung as a rebel, she replied, "as he was engaged in a good cause, he was in good hands, and she hoped he would be protected." After cursing her most profanely he informed her he thought "the women in that part of the country as damned rebels as the men, and that one-half of them, at least, ought to be shot or hung." To all this she did not reply.

Spying a Bible and a hymn-book on the table, he exclaimed

that he presumed "the old man prayed every day in his family." To this Mrs. Denny added that when at home they usually had family prayers. "Well, does he ever pray for King George?" followed in a sneering, haughty air. She gave an indirect answer. He then told her emphatically she must tell him "He *must* pray for King George." Very indifferently she replied that perhaps a good man might pray for the salvation of his soul, "not for the success of his arms; for he had sinned so long and so much that there was very little encouragement to pray even for his *salvation*, and to pray for the success of his arms when they were employed to oppress and to enforce obedience to unrighteous authority, would be praying in direct opposition to the instructions of the Bible, which would be offensive to God as it would be useless to man." Whereupon the officer told her that her husband must pray for the king or be treated as a rebel. "Ah, indeed," said Mrs. Denny, "he has been denounced as a rebel long ago, and no thanks to you nor King George either that he still lives to defend his country." "Well," he replied, "do you tell him that he must pray for King George tonight, for I intend to come or send men to ascertain, and if he does not, I will have him taken and hung up to the limb of that oak tree in the yard." "Aye, fa'th," retorted the brave old dame, with consummate nonchalance, "Aye, fa'th, an' monny a prayer has been wasted upon King George."

The young Lieutenant, baffled, summoned his men as the sun was fast sinking in the west and quickly galloped back to camp, taking with them considerable plunder, but by no means all of Mr. Denny's abundance.

During the stormy days of the Revolution the women were just as willing as the men to suffer and share privations with them. The country being thinly settled, they were much isolated and had to face innumerable perils. Frequently the quick wit and ready, proper word of some intelligent woman achieved a decided triumph. To this class could be assigned Mrs. Sarah Logan, noted for her repartee, excellent sense and

kindness of heart, and who was universally esteemed. She was a native of North Carolina, though after her marriage she lived in South Carolina, near the dividing line. Many incidents occurred that testified to her patriotism, judgment, character and ready wit. This one related here in particular is illustrative of her varied experiences.

One morning in November when the air was cold and frosty four or five Tories swooped down upon her home in the absence of her husband. They were known to her by sight and name, though they were not of her class. She spied them as soon as they entered the lane and at once guessed their purpose. She instantly resolved to devise some scheme by which to safeguard her property against their pillage.

They rode up and hitched their horses to the fence within a few feet of the house and entered without ceremony. Mrs. Logan feigned a cordial welcome and invited them to be seated, adding that such cold weather, after a long ride, they must be cold and insisted on their sitting nearer the fire, on which she had more wood piled. She inquired of the health of their families, of the neighborhood; in fact, received these avowed enemies bent on pillage as graciously as though they were friends. She apologized for the upturned state of her house, claiming that her duties of housecleaning had been neglected for a sick child and was just so engaged as they approached, that if they would excuse her giving annoyance she would proceed and finish in two or three minutes. She swept vigorously, raising a cloud of dust. She next began making up the bed, beating the feathers and seizing sheets and bedspread and blankets, taking each at a time, she stood on the door-step and shook them violently, making a great noise and flutter as each spread out on the breeze. The horses became alarmed, one broke loose, then another, until all severed their bridles and galloped in every direction. The Tories, realizing that their steeds were more valuable than any plunder to be procured at the Logans', took to their heels in hot pursuit, catching, as they bolted, Mrs. Logan's regrets—

“very sorry”—“what a pity.” Thus kindness proved of more service than the sword or a sharp retort.

There lived in Surry County, near Mount Airy, during the “Old War” (as the old people termed the Revolution) Mrs Eliabeth McGraw. She was prior to her marriage to Jacob McGraw a Miss Waller, daughter of George Waller of Henry County, Virginia. Both she and her husband were staunch Whigs; therefore their home was naturally an objective point with the bands of Tories scouring that section. Still an account of one raid is handed down in that locality. It occurred on a bitterly cold night when Jacob McGraw was away from home and his wife was the sole white person on the place. When she ascertained they were approaching she made all the negroes who could leave run and seek some hiding place, and in the meantime she engaged busily in wrapping the pickaninnies in the tow that had been *hackled* from flax that day, dressed and secreted them in a closet, just finishing as the Tories burst into the house. They searched the place from top to bottom, but, strange to say, missed locating the little negroes concealed in the tow. They appropriated all valuables and lastly took from the cupboard Mrs. McGraw’s shining pewter plates. Thru the rims of each they bored holes and ran a hickory withe which they carried along with them. Years after Mrs. McGraw had the peculiar experience of taking dinner at a neighbor’s when the meal was served from her own pewter plates with holes in the rims. She attained a great age, dying near Mount Airy in 1836.

Even amid the horrors of war people can and do relax from their responsibilities and sufferings long enough to engage in diverting festivities, better perhaps for the change. During Major Craig’s occupancy of Wilmington he and his officers attended many balls and other entertainments. Tradition still keeps alive in New Hanover amusing things that took place at these social affairs. One anecdote, though ludicrous, that has not been lost, concerned Miss Ann Fergus, a



lass of a wealthy Scotch family of fine social standing. She possessed a superior intellect, was well educated. Exceedingly tall—five feet ten inches—but when wearing the high heel slippers of that period, as she would have done at a ball, she must have measured fully six feet. One of her brothers was in the Patriot Army, possibly also a lover. One evening she attended a ball at which a number of British officers were present. Among them was an exceedingly diminutive man, full of conceit, who was most persistent in his attentions to the American ladies, being both impertinent and presumptuous, as his conduct to Miss Fergus proved. During the evening he sought her out and asked for a kiss. With all seriousness and perhaps *hauteur* she replied "Yes, he might have one, if he could take one without getting upon a stool." Whereupon he tiptoed and stretched his neck and she drew herself up to her full height, and he "couldn't come it." The whole company present were intensely amused at so ludicrous a spectacle. Ridicule caused his instant flight as well as brought to an end his attentions to American belles.

It is not often that a woman possesses such spirit of daring and bravery that she is willing to attack an enemy of the other sex, assuming the role of aggressor. Of such type was Mrs. Margaret (Gillespie) Caruthers, a native of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, who settled with her husband, James Caruthers, in middle North Carolina some time prior to the Revolution. Her family included four sons and several daughters, all eventually becoming useful citizens and church members. Three of her sons served in the Revolution. The eldest, Robert, being a partisan leader, won the rank of captain and was very active, being almost always on duty. The youngest, who was retained at home to protect his parents and attend to the farm, met death at the hands of Tories disguised as Indians, as strong circumstantial evidence proved. His dead body was found by a creek on the plantation almost in sight of the house. He had gone to a neighbor's, two miles distant on an errand. The report of a gun drew his mother

and sisters to the spot to find him dead, scalped with a bloody knife bearing the name of a neighbor, lying near his head. Ever after when the said neighbor met a member of the family his countenance expressed guilt and he manifestly shunned them. Thus deprived of her main support, with her husband, not infirm but passed the draftable age, compelled for safety to conceal himself, she found herself unprotected, especially during the trying year of 1780. Her wonderful self-possession never failed her in time of danger. Her firmness and energy of character, combined with the "spirit of '76," rendered her far from helpless in emergencies.

Not long after the tragedy just recounted, two Tories, neighbors, came to plunder her premises. They at once attempted to steal a fine young black mare, of unusual beauty and splendid qualities, which they brought out and hitched to a shade tree on the west side of the house." After packing up all provisions, blankets, etc., to be found in the house they entered the corn-crib to fill their bags with corn. The quaint form of crib of that day had an opening thru which a man must thrust one leg, next his head "and with his body laid beside the projecting leg force himself thru, with the other leg resting on the floor, and, at the same time, as it was raised a foot or two above the ground, held by the side with the left hand lest when the center of gravity passed the sill, he might go faster and further than he wanted." The thieves were busy over their grain when Mrs. Caruthers hid the black mare in the cellar, locking the door. Then she took a stick of hickory, intended for an axe-handle, laid by to season in the chimney corner, twice the size of a dressed article, which she concealed under her apron and stood at the corner of the crib. As each appeared she beat upon him so successfully that he could neither defend himself nor return the blows, and both fled in haste, leaving their plunder behind and never again did they dare to enter the Caruthers home.

The name of Betsy Dowdy is universally known and her bravery can never be forgotten, while the name of Margaret

McBride is familiar to comparatively few and of the service rendered her country little is known. As her surname implies she was of a Scotch-Irish family. Hanty McBride, a resident of Guilford, was a man of good standing in the neighborhood where he lived and died, some seven or eight miles south of Greensboro, midway between Alamance and Buffalo creeks. He was a member of Dr. Caldwell's congregation, and a true Whig. Too old for military duty, he served his country when possible. His large family was comprised of nearly all daughters. Of one son, Isaiah, the oldest, we learn that he was in several campaigns.

In 1781 Margaret, or Maggie, as her family and neighbors called her, was a pretty lass of thirteen or fourteen summers and well grown for her years. She was full of life, but discreet and had the courage to express her convictions. With winsome ways and abounding enthusiasm, she was naturally a favorite. She gloried in being a Whig and hated the Tories. A certain tract of land four or five miles wide, ten or twelve in length, between North and South Buffalo creeks, lay to the north and northwest of Hantz McBride's. This included the present site of Greensboro and ran along both sides of the Hillsboro road to Buffalo Bridge. This was not inhabited and was traversed only by roads connecting the two settlements. As pine was the principal growth it was called the "Pine Woods," or "Pine Barrens." People did not settle there because the land was considered too thin. It afforded fine pasturage for cattle. At intervals rich and well-watered glades existed like oases of the desert. In the first days of autumn, 1781, a band of Tories from southern Guilford or northern Randolph pitched camp in one of these fairy dells. The Whigs were thick on the outskirts of the "Barrens" and some were wavering. These the Tories in question visited and exerted no good influence over them. The true Patriots became uneasy—something must be done, and accordingly a band bent on retaliation was organized, though none knew the exact location of the camp. It was thought that the

McBrides knew of it if any one did, so to that home they repaired one evening just after dark. Hantz McBride, of course, was absent, the mother, Maggie and other children were there. The captain, after ascertaining they were staunch Whigs, inquired whether there was a Tory camp in the "Piney Woods." She understood there was. When asked for directions to find it, she answered as intelligently and as best she could, little Maggie by her side now then adding a word of explanation. The captain observed her interest and said courteously, "Well, now, my little Miss, could you go along to show us the way?" This startled her. Objections she urged—going off with a party of soldiers, all strangers; then the fighting, etc. The captain insisted. She *reckoned* she might go; they must promise not to fire on the Tories till she left them. They consented, so she mounted behind the commander and they rode off at full speed. It was agreed that she should remain with the band until they came in sight of the place, when she was to fly back home, it being impossible for her to be taken into the battle in the darkness. She was firm in her determination to render this invaluable service to the Whigs, and never faltered when so much was at stake. The spot was familiar to her as she had frequently been there when hunting the cows on summer evenings with the other children.

As they approached the camp near enough for the sound of the horses' feet to be heard, they proceeded with great caution and Margaret McBride was straining her eyes and craning her neck to ascertain the exact spot. Finally she exclaimed, "Yonder they are," and sprang from the captain's horse, returning home with the agility of a native of the forest. As soon as she alighted on the ground the party dashed forward at a gallop, took the camp by surprise, firing a good volley as a greeting on approach. Before the brave little heroine had passed over much ground, she heard the report of twenty or thirty pistols and the clash of sabres, with shouts of victory and cries of the assailed, all of which made



her run but the faster. On reaching home she proudly informed her mother that "those miserable Tories have got a lesson tonight which they will not soon forget, and I hope they will no longer be a pest and a reproach to the country." "Why, my daughter," replied Mrs. McBride, "You didn't stay to see what was done?" "Why, mother, as soon as we came in sight, I jumped down and started back as hard as I could, but I had come a very little distance—it didn't seem to be a minute—till I heard ever so many guns, and then such slashing and hallooing—you never heard the like. I just know the ugly things are used up, and we shall now be clear of them. Well, I do feel sorry for them after all—really sorry. Just think how they will be cut up and run off like as many sheep-killing dogs, but then they had no business to be Tories. If they are so mean and pusillanimous that they want to be slaves or foot-pads to King George, let them not stay here and try to make us as degraded as themselves, but go to his own country and serve him there. We have no use for them here and I am so glad they are gone."

The Tory den was completely broken up. All that were not killed fled, and henceforth the "Pine Barrens" of Guilford knew neither them nor their like again.

When Margaret McBride grew to womanhood a few years later she married and, with her husband, moved westward with the tide of emigration that laid the foundation of some of our great States of today, and nothing was known of this brave heroine of old Guilford.

North Carolina can well be proud of her women from the earliest days when the hardships and perils of life led by the first settlers in the wilderness were patiently borne, during the stormy times of the Revolution, of the War between the States and, lastly, of the response they are giving to the demands of this present-day world conflict.

# H. STEINMETZ, Florist

RALEIGH, N. C.

Beautiful Cut Flowers for all occasions.  
Exquisite Wedding Bouquets and Floral Designs.  
Palms, Ferns, and all other kinds of House and Out Door  
Bedding Plants. A large collection of

HYACINTHS, TULIPS, DAFFODILS

and Other Nice Bulbs for Fall Planting

All orders given prompt and personal attention. Write for quotations

---

# CAPUDINE

For HEADACHES

No ACETANILIDE, nor other COAL  
TAR HEART DEPRESSANTS

TRIAL SIZE TEN CENTS—TWO DOSES

---

J. C. ELLINGTON

*Fine Pictures, Frames  
Art Novelties, Window  
Shades*

Embroidery Materials, Wools, Zephyrs, Mirrors

RALEIGH, N. C.

**Books You Haven't Got**

WRITE TO

Alfred Williams & Company

RALEIGH, N. C.

Everything in Books, Stationery  
Office Supplies

ESTABLISHED 1867  
50 Years Service Record

---

Established 1879

W. B. MANN & COMPANY

(INCORPORATED)

GROCERIES

No. 11 E. HARGETT ST.

RALEIGH, N. C.

---

King-Crowell Drug Company

RALEIGH, N. C.

Rexall Agency

Huyler's Candy

# THE NORTH CAROLINA Historical Commission

---

---

ESTABLISHED BY CHAPTER 767, PUBLIC LAWS OF 1903  
AMENDED BY CHAPTER 714, PUBLIC LAWS OF 1907

## PURPOSES

- (1) To collect, (2) to preserve, (3) to publish original sources  
of North Carolina History

## Your Co-operation Invited

The Commission occupies the only modern, fireproof depository  
for historical records in North Carolina

---

---

## MEMBERS

J. BRYAN GRIMES, Chairman...RALEIGH, N. C.  
W. J. PEELE.....RALEIGH, N. C.  
T. M. PITTMAN.....HENDERSON, N. C.  
M. C. S. NOBLE.....CHAPEL HILL, N. C.  
D. H. HILL.....RALEIGH, N. C.

## SECRETARY

R. D. W. CONNOR.....RALEIGH, N. C.

---

---

Address all Communications to the Secretary

# The Harborough

RALEIGH'S LEADING AND LARGEST HOTEL



EUROPEAN PLAN



Rooms \$1.25 and \$1.75 without bath; \$1.75 to \$3 with bath

## OUR CAFE

IS ONE OF THE BEST IN THE SOUTH



B. H. GRIFFIN HOTEL COMPANY, PROPRIETORS

---

## COATS-OF-ARMS PAINTED

---

Coats-of-Arms painted, decorated with helmet, lambrequin, etc., and enclosed in passe partout, ranging from -----	\$12.00 upwards
Same style and size, but unframed, ranging from-----	10.00 upwards
A painted Coat-of-Arms, without helmet, lambrequin, etc., unframed, ranging from-----	5.00 upwards
India Ink drawing of Arms-----	5.00
Searches for Coats-of-Arms, including (if found) a small sketch of the arms-----	8.00
Book plates designed.	

Write for particulars, enclosing stamp,

MISS MARY HILLIARD HINTON,  
"Midway Plantation,"  
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA