

CHAPTER XXI

Men of Mecklenburg

Draper Correspondence

Mecklenburg Place
Knoxville, Tennessee
May 15, 1874

L. C. Draper, Esquire
My Dear Sir,

I enclose you herein a part of the (Nashville) *Republican Banner* containing proceedings of the Historical Society of Tennessee at its last meeting. After fifteen years of inaction it has been resuscitated and galvanized into life. You will see that very unexpectedly to myself I have been unanimously elected president and that on motion of J. Berrien Lindsley, LL.D., a committee consisting of Doctors Ramsey and Foster and Judge Lea, was appointed to prepare and issue a circular address to the people of the state, soliciting the contribution of historic relics. Nearly an octogenarian, I at first felt unwilling to accept these high and laborious positions—president of the state historical society and chairman of its most important and responsible committee. But under the circumstances I could not consistently decline the honor and the labor implied by the compliment intended me. I had been invited to attend the called meeting, but being unable to do so I wrote a long letter in which I mentioned Lyman C. Draper and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin as having made the most perfect and successful historical achievement in that direction of any of her co-states. I pointed to your success and efforts as our model with a suitable comment, other suggestions on the general subjects involved, etc., etc. If my letter is published you will see it.

Before my library was destroyed in 1863 I could look into it and find almost anything I wanted. You had sent me several volumes of the proceedings and transactions of your society. One of them I recollect still with vivid freshness. It may have been one of your own reports as secretary,

or of one of your committees, or of one of your earlier circulars, but it contained, I recollect, a full list or catalogue of the several *objects* and *purposes* and *aims* of your society, classified so perfectly as to enable each contributor to see for himself to what object to direct his attention. I think in the enumeration of its several objects were early explorations, first discoveries and settlements, voyages, biographies of your pioneers, battles, battle grounds, forts, stations, maps, the private files of the leaders in their days, early newspapers, relics of every kind, rare coins, aboriginal curiosities, etc., etc. This list was so well *classified* and *arranged* that I supposed you had a hand in it yourself. I admired it as being perfect of its kind. Now I wish to procure from you this circular, this pamphlet, this report or this volume as the case may be. I am now engaged on the *Circular* as required by the resolution of Doctor Lindsley, and will be greatly obliged to you to favor me with it at your earliest convenience. Address me at Knoxville, as heretofore (not Nashville, the seat of our state society). You are too busy, as I am, too, to trouble you today with anything further, only to say that after my sketch of Captain Robert Craighead, one of Sumter's officers, I found his name mentioned in Wheeler's *North Carolina* as having served under General Griffin Rutherford in his Cherokee campaign. Nothing further of him though is mentioned than his name as Captain Craighead. When will you publish? We are in our usual health, only again bereaved by the death of my excellent brother Colonel W. B. A. Ramsey, late secretary of state. He died in the Lord, April 27, at Nashville aged seventy-five. God's will be done!

Yours faithfully,

J. G. M. Ramsey

May 23, 1874

Your prompt reply and the enclosed circular with my earliest acknowledgment. The circular is the very thing I needed and asked for. Then I had found out by former experience as corresponding secretary of E. T. H. & A. Society that the suggestions you make—especially 1. 2. 4.—are very essential to our success. I will try to put them in practice.

Your inquiry whether our society would loan you their volume of South Carolina *Advertiser* 1789 shall receive my early attention. I was once (as Honorable Mitchell King said in his speech in Charleston) *the* E. T. H. & A. Society, being then its corresponding secretary. Now although presiding officer of the historical society of the state, I must con-

sult others before I can answer affirmatively. I have called a meeting of the society for the sixteenth June here at Knoxville when I will meet at least a quorum of our body and I have no doubt I will be authorized to say yes to your inquiry—especially as you ask for the loan a brief period only. I hope that time will answer your purpose. It is Commencement day of East Tennessee University and that occasion brings together here the representative educators of the whole state. Can you by any possibility favor us with your presence on that occasion? If you could be here and tell us what your exertions have achieved for Wisconsin, and for history and biography in general, a new impulse would be given to our cause and a new life infused into our society. You will be formally invited. I hope and I beg you to accept. I do most ardently desire success in my new position but am not sanguine. Help me, advise me all you can.

Yesterday I made a professional visit to Sevier county to see one of the few surviving pioneers of Tennessee. He is living in the same house (a cabin modernized) that was occupied in 1786 or 7 when Sevier was Governor of Franklin and built by his father on that then frontier. The place almost inspired me.

To your other question I can only say all the collections of my (E. T. H. & A.) Society as well as my private collections were lost, burned or stolen by the vandalism of September 1863.

May 25, 1874

Your *second* favor of the twenty-first reached me yesterday. My reply to your *first* was a very hasty one, written after a fatiguing trip of a professional character to a distance patient, a pioneer of Sevier County last Thursday. But in imitation of your own promptness I answered it *emente calamo* and now scarcely know what I said. I desired though especially to thank you for your circular and the excellent suggestions you made me in my *new* position and duties. The circular though was the very thing I needed. You were right about the reference I had made to Captain Craighead. It was Hanging Rock. I found it again in Wheeler, ii, 194.

During my exile in North Carolina I did make the acquaintance, rather I renewed it, of Governor W. A. Graham. I have known him always. He is of *Hillsboro*, not *Greensboro* as you have it. Your letters may not have reached him. He is commonly prompt and obliging. Write him again that you must have the entire transcript of the Davie Manuscripts. If you fail,

then write to Colonel William Johnston, or Colonel John Walker, both of Charlotte, North Carolina. The latter married Mrs. Swaine's sister (a granddaughter of Governor Caswell) and one or other of them will see that Ex-Governor Graham will furnish you the transcript. Refer to me. I think you will succeed. If not, I will write myself. Again you must have the loan of the South Carolina *Advertiser*. I will ask Judge Lea (who presented it to our society very recently) to bring it with him to our called meeting June 16 here in Knoxville. If he does so it can be expressed to you from here unless you may be present with us on the occasion of our educational and historical meeting. Please consider yourself as formally invited to attend. No one of our expected guests will be more cordially welcomed. I will send such of our proceedings as are published in the political papers as may be worth your notice.

I notice what you say to us of the necessity of money from the state or from endowments. We have neither. Indeed from an intimation of one of the officers I fear the society is in debt—amongst other things for painting the pictures of ten of our governors. I am apprehensive of failure from this very impecuniosity. Our state indebtedness is already great, and private benefactions are infrequent. The failure will mortify me the more as I never touched any public enterprise which did not succeed. I can only try. "In great attempts 'Tis glorious e'en to fail."

I know I have your good wishes. Your past example, your great success, stimulate me.

Did I tell you before that my heart is again heavy by reason of a loved brother's death. I am the only one left of my father's house. Olive plants of the same pious fireside, classmates, co-graduates, entering public life in the same community, members of the same communion—it is not strange that I feel like a pilgrim and stranger since his death. God help us!

July 8, 1874

With this please receive the "Circular" of the Historical Society of Tennessee. We hope to galvanize the old body into new life and activity. I hold up Wisconsin as our model for imitation. We are yet without funds, and Tennessee is so much in debt we cannot certainly count on a legislative appropriation or I would promise you our first volume of transactions.

During the late meeting of the society at the ancient capital of the state I brought to the attention of our officers your wish *by and by* to get the loan of the Southern *Advertiser* (if that was its title). Judge Lea said the reporter had made a mistake in the published account of the proceedings and that the series of the journal was not so extensive as reported. When you get ready for it address at Nashville Honorable J. M. Lea, J. B. Lindsley, D.D., A. Nelson, Esquire, Recording Secretary, or R. C. Foster, M.D., Vice-President, and it will be at once expressed to you. Have you ever seen the signatures to the Cumberland Association in May 1780? I had not time to copy them or I would send you a copy. Have you in your library the "Reminiscences of the Prominent Men of Alabama" by W. Ganett? The author promises me the mss of a Tennessee pioneer formerly of Cocke County, Tennessee. It will fill a gap in our history.

I practice in a limited circle to make my "daily bread" but I return to my first love, history and biography and regard it still *con amore*. Am in good health, buoyant and hopeful. Adversity has its blessings. . . .

Draper Manuscripts 2 GG 67

May 17, 1875

Yours of thirteenth instant received last night inquiring "about a facsimile of a hand bill publication at Knoxville by Heiskell and Brown and three of the Mecklenburg Resolves."

Yes. I know all about it. About 1824 or 1825 Colonel William Polk of Raleigh, North Carolina sent me by mail the Raleigh *Register* and a small pamphlet containing the Mecklenburg Resolves with names of delegates and others by whose influence and popularity the meeting had been gotten up May 19 and 20, 1775. Considering the perishable condition in which these documents were, I extracted from them three of the more prominent of the Resolves and had them, with the names, printed by Heiskell and Brown of this city. I had two copies printed on satin. Of these I presented one to General Andrew Jackson. The other I had neatly framed to hang up in my parlor by the side of the splendid picture of the battle of New Orleans where they have hung ever since. The state of the arts was at that early day in Knoxville behind the present style, but Heiskell and Brown made me a pretty picture or souvenir.

I had a few other copies printed on paper on the same form for keepsakes which I presented to such of the descendants of the 1775 patriots

as were within my reach. It may have been one of these souvenirs which Dr. Joseph Johnson had seen. Though I do not know.

I always take a lively interest in my mother's old native country of Mecklenburg, North Carolina. I hope you will prepare your paper and publish it. Please send me a copy. Have you seen the Memorial and Argument of Ex-Governor W. A. Graham?

The Proclamation of Governor Josiah Martin from aboard his Majesty's ship Cruizer in Cape Fear River August 1774 refers to the Charlotte Committee and denounces them. See Wheeler.

I am still confined to my room and cannot leave it or I would be at Charlotte on the twentieth. Am glad to hear that Mr. Butterfield has joined you in book making. . . .¹

Draper Manuscripts 2 GG 81

May 23, 1875

The copy of the Raleigh pamphlet which you have must be the same from which I extracted the three Resolves of my souvenir, though I have no copy in reach so as to compare number of pages, date, etc., etc. Mine was on perishable paper, very thin, I think about 16 pages. So I think you may fairly say that from this the three Resolves were copied. Then as to the *names* of the *delegates* (for there were no *signers*) the list given was the result of various combined recollections and thus varied a little. There were too many for the known number of captains of companys and in Colonel Jack's certificate he takes greater latitude by embracing those by *whose influence and popularity* the measure was adopted. Wheeler has the list *correct*. The legislative pamphlet I owned was burned in September 1863 or I would send it to you today. I think Wheeler has it too. I think Colonel William Polk's statement was in a previous number of the Raleigh *Register* introductory or a succeeding number containing the certificate and attestations of survivors, but I am not sure. Dr. Foote and Wheeler, you know, go into greater details. I wish you had material for sketches of the lives of these old patriots. There was not a trifer in the list. They were all men of mark, not one was a politician. In such times no one is elected but the wise and the virtuous. Foote says there were Pres-

¹ Consul W. Butterfield of Bucyrus, Ohio, moved to Madison, Wisconsin, to be Draper's associate in writing his histories and biographies. The association lasted only a short time, but they finished the manuscript of a book on "Border Forays and Adventures" for which they could find no publisher.

byterian preachers—Reese, Balsh and _____. Seven of the delegates were Presbyterian elders. One delegate was a physician, Dr. Ephraim Brevard, to whose cultivated pen the Resolves are always and by everybody ascribed and by whose eloquence they were enforced. He was taken prisoner at Camden, held so in a Charleston prison ship, released and got to the house of his ex-secretary, John McKnitt Alexander, to die. Foote gives a biography almost of him. Colonel Thomas Polk was a high souled Cavalier full of dash and courage, rich, hospitable and daring—a crown officer (surveyor, I believe) and McKnitt Alexander, also. The latter acted in 1780 and 81 as aide and pilot to Greene on his retreat before Cornwallis in pursuit of Morgan and his prisoners and was actively employed in destroying or sinking the ferry boats on the Yadkin and Dan Rivers. The Tories remembered him long after and burned his house. You will find some short biographical sketches of several delegates in Foote and Wheeler—and when I have time I will copy from other sources the inscriptions on some of their tombs. They are not in my reach today—such as you need promptly.

I scribble off hastily now but *truthfully*. All these were Scotch Irish Presbyterians of good mental culture and devotion to principle, cherished loyalty to no one—king, prince, or chief—not even to majorities or *King Numbers*. They were loyal only to right, conscience, liberty and independence—loyal to their creed and to Christ. It was they who after their defeat in 1771-2 at Alamance shook the dust from their boots, crossed the mountains and settled Tennessee. They were a remarkable race and in 1860-4 with few exceptions were secessionists. I am sorry Governor Graham has not written you. He has been very much occupied—is now more genial and I hope you will try him again. He is occasionally from home and his clerk may not take care of his letters in his absence.

One of the delegates was Duncan Ochiltre, a wealthy Scotch merchant in Charlotte. He could save his goods and other property only by consenting to become Lord Cornwallis' commissary during his occupancy of the village and thus became obnoxious to the Whigs and when his Lordship was about breaking up camp at night Ochiltre went to the house of J. McK. Alexander to propitiate the Whigs. He replied, "The only way to save your life is to flee to Wilmington for safety." He did so and escaped to Florida. But he never came back to Charlotte. His property was confiscated. Still his principles were believed to remain pure—though the Whigs never forgave him.

Another delegate, very impecunious but true as steel, on one occasion attended Halifax or Newberne *walking* all the way to avoid the Tories and took his seat in the Provincial Congress. His name was Patton. See *The Land We Love* by General D. H. Hill, last volume. You ask for the likeness of Colonel Thomas Polk. I reckon none exists. These Scotch Irish were a curious people—they (some of them) did not hold that they should have “the likeness of anything” in their houses even to look at and there were no artists in those days. Polk died early. I have thus answered your letter hastily line by line. But as it is Sunday let me use one of its holy minutes by inquiring whether in all your various writings you have had to investigate the great religious awakening in the West—1795 to 1810? To me it is the most remarkable physiological (psychological, I almost said) phenomenon in our whole history of the past. I would almost be afraid to tell what I saw myself of it. Can you so far believe in Mesmeric influence as to think that a *revival* in the true meaning of the term could be propagated by mail in a letter from an unconverted man to a friend sixteen miles from him and when the letter was read from the stand the jerks—the exercise—the cries for mercy started forward a crowd of 2 or 3000? Resolve the strange work in your mind. . . .

Draper Manuscripts 2 GG 86

May 25, 1875

In my last of the twenty-third, after answering yours of the twentieth line after line, I added hastily some sketches of a few of the delegates and hoped by further reflection and examination to find more to send you. In this I have not succeeded. But now on thinking over what I said of John McKnitt Alexander as having acted as aide to General Greene I must request you to omit *aide*. He was my grandfather and it will look indelicate for me to call him that—though such is the tradition. He was so only *pro tempora*. He accompanied his army to the Yadkin and the Dan Rivers as pilot, being from his office (surveyor) he was familiar with all the roads, ferries, fords, etc., and went before Greene to collect first and then destroyed the boats. It is a small thing but as I pride myself on historical accuracy please erase the word *aide*.

It was suspected that the Tories set fire to his house in 1800 as they had threatened to do in 1780 and 1781 during the invasion but it was not

known to be so. Perhaps they did not. I hear the centennial was a success. In haste. . . .

Draper Manuscripts 2 GG 93

May 26, 1875

Your inquiry is a very natural one and as I said about my souvenir or keepsake, cut, or plate containing the three Resolves, etc., I know all about it and proceed to give you the wanted information and I give it with great pleasure.

John McKnitt Alexander was the ancestor, the head of his family. He had two sons William Baine Alexander and Joseph McKnitt Alexander. Each was known in Carolina and especially in Mecklenburg. The senior as William Baine—the junior as Joseph McKnitt—even spoken to and spoken of and addressed as such, Billy Baine and Joseph McKnitt, and by no other name. The children of each son were called Jimmy Baine, Joseph Baine, Peggy Baine, and so down to the youngest of his fourteen children. So also the children of Joseph McKnitt Alexander. One was called Moses W. McKnitt. Why was all this? Mecklenburg was colonized about 1745–60 by a whole tribe of Alexanders and they were a prolific stock and today every alternate man is an Alexander and in Hopewell Congregation, where the McKnitt Alexander branch the tribe lived, almost every one is named Alexander—and only every fifth or sixth one is of another name. The commonness of the name produces necessarily great confusion and inconvenience. The people correct this themselves and speaking of W. Baine Alexander's children called them Jimmy Baine, Joseph Baine, and Peggy Baine, and so all over the county in all the other branches of the Alexanders.

So to come to the point of inquiry. J. McKnitt was the signature of Joseph McKnitt Alexander. His letters were addressed as McKnitt—he was addressed as such on the road, on the street and anywhere else—was never called or spoken of as Dr. Alexander. I have received not less than one hundred letters from him and each one is signed J. McKnitt—never by any other name. He was the active executor of his father's estate and in conveying title to his legatees for his real estate I believe he signed the deeds "J. McKnitt Executor of John McKnitt Alexander." Indeed I almost am sure of it but our deeds to my brother and sister and myself are in Shelby County in possession of those to whom

we sold our lands. So you are right in supposing that J. McKnitt, Joseph McKnitt Alexander and Dr. J. McKnitt are one and the same person—perfectly identical. So numerous are the Alexanders in Mecklenburg that they are often designated by the office they bear or the trade or pursuit they follow: thus Governor Nat. is Governor Nathaniel Alexander; Fuller Nat.; Red Head Nat. Alexander, Clerk Isaac was used for Isaac Alexander; Long Creek Isaac Alexander. . . .

I never was surprised that Mr. Jefferson balked at J. McKnitt being the son of John McKnitt Alexander. It is natural that he should balk at that appearance of inconsistency and conflict.

I hope I have explained it to your entire satisfaction. You have seen or can see by reading Governor Graham's Memoir on the Mecklenburg Declaration that he gives this explanation. Professor Willing accepts it.

Reverend Dr. Martin of Atlanta has just left my room. He is the author of the poem to be read at Charlotte, May 20, '75, which I enclosed to you yesterday. I wish if it is published in your Madison papers you would have a copy of it sent to *Reverend Joseph H. Martin, D.D., Atlanta, Georgia.*

When your paper is prepared please send me a copy. You will have received mine of yesterday in which I asked you to erase the word *aide*. Work out the problem. Mr. *Howard* of Georgia who interviewed Mr. Rush has been written to and Dr. Martin thinks the paper Governor Josiah Martin enclosed to the British government will be found. If it is never found I am still a firm believer in May 20, 1775.² It is a nursery tale and a tradition with me.

Draper Correspondence

August 17, 1875

I preferred to see and consult with my pastor, James Park, D.D., before I would reply to yours of the third. He has been absent and has not yet returned. I will wait no longer but give you only *my own* recollection and observation now and if Dr. Park gives me further or different light on the subject I will write again.

² Draper completed a book-length essay on the Mecklenburg "declaration of independence," using a great deal of the material which Dr. Ramsey supplied. He apparently never divulged to Dr. Ramsey his own conclusion that the so-called "Resolves" were spurious. He was never able to find a publisher for his work.

Southern Presbyterians especially in Virginia, the Carolinas and Tennessee have always used Saturday as preparatory as far as temporal affairs are concerned to the sacred duties and observance of the Sabbath. The wood was cut and piled near the door. What cooking was necessary for the Sunday's consumption of the family was all done Saturday evening. Even the boots and shoes were blackened and ready to put on Sunday morning. Even cracking walnuts was not allowed on the Lord's day and the family worship of Saturday night something like this concluded that service: "Help us now to dismiss all our worldly cares and prepare to keep thy Sabbath holy which is approaching. May we be in the spirit on Thy Sabbath. May we make at least a Sabbath day's journey heavenward. Help us to read Thy word with care and profit, having faith mixed therewith. May we lay it up in our hearts, practice it in our lives. And if Thou shouldst give us or any of us an opportunity of meeting with Thy people in Thy house of prayer, graciously meet us there in mercy and bless us. Let Thy stately steppings be seen in the sanctuaries of Thy grace. Give us Thy convincing, converting and sanctifying grace and prepare us for that Heavenly Sabbath above which shall never end." These simple petitions were offered up in nearly every Presbyterian home in the South. Parents, children and house servants all joined in the service. But Saturday was never *the preparatory day*. In the olden time and now in all country congregations, on communion occasions four days were appropriated to the solemnities of the supper, from Friday morning till noon on Monday. Friday was observed as a fast and on that day every communicant at least in the congregation was expected to be present at church and to hear *the preparation* sermon. It was for believers only and pointed out the duty of self-examination, personal religion, spiritual mindedness and self-consecration. Thus *Friday was preparation day* as far as I know and believe in all Presbyterian communities. More recently, and especially in cities and large towns, the fast day has been omitted and a communion service is confined to Saturday and Sunday only. The preparation sermon is unfortunately too often omitted. Have I comprehended your inquiry and answered it?

In a former letter I told you that I believed that *J. McKnitt* signed that name to title papers, deeds, etc. I believe so still but do not assert it to be so. I send you his signature *es nomine* as a witness to a bill of sale for a slave which in Wisconsin will be considered almost a curiosity and worthy of presentation to your society. In North Carolina and elsewhere

in the South Mr. Jefferson's skepticism on the subject no longer excites surprise.

You say rightly of Mr. Johnson that he was *honest*. I admit it but his course on *coercion measures* caused more bloodshed and other mischief than Napoleon ever did.

I am glad your Mr. Butterfield meets your expectations. *Border Forays and Adventures* will be a good introduction to your future enterprises. I am almost tempted to turn critic in advance upon its merits. Williams Sturgiss and Company of this city are reliable booksellers. I am still a cripple but otherwise am quite well. Did you complete your papers on Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence? . . .

September 20, 1875

I have this moment read the second time your favor of the 16th just received and proceed without delay to answer in their consecutive order your several questions, occasionally adding something else suggested by them. First, I have no knowledge of Colonel Elijah Isaacs of North Carolina. I think there has been a Judge Isaac in West Tennessee. I will inquire for one of that name and if I hear anything of him will hereafter write you. Second, I knew Clark Isaac Alexander well half a century since. He was known only as Clark Isaac and never was called by any other. As I wrote you heretofore, so numerous were the tribe of the Alexanders, they had to be designated by their office—their trade or their middle name—in the case cited to you Jos. McKnitt for Jos. McKnitt Alexander. This Isaac Alexander was, as far back as I can recollect, clerk of Mecklenburg County and retained the office while he lived. His chirography was elegant, his attention to official duty never was surpassed. I think he was a member of Sugar Creek (Presbyterian) Church and perhaps an elder. Everybody confided in him as a patriot, a neighbor, citizen, head and priest of his own household. His official and private integrity, his capacity and fidelity were proverbial.

John Flenniken emigrated at an early day from Mecklenburg to Knox County, Tennessee. He died before my recollection, left descendants, with one of whom, Major Samuel Flenniken, I was intimately acquainted. Have heard from him his recollections of what he had heard his father narrate of the Mecklenburg Convention, May 20, 1775. He was, I believe, of the seceder (Presbyterian) faith and lived south of Holston amongst

that denomination in a congregation called Salem, near the Andersons, the Wilsons, McCalls, McBaths, etc.

You do not inquire for Zacheus Wilson, one of the delegates of the Charlotte Convention, but I will add that soon after the Revolution he came west and settled near Gallatin, Tennessee, on the Cumberland. Lived to become superannuated but still recollected 1775 and his participation in the measures of that day. Colonel Thomas Boyers, well known in that neighborhood, may be able to ascertain whether he left any important papers, etc., etc. I can't give you his P. O.

I think there has been published a map of Tennessee with all the county lines but not an Atlas made up of county maps. I have not kept up with these new and money making enterprises, called school books, school geographies, etc., etc. Have found some of them erroneous and unreliable. *W. T. Berry and Company*, booksellers, Nashville, Tennessee, can inform you better and if you will say that you had been referred to them by me they will tell the truth and not cheat you either. I have thus replied to your several inquiries—imperfectly it is true but still as fully as I can today. Write again and often when I can do anything for you. Am sorry that you do not find publishers. Northern houses, as I have learned by corresponding with them, do not like to touch anything wearing Southern features or promotive of Southern interests and character. I am impatient to see before I die something from your pen. But *festina lente* is a good maxim and I must not hurry you.

I inclosed in my last a bill of sale for a slave, witnessed by *J. McKnitt* as Dr. J. M. Alexander always signed himself. Did you receive it?

Considering that I am a cripple, I have been rather successful lately in collecting for the Tennessee Historical Society. Beside this Dr. Lindsley of Nashville and myself hope to bring out soon "Ramsey's *Annals* abridged for the use of Schools."³ Can you give me some of your wise suggestions about it? May our good father in Heaven bless, guide and save you!

³ Dr. Ramsey, too, was the author of an unpublished manuscript. His "Abridged History of Tennessee, for the use of Common Schools" bearing only his name on the title page, contained the outline of seven chapters—discovery and exploration, Watauga, North Carolina in the Revolution, the state of Franklin, the Cumberland settlements, the territory South of the Ohio River, and the history of the state of Tennessee to 1860. The last chapter was not written, and the others consisted of introductory notes and references to passages in the *Annals* which were to be incorporated in the abridgement. A note, dated December 7, 1875, read: "I will explain all this to Rev. J. Berrien Lindsley, D.D., when he arrives Dec 25 or 27 and he can then explain it fully to our publishers." A typewritten copy of this manuscript is in the McClung Collection.

P. S. I enclose for your collection of autographs that of my grandfather John McKnitt Alexander cut from a business letter to James [obscure] dated May, 1800. Its date if nothing else makes it valuable.

[Inclosure]

Biographical

John McKnitt Alexander, whose autograph is herein enclosed, was a native of Pennsylvania and migrated about 1750-5 from that then Province and settled near the Catawba River at his well-known farm, Alexandriana, on the head of Long Creek where he ever afterwards resided. His wife was Jane Baine, also of Pennsylvania. They were members of the Presbyterian Church. He was the founder and one of the first elders of Hopewell Church in what afterwards became Mecklenburg County. He often represented this county in the provincial legislature at Newbern, Halifax, etc. He was also a crown officer—a surveyor, it is believed. But from the commencement of the oppressive and unconstitutional measures of the British parliament and ministry, such as the Stamp Act, the tax on tea and the Boston Port Bill, etc., he boldly and unselfishly took a decided stand in favor of the colonies—favored the Regulators in their resistance against illegal taxes, the official magnificence of Governor Tyrone's officials and on May 20, 1775 was present as a delegate to the Charlotte Convention—noted as one of its secretaries—and throughout the Revolution which ensued he was an active officer in the army. If not a member of General Greene's staff, certainly his pilot driving the retreat of the Americans in the direction of Virginia in 1781. His familiarity with all the roads in the up-country of North Carolina led General Greene to select him to destroy all the boats and ferries in the Yadkin and Dan Rivers. He was wealthy and gave of his money freely to the cause of independence and liberty. He died in 1817, is buried in Hopewell, aged eighty-four. A true patriot and a good Christian.