

CHAPTER XXIV

King's Mountain Men

Draper Correspondence

Mecklenburg Place
Knoxville, Tennessee
March 11, 1880

My Dear Mr. Draper,

My mail late last night brought me your favor of March 8. I read it twice and endeavored to grasp the whole subject. I seldom give advice without first examining it carefully. *Festina lente* is a good maxim, and one which I have through life adopted. Make haste deliberately, or, as Crocket used to say, "Be sure you are right—then go ahead." So in the present instance, after the second reading of your letter, I laid it on the table, slept on it, looked on it in all its bearings and aspects and now give you my deliberate opinion that the present is the auspicious moment to lay down everything else and give *King's Mountain and its Heroes* to the press.

I think there will never be a more suitable or opportune an occasion to *inaugurate* the business of your *life*—your *Border Warfare*—your *Robertson, Shelby, Sevier*, even your *Sumter*, and a host of others. All these have some day soon to be *inaugurated* and all the surroundings of the situation point out 1880 as the *very time* for beginning of the ceremonials. First the Nashville Centennial opens up the ball in the west—this brings into consideration Virginia, good old North Carolina and with her, her gallant daughter, East Tennessee, whose pioneers at Alamance in 1771 were the first armed force that opened resistance to colonial oppression and misrule of any of the British Colonies. Driven from the field for the want of ammunition and an experienced leader, their pioneers, as Bancroft says, shook the bolt from their brow and crossed the Alleghenies and settled Watauga and in a state of political orphanage, in a secluded wilderness, formed the *first self-governing association* known in America—a free and

independent little Republic, a gallant little Swiss Canton in the mountains of Tennessee—and all this against the proclamation of the king inhibiting any settlement or purchase on the western waters. (King's proclamation dated 1763.) Watauga then petitioned North Carolina for annexation to that state under the condition and pledge of bearing her full share of the expense to be incurred in the war for independence. This annexation was made, and the representatives of Watauga took their seats in the convention which formed the state constitution of North Carolina. Then came King's Mountain, the most decisive battle of this revolution. Then the surrender of Yorktown and independence. After October 7, 1880 will come the Cowpens, Eutaw and Wapetau.

So we have a historical epoch—a garland of brilliant victories within the next two years. Your part in the whole series is the publication of your book. This being admitted, your Cincinnati enterprise comes next. You ask me if I know any reliable, experienced and energetic canvasser. I know some who will do as side agents under a competent chief. But for such a one please give me a little time. When this letter is finished, say this P.M., I will write to my friend Anson Nelson, Esquire, my recording secretary (and whose name you will find on this letterhead page¹) and explain confidentially to him your purposes and desire to procure the services of a competent canvasser in Tennessee for your volume. Mr. Nelson, though somewhat busied *officially* these centennial times, will I know be able to find a suitable chief for you and perhaps some sub-agents. He has heretofore had something to do with the publishing houses in Nashville and two years since when I was making an (abortive) attempt to bring out an abridgment of my *Annals*, told me he was well acquainted with canvassers who were experienced and competent and would exactly suit my purpose. I will say to him further that I have given his address to you and advised you to write to him immediately. I know he will obey your request. We have a bookseller here, an agent of Colonel J. B. Killebrew (author of his *Resources of Tennessee*), whom I will consult this P.M. if he is at home. He knows all the canvassers in Tennessee and can perhaps promote your purposes in this behalf.

If you can get the volume out against October first your agents and yourself will have achieved a remarkable success. I know it will sell well everywhere in the South. When you inquired if Yorktown would absorb

¹ Nearly all of Dr. Ramsey's letters to Draper were written on the letterhead of the Tennessee Historical Society.

King's Mountain I thought the places and the dates intervening were too far apart to interfere much with either celebration. I think so yet. The latter is isolated, insulated rather, in the woods thirteen miles from Yorkville, South Carolina over mountain roads, with a sparse population and very limited accommodations. But though somewhat desolated and secluded, these Palmettos are, as in 1780, determined to do their whole duty in 1880. They are exerting every energy to have a good celebration. They will have a sham battle—orators from every state that participated in the fight. In upper East Tennessee troops will assemble September 25 at Watauga Old Fields and some of them march over the old Brights Trace in the old frontier costume to the battleground. And here in Knox County we are trying to form an association of the descendents of the old time Whigs of 1776 to attend this centennial jubilee. I hear Governor Marks is invited and will attend with the executives of Georgia, South and North Carolina and old Virginia. So that, as far as I can now see, it will be a good celebration. Since I began this letter Reverend Lathan writes me under date Yorkville South Carolina March 6, 1880 that my name had been placed at the head of the historical committee and that this committee is charged with the duty of preparing a sketch of the battle and of the lives of the prominent actors on that occasion. He is silent as to anything he expects to perform then. Says nothing of his *pamphlet*. I once knew Mr. Lathan. He will not interfere in your book at all as you will cover the whole ground while he will only skim the surface of the mountain itself. Therefore, I repeat my advice to you to go on at once and publish your volume. Four hundred pages is a good size and five hundred is better. The subject is broad and comprehensive and ought not to be too much condensed. Cincinnati is a good place, too, now when she is sticking out her iron hands to Tennessee and the South. When the proper time arrives for the Tennessee Historical Society to endorse your great enterprise and give its small prestige to its success, if I am still living it shall be most cheerfully conferred.

Your name is already before our committee of invitation of which Honorable _____ Guild is chairman. Come if you can. It may help you greatly in many respects. Is the next volume of your *Collections* out? I must have fatigued you as I have fatigued myself.

Your Friend Truly

J. G. M. Ramsey

P. S. I have not intended to omit the mention of South Carolina and

Georgia. Have you seen the old time correspondence between Governor Isaac Shelby and Senator William Campbell Preston, his grandson?

March 23, 1880

Hearing that Mr. Paulett had arrived at his headquarters (Knoxville), I sent for him this morning to call over and see me. He is a book agent, canvasser, sometimes chief agent of publishers, or of authors—having sub-agents or deputies over a given territory. In this capacity he has canvassed some years back the whole of Tennessee and adjoining states and has very successfully introduced Killebrew's *Resources of Tennessee* and other smaller works. His limits are extensive, from Chicago to New Orleans and all the South. He is a native of Anson County, North Carolina, but has been in every county of Western North Carolina, South Carolina, North Georgia and Western Virginia and all of Tennessee. The very field for your book and (I think) the very type of such an agent as you need to introduce *King's Mountain and its Heroes*. He is no Yankee but a true Southern man, prudent, discreet, and wise and ready to work now. I mentioned (*inter nos*) your present purpose and plan of operations. As far as I could judge, he thinks very favorably of your enterprise, and thinks the time very opportune to take up subscriptions—now when the centennials of 1880 are the theme and the talk of the day.

He will write to you this P.M. This letter and his will reach you together. If you have not contracted with others you will perhaps mature something with Mr. Paulett. Whomsoever you employ, your subscription papers should be at our Nashville celebration April 24.

I have received from our friend Nelson information that when you write to him on any subject he will attend promptly to your request, such as agent or sub-agents to take up subscriptions for your book. . . .

P. S. I am often applied to for the exact route of the Mountain Men from the camp on Watauga across the mountains to Ferguson's camp, or rather, camps. It will greatly add to the interest of your book if you could give in detail every trace and encampment from Watauga to the seat of the battle and even of the returning route of the victors.

What is Brights Trace? Which *Broad* River did our troops cross on the fifth and sixth October? What became of the spoils taken on the seventh and were they auctioned off on the eighth and ninth? Their march

to Hillsboro was necessarily hurried. Where did they cross the Catawba and the Yadkin and where and to what American officer were the prisoners given?

April 20, 1880

I received your kind favor of the fourteenth and by next mail your society's annual report. I need not say to you how much your success rejoices me while I also feel so mortified at the comparison between the results of my efforts in the Tennessee Historical Society and your progress in that of Wisconsin. I have done what I could. We may do better at a future day. I have an excellent cabinet—my field is broad and long and all but two of us officers are poor, broken down by the war. We have never received a single donation, devise, bequest, legacy,—little state aid and little more hoped for as the state treasury is impoverished indeed. Bankrupt, we don't even ask the state for a dollar. Our centennial exposition expenses are paid by our own voluntary individual contributions. But being a very proud people we are going to succeed in making a big show. I am glad to hear you will be at Nashville. May you enjoy it fully.

Now as to private business. I am glad to see you are so hopeful. The preliminary commendations of myself and your other friends will be forthcoming any time you may think proper to name. Please be specific even as to the minutiae. There is a great policy in this whole thing. I am generally very careful what, when, and how to speak, but in your case anything you wish me to say for you, your book, your capacity to write history accurately, truthfully, it will be said cheerfully and without stint. Indicate when, how and to whom. And so of my society and of my historical and personal friends in Tennessee and anywhere else. I will endorse you from A to Z, from Alpha to Omega, and I know I risk nothing by doing so. Your subject, King's Mountain and its Heroes, just meets the emergency now present. Have it on the ground October 7 ready for distribution to every point in the South and Southwest. I think it will take. You should have some sure friends at Washington to speak in the social circles and to colleagues for it. That is an emanating point, potential and effective. When you get *started* I will write to my friends (Harris, Bailey, Vance, Ransom, Atkin, Dibnot, and all the rest) and get them to look at King's Mountain as a matter heretofore neglected and little known even in the South and by general historians (except Butler) ignored. Even

Bancroft (in first edition) treats it as a backwoods *skirmish* and those we call *Heroes* as a *Banditti*. Ferguson thought thus of Sevier, Campbell, Shelby, and Chronicle etc. I comprehend what you say about the conference at Charlotte. It is a big thing and a capital idea. I am corresponding with Vandyke at Athens. I nominated him to Governor Marks. He is to be here to see me this week. I know him like a book and will dissect that whole subject with him.

No doubt about your material. *Forty* years research as to the extent and then the *con amore*—the *heart* which animated and prompted the seeker.

When you go to Nashville see and investigate Judge Lea and Mr. Nelson. They are safe councillors. Command my services at all times and ways. You must make this book introductory to future volumes. God bless you!

May 19, 1880

Yours of the fourteenth has been received. I am glad to hear that you have made an arrangement with Peter G. Thomson for the publication of your work; and it affords me a sincere pleasure to promise *in advance* any commendation of the enterprise which may promote its success in development and preservation of American history of our Revolutionary period. How can I do this most efficiently? If I had the address of your publisher I would enclose to him a short note on the subject, which he may use as he thinks proper in securing to the work a wider circulation and a more remunerative patronage of his enterprise. I enclose it to you herein. I am little acquainted with the forms of such things. You may think the enclosed too long or too short, not in sufficient detail of what I know of the author, his familiarity with the whole field he investigates, his patient research, his untiring diligence, ability, accuracy, etc. You may see much to amend, reject, some additions, some changes to make in the phraseology. I here give you a *charte blanche* to make it longer, shorter, more in detail, more or less specific as to your place of nativity, past publications, pursuits, etc. Whether thus amended or changed or in its present form consider it as addressed to *yourself*, or, what may be better, to the *Publisher* and to be used as he may think best either in his prospectus or some literary journal.

I will also write to Judge Lea and other historical friends to unite with me in this or a like commendation.

No. All my Knoxville and other newspapers were burned in September 1863 by the enemy. But I have already sent over into town asking Colonel Moses White (who has the dates you gave me, 1812-13 and 22) to *loan* them to me for you. I guaranteeing their safe return. After a few days, if they are found, they will be forwarded to you.

I notice what you say of appending the whole *Preston-Shelby correspondence* to your volume. It will add greatly to its interest and will, at the same time, awaken the slumbering ires and animosities engendered by the correspondence in 1821. I had it all before me in 1852 when my *Annals* came out. I found other material too abundant to allow the insertion of the correspondence. The truth of history may require another course proper now. I do not advise either way. Virginians are very sensitive. Some of them thought me at fault in not making Campbell the hero of King's Mountain. I did not.

General John S. Preston has not yet replied to my letter to him.

May 20, 1880

I have just received and herein send you answer of General Preston to my former letter to him. I hope you will soon receive the Shelby and Preston correspondence.

I wrote yesterday in full to Judge Lea and think he will cooperate fully and cordially in commendation of your Book.

Colonel White has not yet sent the Knox Papers. As soon as he finds them they shall be forwarded promptly to you.

June 15, 1880

I think I promised you that after I could see Judge Vandyke I would write you. He came to Knoxville, came over at once to see and confer with me, stayed all day and dined with me. He had determined before to go to Charlotte on the twenty-first. Saw some of his colleagues *here*. I gave him letters of introduction to several of my friends in Charlotte and promised to write others (which I will send him today). I mentioned to him your book especially, agreed to *commend* it fully and if found best to get all the commissioners to unite in some commendatory notice of *your* work when they adjourn and to send me, yourself, or your publisher at Cincinnati a copy of it. If he does this I will hand over what the

commissioners say to a Knoxville paper and send it to Madison or Cincinnati.

If this is all right be it so. If not, write in time for me to act on the matter.

Our heated term is on us in all its intensity and am able scarcely to write this much.

Draper Manuscripts 15 DD 69

Mecklenburg Place
Knoxville, Tennessee
July 12, 1880

My Dear Mr. Draper,

Your favor of the ninth has just been handed to me, two P.M., and as my constant habit has long been to leave no duty undone before I go to sleep I am already *in medias res* by way of reply.

You are right. I did recently write a hasty P. S. to you in which I said "It is an invariable tradition all over East Tennessee that on the point of the march of the rifleman from Sycamore Shoals on Watauga, the troops engaged in divine service and were adressed by a Presbyterian clergyman then present." This minister is said to have been Reverend Samuel Doak. He was then or soon after the founder and president of Martin Academy, the first academy chartered by law west of the Allegheny Mountains (has since been succeeded (1795) as the present Washington College—of which he became the founder and first president.) The tradition has preserved this further that in his prayer or address he used the words or petition "Teach our hands to war and our fingers to fight." and also "The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" I have heard this tradition from my boyhood and from all my knowledge of the man I believe it substantially true. Dr. Doak was my father's pastor and I am an alumnus of his college.

You say "I wish I knew more of the route of the King's Mountain Men." So do I. I have encountered the same difficulty. *Brights Trace*, which the army pursued, is indefinite now. As far as I know or can certainly say is that the riflemen crossed the Yellow Mountain where it was also called the Bald Mountain. Several of the soldiers have told me that when they reached the very top, *the acme of the ridge*, the army was ordered to shoot off their rifles and in so doing there was little or no *report*.

Such was the rarity of the atmosphere that when the rifles fired there was almost no explosion heard. They must thus have crossed the Bald Mountain Gap and when, after the escape of the two deserters (see my *Annals*), the army deflected to the left and thus left Brights Trace till they fell in with Cleveland and Winston at the foot of the mountains. These *Traces* are very indefinite and often mislead both the writer and reader. Tilden's Ridge was also on Brights Trace—some short distance from Morganton. I wish I could speak more accurately of the *route*. Shelby's officers: John Sawyer, I think, was one of them—then of Sullivan, afterwards of Knox County. In 1774 he decided the fight at Kanawha. I think Jesse Walton was a captain of Sevier. Colonel Maxwell was one of Shelby's captains. Major Tipton, I think, was of Sevier's men. If I can *ascertain* any thing further will write soon. I wish you could describe the route and print the map to accompany it. It adds greatly to its value. I had not seen Major Dunlap's name before. Give us all you can find of the *Tories*. As far as I can learn their descendents were with few exceptions opposed to the South in 1860 and 65.

Draper Correspondence

July 14, 1880

Yours of the eleventh came to hand last night and as there is no time to be lost, I wrote at once (at seven A.M.) this morning to General John S. Preston, Columbia, South Carolina, telling him of *you*, your purpose to issue a volume on *King's Mountain and its Heroes*, and that you greatly needed and desired to obtain the *loan* of statements collected by Honorable William Campbell Preston about the battle October 7, 1780—and that he would at once gratify and oblige me greatly by granting the loan and furnish thus a tribute to history and to science and reminded him that in 1852-3 I had met him at a club in Charleston, had heard his lecture, and was introduced to him by Honorable Mitchell King, etc., etc. I know he will lend you at once the statement.

You did not, like myself, get to Nashville. We both missed a *treat*. Colonel Henderson, one of our members, has just returned and came right over to see me and told me that Judge Lea had assigned Dr. Draper and Dr. Ramsey specially as his own guests—that we had almost spoiled the entertainment and the centennial by our failure to attend etc., etc.

You may have seen all the speeches and the proceedings in the northern papers.

The celebration at King's Mountain will wind up the centennial and will indeed be its most *prominent* feature. If your publisher can get out the volume and have some of them on hand the sixth, seventh, and eighth the book will be *canonized* at once—its fortune assured. I will not be there. You will be, I hope. Can't you take Knoxville in your way? Drive right to my gate and some of us will go with you after a night or two in my cell. I have read your last report. It is excellent and is on its circuit round town. Command me *ad libitum*. . . .

Draper Manuscripts 15 DD 70

July 29, 1880

I think Matthew Talbot's mill was not far up the creek then known as Big Creek. If I recollect right it is a tributary of Watauga, but it may be of Big-Doc. It must be *this* side of Yellow (Bald) Mountain. Crab-Orchard, I think, is on the east side of it. But there are several Crab-Orchards in all the ranges and on all the traces. This may produce confusion and error.

Paulette may decline the general agency because that would lead him off into Virginia, the Carolinas etc. and interfere with his main pursuit of Tennessee schoolbook enterprises. While he sat in my study he spoke of your book as the biggest of the two jobs as it is certainly. A picture such as you describe of Shelby, Sevier, McDowell and Hammond etc. will make your book popular for another century.

If Paulette is here soon I will take the opportunity to set him right. By the way what costume will you put upon the *officers*? McDowell had been a *Colonial* officer and was a grand old fellow, dignified and aldermanic in his dress, his person, and his bearing and used to walk about the Quaker-Garden (the Pleasant Gardens as afterwards called—*Carsons* still later) as if he were a duke, while the western colonels all wore the back-woods hunting shirt. I am describing the expatriated and exiled McDowell, and not the brother who commanded October 7.

Doctor Sevier lives at Jonesboro but not Dr. G. W. Sevier. Colonel J. W. Sevier, the governor's son once lived here but afterwards at Nashville where he died. I do not know the initials of Dr. Sevier of Jonesboro. He will get your letter there.

I can hardly tell you *who* now represents the old Carter family at Elizabethton, Carter County, Tennessee. A greatgrandson, Honorable Robert L. Taylor is the present member of congress. He lives at Jonesboro, Tennessee. Reverend Nathaniel Taylor, his father, lives at Elizabethton and Colonel Alfred Gillespie, another grandson, lives here. Any of whom will represent their ancestors or Colonel H. L. McClung here:—all first rate gentlemen.

Bear one question from myself. Were any Tennessee soldiers with General Morgan at the Cowpens? They write to me from South Carolina and I can't tell. I know you can. If there were any such, who were they and their names, especially if they were officers? I don't think there were any. Morgan's men were not militia from this side of the mountains. But if any were there I want to give them a place in the picture. . . .

P. S. They are getting up a commemorative monument at Cowpens and their committee asks our Governor Marks for the names and he asks me to answer their letter. Please tell me the names, especially of officers.

Draper Manuscripts 4 DD 42

August 2, 1880

I wish you to have every opportunity available for perfecting your King's Mountain enterprise. So after I wrote you last week I sent to my neighbor Major Webb, whose wife is a great-grand-daughter of the *ancestor* of all of the Tennessee Carter family. Major Webb took your letter over into town showed it to Major Taylor, Colonel McClung and Colonel Alfred Gillespie (who all are of the Carter stock and who got their wives on Watauga River and of course are familiar with the locations you inquire about). Please find on the next page two paragraphs which he has written for you. He also informs me that Reverend Nathaniel Taylor of *Elizabethton P. O., Carter County, Tennessee* is the now accredited representative of the Carter family. He is able and very willing to aid your inquiries on any subject connected with King's Mountain and that he would apprise him of your wishes. Reverend N. Taylor lives there on the spot and is the very man for your purpose and is capable, reliable, and a gentleman of leisure.

Several of this *tribe* will take tea with me this evening and I will take that opportunity of enlarging on your book. Honorable R. L. Taylor of

Jonesboro is the congressman of that district and we hope will be re-elected this year.

Don't be discouraged about Paulette. He is no thermometer on this matter. There is as good fish in the sea as *were* ever caught before. Command me when I can serve you. Hancock booms. Better and better than even Tilden or Seymour. God directed him in December 18, 1876 to write that letter to General Sherman. I believe in the designs of God even about presidential elections. . . .

P. S. I enclose an extract from the *History of Montgomery County* by Goodpasture. The last letter was *first* published from the original letter in my *Annals*.

The troop made only a short day's journey first day. The beeves disliked to leave their *own home range* and most of them had to be left and were abandoned as the *Annals* say. Can Thomson give us a plan or even an imperfect map of the route on both sides of the mountain? I hope he can make it more perfect than has heretofore been done.

Draper Correspondence

August 6, 1880

Yours of the second is received. The dark places and the uncertainty on the *western* part of the route I hope will be somewhat relieved when you shall have conferred with the Reverend Taylor (Elizabethton, Tennessee) with whom my last put you in communication. The *Crab Orchard* you are after has been identified satisfactorily.

You don't know how much you have relieved and gratified me about Tennesseans at Cowpens. I knew *where* to turn my eyes for help. *Wisconsin-ward* means, as everybody knows already, her corresponding secretary of her historical society. I had heard before as traditional that Moses Shelby, wounded on or under a wagon on King's Mountain, went before his wound was perfectly healed to Cowpens—but now I know it on Wisconsin authority and his obituary. Will not that enable me to put his name on the Cowpens monument as the *senior* in command of the volunteers from Tennessee in Morgan's great victory? Yes; unless Wisconsin tells me I ought not to do so. The enemy burned or stole my Johnston's *Life of Greene* and also Dr. Charles Caldwell's biography of the southern Washington and all my other historical works and I cannot procure an-

other copy in Tennessee. The plate of Johnson's Cowpens battle may throw some further light on this point. Please tell me. Evan Shelby, Jr., if tradition is correct, went with his wounded uncle (?) and he will not compete for the seniority in command.

I am very exacting in this troubling now when you are so busy on a subject so important and so imperative. But you are so methodical, so systematic and hold so much, everything nearly, in your head that I venture to ask a monosyllable or two.

I knew George Nelson, the editor of our Knoxville *Gazette*, the first journal I ever read, and have some recollection yet of Mr. Greer, his father-in-law and his brother, Andrew Greer, our then Sheriff, etc.

I think there is no *Atlas* of Tennessee by *counties*. But Killebrew's new map of Tennessee is just out. I have not seen it. They speak highly of it. You are progressing exceedingly well to be reading proof of four chapters. . . .

I must tell you that yesterday our sheriff's election took place. We elected our Democratic candidate. Anderson was elected by *one* majority—the vote of the Radicals more than four hundred votes. Tennessee Republicans recollect 1829 and refuse to endorse the Hayes fraud of 1876. We claim it as a Hancock victory. I voted in 1819 for the grandfather of Anderson and yesterday for his grandson. I was carried to the polls and one vote saved the Democrats and now they say *Ramsey* decided the election. This old heart rejoices. It will be still better in November.

Success to King's Mountain and its Heroes. . . .

August 16, 1880

I must intrude upon your time once more if I do so in pencil.

I have answered, at Governor Marks' request, the letter to him from W. A. Courtney, chairman of Cowpens Committee on Monuments. I sent a copy to Governor Marks of my answer to this chairman and now write you in the absence of a copy, the *substance* of it only. I began in your cautious words "There was no embodied party probably at Cowpens from what is now Tennessee. These western soldiers had, after the defeat of Ferguson and the capture of his whole army, taken the prisoners and the spoils of war to a place of safety in the interior and the Wataugans with Sevier and other officers at their head had returned to their homes in the West and found their frontiers invaded by a large force of Cherokee warriors. Without stopping to rest a day, Captain Russell's company contin-

ued their organization and without disbanding they and their comrades from King's Mountain started on another expedition." Here I gave the strong points of page 262 *et sequento* of the *Annals*, closing with the remarks that at the time of Morgan's fight the western soldiers were too much occupied in the wilderness with the Cherokees to know that Tarleton had thrown down the gauntlet against Morgan or that the latter needed a reinforcement.

But, I added, "It is still satisfactory to know that a few, a very few, were in the Cowpens engagement. Amongst these Moses Shelby (brother of Isaac), in his intemperate eagerness for victory at King's Mountain, charged either under or over the line of wagons used by Ferguson as a defense of his encampment in which he was wounded and had not yet recovered when he dashed again over the mountains and encountered another corpse under a different leader. It is claimed further that Evan Shelby, Jr. was at his side and supported his kinsman still only partially recovered from his former wound. To these named we add *Jordan Roach* and *Alexander Greer* on the verbal authority of an old editor of Knoxville, George Wilson, who has since died in Nashville. There may have been others. But these four, I believe, went from Tennessee to Cowpens and participated in Morgan's victory on traditional testimony authentic and unquestioned.

"But as to the *seniority* of these four, I cannot answer. The one previously wounded at King's Mountain and, when not yet wholly recovered, volunteered for a second campaign and second fight would seem to have won his spurs for the seniority.

"There was a force of 700 with Sevier. They went as far down Coosa as to see the long leaf pine—nearly three hundred miles from their homes."

I have heard here this further. That when Moses Shelby declared he *would* go Evan Shelby said he would go too and take care of his wounded kinsman. So you see I have turned my eyes Wisconsinward by incorporating your traditions with my own. Will it do?

Yes. I did once write for some data of your life and for a very good purpose and I wish even yet to see them. If Rasmus B. Anderson writes soon I hope to see his sketch.² But if not, there will come an occasion

² Rasmus B. Anderson prepared a "Memoir" of Draper for a volume on the history of Dane County, Wisconsin. Draper had the memoir reprinted and bound by his Cincinnati publisher, Peter Thompson, and circulated it widely.

before long I hope when another of your friends and one who knows something of your historical zeal, diligence, ability, and success, and knows how to appreciate and admire them will wish to scribble, if it is only a newspaper paragraph about "King's Mountain and its Heroes" and its author's merits. I have too often intruded and taken you from your important work, and must not again seduce you—but that you can do for me in half an hour if you have that much leisure. . . .

September 6th, 1880

My mail did not reach me till today, and then came in a *heap*. One letter was to be answered instanter and now my attention will be directed to yours of the first September. Yes. I can recall my authority for the statement on my 230 page referred to in your letter. I received it from Mr. Love, Jr. (one of the good families then living near or at Elizabethton, Sparta County). He was a member of the East Tennessee Historical and Antiquarian Society of which I was *perpetual corresponding* secretary, Chancellor Reese, president, and Reverend Stephen Foster vice-president. Mr. Love was well educated. I think his father was in the army that went to King's Mountain and perhaps some of his uncles also. He had always lived up there and seemed to know everybody and every place on Watauga. He corresponded with me and the society and died forty years ago. I copied what he wrote and as he had the pioneers and soldiers for what he wrote I always thought him correct. I know he was truthful and had good chances to be accurate.

Then I have heard from others the great difficulty of getting beeves just from the canebrakes and the wide range so tame as to be driven along a crooked road—path or trace. At the point of starting the beeves (as mentioned in the text) they took a *stampede* and had to be left behind. Some of the soldiers, too, slept at home the night before they started. Then the religious services in camp would occupy some time and thus it might have consumed the whole day to reach Talbot's. W. B. Campbell is very good authority for what he says. Mr. Love I consider equally in getting the truth. I have never heard one reader of the *Annals* say there was any inaccuracy in my text about staying the first night at Talbot's. Next morning the drivers, having after the stampede all rejoined their comrades, they were all fresh and, nothing impeding their rapid march, would reach their

second camp across the top of the mountain. Take these thoughts for what they may be worth. Nothing more than that.

I see that we are invited October 7. I wish you could be there. I think it would help the celebration greatly and your sales still more. Will your book be out on the ground on the 7 October.³ Paulette has not been here and I see nothing in the papers and I am too cautious to say anything, I do not know to be authentic. But I would be glad for you to give me the *data* about yourself which I believe I asked for two or three years ago. Don't forget that.

The Cowpens Committee say the three or four names I and you have mentioned shall be cut on the memorial column at Cowpens. I find *Alexander Greer*, the father-in-law of our old friend George Wilson, was in 1794 a citizen of Knoxville. We are unveiling some hidden things. God bless you prays your friend.

October 20, 1880

Your favor of the sixteenth reached me an hour ago and I reply at once not that I have much to give you in answer to your inquiry but to tell you at the earliest moment all that I know of Ensign Robert Campbell. He was one of Colonel William Campbell's relatives—perhaps his brother or cousin and one of his truest soldiers in the King's Mountain campaign and battle. He was an emigrant about 1826-5 to Knoxville from Washington County Virginia, bought a plantation near town and died here 1832. He was known as Ensign Robert Campbell and was reputed as the capturer in the fight on the seventh of one of Ferguson's officers—McGinnis, adjutant of Colonel Ferguson.

I regarded Ensign Robert Campbell as a very truthful and reliable man. I have never read the narrative you ascribe to "Colonel Robert Campbell" but think he was the same individual as Ensign Robert Campbell. I have seen in the newspapers some reference as to his narrative but never read the narrative itself and never heard in the whole Campbell clan of any other Robert than the Ensign. There was some very chivalrous incident in the capture of Adjutant McGinnis. But I do not recollect it accurately

³ Despite Dr. Ramsey's high opinion of his ability to accomplish his objectives, Draper was always dilatory about writing. Although his publisher was urging him to hurry, Draper had stopped writing half-way through his book. It was not ready on October 7, 1880, the centennial anniversary of the Battle of King's Mountain. When it appeared, nearly a year later, the enthusiasm of the centennial celebrations had waned and it met a poor reception.

and will not try to recall it only to say that Ensign Robert Campbell had the credit of achieving the incident. He left three sons; David, Edwin and Robert. They left home about 1840. The two first moved to Arkansas and soon died. The youngest, Robert, when I last heard from him, was a clerk in Nashville, Tennessee and may now be dead. Probably they left no papers. I know no one to refer you to. The senior Robert Campbell I think was referred to in the correspondence of Shelby and Senator Preston.

The delay in the appearance of your expected work will only make it the more *perfect*. N. Dickson, Esquire, my grandson was present during the centennial of King's Mountain and heard frequent inquiries about your book and were very desirous to see it. We are all so here in Tennessee. There was a "beggarly account of empty bones" from Tennessee and Virginia. As to Tennessee it was owing to intense political excitement prevailing all over the State. Hancock and English are safe. But our state debt has created much doubt as to the governor, legislature and members of congress. Our platform ought not to have touched state indebtedness. It has divided our people and may ruin our prospects in future. These modern Democrats affiliate badly with the *old Democracy*. . . .

November 5, 1880

Yours of the first received late last night. The youngest son of Ensign Robert Campbell has come back to Knoxville and is now a resident clerk in the office of Colonel C. M. McGhee, president of East Tennessee and Virginia and Georgia Railroad, Knoxville, Tennessee. Thus addressed, your letter cannot fail to reach him.

You have estimated Reverend D. C. K., D.D. of Nashville exactly. He was appointed by Governor Marks as one of our state commissioners to King's Mountain Centennial but failed to attend after promising to do so.

Much of what I say in my *Annals of Tennessee* about Captain Edmondson I have from the lips of Andrew Cresswell, John McCrosby and many other of the King's Mountain fight who had the best opportunity of knowing the truth of every incident I mention. They were privates under Edmondson and each of them men of unquestioned integrity and truth. I knew them well, practiced in their families forty years ago. So also of Grimes, one of the *very* few Tories on Watauga. I heard all the details about him from the same source and others. Captain Robert Sevier tarred

and feathered him before the King's Mountain campaign and then drove him across the mountains. He was hung as a desperate and cruel Tory.

Honorable William A. Courtenay, mayor of Charleston, South Carolina is the chairman of committee of invitation for the celebration of the battles of King's Mountain and Cowpens. Charleston, South Carolina, is his proper address.

I cannot recall to mind from whom I got the statement of the King's Mountain campaign. It was, I think, a contribution to the E. T. H. and A. Society of which Honorable W. B. Reese, chancellor, was the president, Reverend Stephen A. Foster, professor in our East Tennessee University, was vice president, J. G. M. Ramsey, corresponding secretary and custodian and Honorable J. H. Crozier was recording secretary. I probably got it in this way or possibly it was sent to me from some other contributor or some historical friend in Kentucky or Tennessee or, as Haywood's book was printed in Knoxville, it may have been received from the publishers here. Haywood quotes largely from it in 1820 and must have seen it and it is not impossible that he may have handed it to me himself. I think the statement was in Shelby's hand and bore his signature. It was among the collections of my society and was burned or stolen by the enemy in September 1863 with all I had when my house and office were burned.

A. A. Anderson, Esquire, lived here in 1823-6, son of United States Senator Anderson in 1786, removed to Frankfort, Kentucky, married the granddaughter of Isaac Shelby at Frankfort, Kentucky and, if still living, is there now. I don't know further about him.

Wishing you a great success in your books. . . .

P. S. I am not quite well today but desire always to answer you promptly and to assure you how much I appreciate your historical enterprises.

Draper Manuscripts 15 DD 86

November 20, 1880

I enclose this letter and its enclosures to you that you may see them before you finish your volume on "Kings Mountain and its Heroes." Please return them to me, or what is better, to *Anson Nelson* Recording Secretary Tennessee Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee.

I could point out some inaccuracy in them but am too feeble to do so today. God bless you prays your old friend.

Draper Correspondence

January 27, 1881

I have this moment received the prospectus of your forthcoming volume "Kings-Mountain and its Heroes." I thank God that I have hopes still to see it and enjoy the privilege of reading it.

I will send at once to one or two of our principal editors and ask them to give it the proper notice. I like the style or plan of the *Prospectus*. Nothing extravagant, high faluting, take-in, or deceptive about it. No. It is all truth, sober truth. The public will so view it. No clap-trap or falsehood in it. It speaks for itself and will be heard.

I will write to the publishers at Cincinnati. He says "it will be published by *subscription*." Of course he will need *agents* and I will write him in behalf of my grandson *Wilberforce Ramsey Dickson* of this city who desires to be one of his agents. He is aged twenty-six years, has not heretofore acted as a book canvasser and of course has had no experience in this business: but believes that he will be able to give full satisfaction in the premises. *My own ambition will be to show that Tennessee will give the largest patronage to your book than any of the sister states. Success and Prosperity! . . .*

P. S. I am a little better than I was when your last letter was sent.

January 29, 1881

I thank you for the two prospectus received from you yesterday. I immediately wrote to Mr. Thompson, the publisher, that if he needed an agent at Knoxville to take subscriptions for his work I would suggest the name of my grandson Wilberforce Ramsey Dickson, aged twenty-six or twenty-seven, an intelligent native of this county, well acquainted with our people and rather a favorite with them. But that he had no experience in *book canvassing business*. But that if that was not an insuperable objection he would address him here to my care. This much I had written to Mr. Thomson when your favor of the twenty-fourth January reached me. I at once added a *Post Scriptum* in which I gave him a list of perhaps thirty gentlemen all over East Tennessee counties who I think will make good book agents or advise and suggest such as will be so and gave their post office address.

The delay in getting the book out has done you no harm if, as you say, it has enabled you to straighten up some crooked narratives, either verbal or printed. Your well known accuracy and cautious care, will shield you from any apprehension as to this.

I was uneasy and even anxious lest the delay would come from *over-work and hurry*. The book will be the better for it. I would have inquired earlier for your health but that I knew you so well. Let me not trouble you for answer one minute only when I can serve you.

The cold weather has not made me worse. Indeed I am perhaps better.

Draper Manuscripts 14 DD 3

March 8, 1881

Some several weeks since I received the long and valuable catalogue of your state library. A few days since the sketch of your biography by Professor Anderson followed it, and late night before last, your appeal to the Wisconsin legislature and your welcome letter of March 1 completed the series. Thanking you for all and each of them and apologizing for *apparent* tardiness in acknowledging some of them I hasten to tell you what I recollect of Colonel John Sawyers. . . .

I thank you for the sketch of your biography and will use it. There is no *vanity* at all in it, incomplete though it be. Yes, your Mr. Thomson promptly did appoint my grandson Wilberforce Dickson agent for Knox County. The young man's modesty, perhaps his ambition to do you full justice lead him to decline the civility implied in the appointment. I had another in view and at my suggestion Mr. Thomson sent me the appointment of Mr. Francis Asbury Butler of this city as his successor. I sent for him immediately. He came at once, accepted the position, and in twenty-one days secured sixty-six of the elite of our city as subscribers—all good and true and solvent men while our streets are filled with Yankee peddlars of trashy vulgarity and light scribbling. I think Butler will make it a success. I have sent to Mr. Thomson a long list of names of thirty or forty gentlemen in other counties outside of Knoxville suitable for similar agencies. I have also suggested to Honorable J. M. Lea, Anson Nelson, Esquire, and others in Nashville to take good care of your interests in our metropolis. It is now too late probably to ask you whether I ever informed you of a very strong tradition or camp-talk in 1780 that Kusick,

one of Sevier's men, was the sharp-shooter who killed Ferguson? or that equally strong conviction that Colonel James Williams of South Carolina achieved that great success?

Probably both are true as Ferguson had more than one fatal shot in his front. I believe this.

P. S. Your picture really has surprised me when I saw it in Anderson's Biography of L. C. Draper—the Plutarch of the West. You look like you were only thirty-five.

Draper Correspondence

March 19, 1881

I enclose to you this letter of Mrs. Douglas—lady friend of ours at Nashville, Tennessee. I fear it will reach you too late for her purpose now. Her enclosure may give you *names* that may interest you in the future as to sales of your books but they afford little unknown to you heretofore.

P. S. You will hear before long more of Colonel Sawyers.

Draper Manuscripts 14 DD 6

March 14, 1881

I have just read over the pages 240-1 of the *Annals* to which you refer me in your last. I concur with you in the conclusion to which you seem to have arrived, that I refer to *Captain* William Edmondson as the officer who fell on that occasion. I was in communication with Governor David Campbell when I wrote but his letters are not within my reach—having been burned in my house in September 1863. But your understanding is doubtless correct on the matter.

In the first copies of my book *Sawyers* was spelt with the last syllable omitted *Saw*. The rest of the edition had its correct *Sawyers*. He was known after the war as Colonel Sawyers by courtesy probably or possibly by our military promotion.

I hear from our friend Anson Nelson at Nashville that Thomson's agent there, a Mr. Price, has commenced an auspicious canvas in Davidson County. F. A. Butler in Knox still meets with encouragement.

Since Spring has dawned in East Tennessee I feel somewhat rejuvenated. . . .

P. S. While this was being written your second letter of March 10 came in time to answer in this. I will this P.M. ask W. A. Anderson, Esquire, who lives near Colonel Sawyers' old place and where he lies interred and will promptly investigate all the questions you ask me to enquire about. He is probably the only living man who can give you any further information authentic and reliable on that subject. Colonel Sawyers had been in service somewhere north as I read in some book on which his name was introduced. What book or account I may never recall. But he was commissary or quartermaster in furnishing army supplies at or near to Fort Duquesne and had military experience.

Draper Manuscripts 14 DD 4

March 25, 1881

Excuse my pencil scribbling on this my eighty-fourth birthday.⁴ (March 25, 1797). The enclosed comes from a granddaughter of Colonel John Sawyers; and is supposed to be authentic—though incomplete and im-

⁴ This letter, written on his eighty-fourth birthday, ended the long correspondence between Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey and Lyman C. Draper. It had served to keep alive Dr. Ramsey's interest in the history of Tennessee and it had enabled Draper to preserve many items, bits of information, and matured opinions which would otherwise have been lost.

There was but one further communication between the two historians. In 1883 Draper wrote to ask another question. More than thirty years before, Dr. Ramsey had sent him a tracing from a tree upon which had been carved "D. Boone Cilled A Bar on tree 1760" Draper had gathered many another carved record of Daniel Boone's prowess as a bear-hunter. Now he wanted to know if Dr. Ramsey had himself seen the tree. The answer came from Mrs. Ramsey, replying to the question and giving another glimpse of Dr. Ramsey's last years:

October 6th, 1883

Mr. L. C. Draper,

Dear Sir,

In reply to your question did Dr. Ramsey ever see the Boone bear tree? He desires me to say he visited that locality at least forty years ago, does not exactly remember the year. His old friend Nathan Gammon wrote to him he had been to see the Boone tree. Dr. Ramsey went to the place described by Gammon, it was 106 miles from Mecklenburg Tennessee the Doctor's old home. He saw the camp grounds sheltered by a cliff of rocks, one of the rocks still retained marks of the fire built by Boone against it. Dr. Ramsey has a photograph of the Boone tree—presented to him from the centennial celebration at Ganesborough. If you would like to have the picture will send one. He has two. Professor McAdoo expected to go on the Watauga during the vacation but was prevented on account of some unpleasant difficulties in the University. He was not concerned himself in the trouble but thought it best not to be absent. He still thinks of going when he has time, will no doubt gather up something valuable which Dr. will forward to you. Although very feeble he is always pleased to render any service he can to his long-time friend in his useful and interesting work. Dr. Ramsey is not able to be out of bed only for a short time.

He enjoys the visits of friends when they call. Many old friends from a distance and

perfect in its details. I give its *pages* as they come to me from others. The remains of the ancestor are buried in the graveyard of Washington Church, Knox County, Tennessee.

[*J. G. M. Ramsey.*]

strangers when they visit the city come to see him. He takes an interest in all public affairs of both church and state. I know you feel an interest in all that concerns Dr. Ramsey, therefore I say so much about him. We were glad to get the magazine which contained the sketch of your life and picture.

Dr. Ramsey desires to be kindly remembered and prays your strength both mentally and physically may be continued for many long years.

Very truly your friend
M. C. Ramsey

Dr. Ramsey lived for another six months, dying in Knoxville April 11, 1884, seventeen days after his eighty-seventh birthday. He was buried in the churchyard of Lebanon-in-the-Fork on the hillside overlooking the site of his beloved "Mecklenburg." Mrs. Ramsey survived him five years. Lyman Draper, his long-time correspondent, retired from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in 1886, and died in 1891 at the age of seventy-six.