CHAPTER XXII

Pioneers of Tennessee

Draper Correspondence
Mecklenburg Place
Knoxville, Tennessee
September 25, 1875

[Mr. Lyman C. Draper]
My Dear Sir,

Yours of the twenty-first is just received. I hasten to say in reply that I have not seen the traditional narrative you speak of in reference to the siege and capture of Fort Loudon. I know if anything new and authentic about it has been published and especially in a Tennessee paper it could have hardly escaped my notice or my recollection. I wish to see all such things and I have outside friends everywhere in Tennessee and the Southwest who never fail to watch for me and forward everything to me that meets their eye. If I find anything more will promptly report it to you. But I cannot let this opportunity pass unimproved of sending you this enclosure. I had intended it for our Tennessee Historical Society but having duplicates you shall have one of them. You are no stranger to the autograph of General Jackson, but may not have the signature of Judge Jackson. You will also notice that of Hugh Lawson White—afterwards Judge, Senator, and Vice-President White. Also Henry Brazeale, writer of the little Book "Life as it is," one of the early publications of Tennessee.

Have you seen the accounts of the Harps—two notorious thieves, robbers and murderers of Tennessee and Kentucky—published early in Tennessee and the West?

Success to you and your Mr. Butterfield on your undertakings and Heaven's benediction on yourself prays your old time friend.

J. G. M. Ramsey

P. S. I answered former favor a few days since and inquired if you had received a former letter and its inclosure.

P. S. No. 2. Samuel Houston is the Reverend S. Houston mentioned in
my Annals as the member of the Convention who introduced the consti­tuion of the Commonwealth of Frankland.

October 2, 1875

Yours of the twenty-eighth ultimo received late last night. I will try to explain the puzzle as well as I can. Mr. W. Shakespeare Harris and others have doubtless given you the correct statement about John Flenniken, the delegate from Providence. When I showed the Raleigh pamphlet to Major Samuel Flenniken he said that his father had often told him that he was present at Charlotte and witnessed all that was said and done there on the nineteenth and twentieth of May '75, and the reading of the pamphlet brought vividly to his recollection all that it contained as having been narrated to him by his deceased father. But the Major may have been mistaken in saying that the father was a delegate. There may have been two Flennikens of the same name in the neighborhood. I never saw this Knox County John Flenniken—he died long before my interview with the son Major Samuel Flenniken whom I knew well as a man of truth and perfectly reliable. The father, I have no doubt, was present but not as a delegate. This may explain the apparent discrepancy. I think Harris has given the true version of it and I still have no doubt that our John Flenniken told his son that he was at Charlotte and witnessed the declar­ation.

Let me here say while I think of it that I had in my possession a letter to myself from Reverend Richard H. King formerly of Iredell County, North Carolina in which he states that he was visiting at the house of J. McKnitt Alexander and found him copying the Mecklenburg Declara­tion of Independence for the use of Dr. Hugh Williamson, the historian of North Carolina. I cannot recollect the date of this visit of Mr. King though I think it was early in this century. His letter I sent to his grand­son, Major Richard Nelson of Rockford in Blount County only a few months since. I ought to have made a copy of this part of the letter but did not. If it is of any service to you I will.

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1 Variously given as Flanagan, or Flanigan.
2 King's letter to Dr. Ramsey is not copied, but is to be found on the back of Dr. Ramsey's letter to King in the Draper Manuscripts, 2 GG 5. Dr. Ramsey's letter to King was dated September 4, 1822—revealing how early he had begun to gather material on North Carolina and Tennessee history. It read:
"Rev. R. H. King.
"Dear Sir,
"It has been asserted on testimony which I feel no hesitation in pronouncing competent
Can you describe the locality of Fort Loudon? Not very certainly, though I have been on the ground. On another piece of paper I send you a rough diagram of it as I recollect it in 1846-8. Dunmore[?] and his men were massacred not at Loudon but at Telico Plains, a few miles—one day's march—from it. The spot is still pointed out. The Telico Plains is a notorious place and if I had the money as I once had I would procure a civil engineer and go with him and delineate both the plains and the site of the old fort for your own special use: but I am impecunious and so is also my society and I must be content with the rough draft I enclose.

Hezekiah Alexander was a full brother of John McKnitt Alexander, the clearest headed magistrate in his county. He had other full brothers and sisters there and some half brothers. Ezekial Alexander was one of these, the youngest son. He died in Middle Tennessee. Adam, Abraham, Ezra and Charles Alexander were cousins of John McKnitt Alexander. Someone told me that Abraham and Adam were his brothers but I could not ascertain the exact genealogy. Mrs. Jemima Sharpe, Mrs. Betsy Samples, and perhaps Mrs. Bradly were his half sisters. The mother of Dr. Ephraim Brevard I have been told was of the McKnitt stock. The two secretaries were probably cousins—certainly they were bosom friends.

When Dr. Brevard returned from his captivity and imprisonment in Charleston, South Carolina sick, emaciated and forlorn, almost moribund, he sought the hospitable house of his kinsman or friend J. M. K. Alexander; was kindly nursed by him and his family and died there. This may have given rise to the belief that Dr. Brevard was interred in Hopewell graveyard, which was the place where J. M. K. Alexander worshiped and buried his dead. But the popular tradition is that the remains were carried nine miles to Charlotte and buried there by the side of his wife previously deceased. I resided five years from 1865 to 1870 in that country and it surprised me much to find how much is lost, how little is well known of these family chronicles and incidents.

I don't know who was the father of Major Thomas Alexander. It might
be found out in Sugar Creek where he lived in quite a late period. I have often been at his house. It was in 1825 near the residence of my uncle, Reverend Samuel C. Caldwell, and is still standing, but out now of his family. One of his daughters, a Mrs. Wilson, was living in 1869 in Hopewell. I will write to my son-in-law, W. Davidson Alexander, near Hopewell Church and learn more details, though you cannot receive his information on this and other points for several weeks. Major Tommy Alexander, as he was called, was an excellent character in church and state. Governor Nat. Alexander belonged to the Alexander tribe, but which branch of it I do not know. Did I not send you the genealogical register of James Alexander, the father of Mr. McKnitt Alexander? I think I did. I know it is amongst my papers. He was twice married and left a numerous set of descendants. I will look up that register.

The snow campaign of December 1775 was carried on against the Scovillites in South Carolina. General Thomas Polk is said to have conducted it. I have heard that his brother, Ezekial Polk, was one of his captains and had in his company and under his command his nephew Devil Charley Polk, son of General T. Polk and also William Polk, another nephew afterwards distinguished at Eutaw where he was a column captain. Devil Charley married the daughter of Hezekiah Alexander and was a dare-devil kind of man, perfectly fearless and reckless. One of his sons was General Thomas Independence Polk, more recently of Fayette County, Tennessee who has a son Charles and another son Colonel H. M. Polk, late the delegate to twentieth May centennial on the part of Tennessee Historical Society and also the Tennessee legislature. Both William Polk and Charley must have been boys in '75. President Polk told me that though they were boys they were both in service under his father Captain Ezekial Polk in the snow campaign.

I forgot to say when speaking of the Alexanders—that Captain Black Bill Alexander, or as he was afterwards known, Blind Bill, was chief at the capture and burning of the British powder before the war of '76. Whose son he was I did not ascertain, but he was a relative of the Alexanders and a brave scout all around Charlotte. I have written you a long letter with little information in it. . . .

I have not heard from Major Nelson since I last wrote you that I had requested him to examine further for Reverend King's letter and to send
DR. J. G. M. RAMSEY

it _entire_ to you. I presume therefore that he has before this enclosed it. I hope he has done so. I thank you for your last and the communication of and the picture of L. C. Draper. Three or four decades have made great changes on both of us as you will see from the picture of _J. G. M. R._, your old friend of seventy-eight—nearly an octogenarian. Born at Swan Pond, Knox County, Tennessee, March 25, 1797. Please give me your nativity—where and when, your parentage, etc., in full. I want to use it soon. Receive for your _Mr. Durrie_ note of Reverend Dr. J. B. Lindsley, who has been my guest for a week. I have just finished 56 closely written pages on _Lebanon Church_—containing biographical sketches of its pioneer members—General James White. Captain or Dr. James Cozby, Captain Thomas Gillespie, Captain Robert Craighead, Squire George McNutt, Squire John Adair, Colonel F. A. Ramsey, Governor John Sevier, his son-in-law, Archibald Rhea, and others.

I hope you will not perpetuate the mistake that Sevier was one of our elders. He was not and I have so declared in my reminiscences of Lebanon. His last wife was a member but he was Gullis-like and cared for none of these things. But he _attended_ our church and always occupied the pew of his old friend and comrade Captain and Surgeon James Cozby while his ladies sat in Squire Rhea’s pew. Some of Sevier’s biographers persist in the error that he was a Presbyterian elder. I know you will have it all right. General White, Captain Gillespie, Colonel Ramsey and Squire Rhea were the elders—Squire Adair, McNutt and others were also but Sevier never—not even a communicant.

I have read _Crawford_ by your associate Butterfield. It is a model of typographical excellence, the whole mechanical execution perfect, and that is not half its _merits_. _Your_ wealth of material—I suppose so—has enriched its pages. He has done his work well. It fills up a hiatus that has been long wanting in our American History. The _Atlantic_ part of it has been pretty well preserved and sufficiently dilated upon and expanded but who but Draper has analyzed the northwestern and western incidents of our early history? _Crawford_ makes a happy beginning to the wanting links of the long chain. George Rogers Clarke (You see I retain the final _e_ as I learned it fifty years ago) ought to have preceded _Crawford_ but no doubt you have your reasons for letting Crawford take the priority, but

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3 Daniel S. Durrie was librarian of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

4 Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey, _History of Lebanon Presbyterian Church "In the Fork," Five Miles East of Knoxville, Tennessee_. (Pp. 24) was first published in 1918 and reprinted in 1952.
it whets my appetite for Clarke. Give my respects to your Mr. Butterfield and say that some of these days I will give him a favorable and friendly and longer review in some of our journals. At this time I am very much occupied with Dr. J. B. Lindsley in abridging my *Annals* into a school history for our Tennessee normal and common schools. I write with some pain. I cannot yet sit close up to my table so as to make my writing legible. Otherwise I am very well and capable of a great deal of labor and *labor ipsa voluptus* especially history and biography. Your picture shows you well preserved and possessed of your old time vigor and energy. I hope you may never suffer the ignoble accident from an unruly horse that has been inflicted on me. Command me freely. Thank you for your enormous catalogue. . . .

November 10, 1875

I write again to Major Wilson *enjoining* upon him to look up the last letter, for I know he has too much *veneration* in his composition to have destroyed it. But having a long list of cousins and other kin he has probably handed or sent it to someone else than Miss Fonte or his aunt as he supposed he had done. I think he will come up with it yet, but it may be too late though for your purpose. Last summer I wrote for the Christian *Observer*, Louisville, Kentucky a memoir of Reverend R. H. King which is now before me and would be sent now entire but that to tear it out of my scrapbook would disfigure and mutilate it too much. (Everything I write for the press it is my habit to cut out and paste in a book kept for that purpose.) But I copy for your use or gratification an item or two to meet your inquiries. During my late sojourn in North Carolina, the daughter of Reverend D. Carruthers of Greensboro, North Carolina requested me to prepare and revise for the press a long and full biography of Reverend King written by his colleague in the ministry, Reverend Carruthers. I did so. This manuscript would make a volume itself, giving in detail the formation, progress and growth of Presbyterian Churches in North Carolina and some revolutionary incidents, etc., etc. From the perusal of this manuscript biography I took dates enough to form my article for the *Observer*—which will answer your inquiries.

R. H. King was the eldest son of James King and his wife was Sarah Hall, sister of Reverend James Hall, D.D., a captain and chaplain in the Revolutionary army. R. H. King was born July 22, 1767 in Iredell County,
North Carolina and graduated at Princeton in 1788. Was a subject of the great revival and felt called on to preach. His presbytery required him to study divinity a certain length of time: he was too impatient to wait so long and he applied to and was licensed to preach by Bishop Asbury then passing through the country. He became a powerful preacher and was usefully employed on his circuit a few years when his presbytery felt authorized to license him to preach in the mother church. This took place about 1808-9 when he took the pastorate of Concord and Bethel Church, which he relinquished early in 1815 when he removed to Knox County, succeeding Reverend S. G. Ramsey in the pastorate of Ebenezer and Pleasant Forest churches. Becoming too corpulent to preach in his churches he removed to Blount County where some of his daughters had married. His weight was 404 pounds. He died in 1825. His letters to me—exact date not recollected—were probably written in 1823 or 1824. In one of them he said that he recollected that on a former visit to J. McKnitt Alexander he found him copying the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence for Dr. Williamson, the author of a history of North Carolina. Alexander died in June 1817 and had been blind several years, say five or six before his death. I suppose the visit alluded to was before Mr. King began to preach, or before he assumed the pastorate, but I do not know—perhaps the lost letter mentioned the date. I am not certain that it does. I will continue to press Major Wilson to hunt it up. I know he would not destroy it. But he is full of business, not very methodical, and has only mislaid it or forgotten whom he sent it to. He valued them very highly. Mr. King was somewhat scientific as well as pious and spent once a considerable time in excavating the tumulas in rear of my house. By the help of my Negro man he sunk a shaft from the summit to the base in these researches.

Your Mr. Butterfield has been more industrious and more skillful than I supposed one of his age could be since I find he had not the benefit of your assistance. He is to be the more commended. I wait impatiently for your Border Conflicts and Adventures. I am now on my abridgment for the use of schools. If I were by you I would ask you for a hundred suggestions about my little bantling—250-300 pages octavo. Is that large enough for nearly ninety years? I only bring it down to 1860, for fear I would tramp on somebody's toes, hurt the feelings of some modern Democrats such as A. Johnson. De mortuis nil nisi bonum. Am glad you have Rupp's work. Some of the Resolutions come very near to the Mecklen-
burg's proceedings, though not quite. I was the more interested in them as the Mecklenburgers, as many of them emigrated from that section in 1760 to Carolina—as some of the Ramseys, Alexanders, McGimpseys and other Mecklenburgers did. I thank you for the dates and localities you sent me.

New Hampshire and Vermont will do—. Not much Puritanism in them. Did you ever compare the rejected constitution of Frankland with that of Vermont—almost cotemporaneous and the two countries almost facsimiles of each other?

Am quite well, but have still to use my crutches. My crushed limb is less painful but very little stronger. . . .

November 28, 1875

I wrote to Major Wilson that I knew he had too much veneration to have destroyed his grandfather's letters which I had sent him and that I supposed he had only put them in a very safe place so that he could not find them on first hunt for them. It turned out to be so. He writes now that he did find them in his son's safe in his store here in Knoxville and that he had enclosed that one to you which had the statement that he had seen: J. M. Alexander copying the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence for the use of Dr. Williamson. I hope you have received it. Please let me hear if you do not get it.

The Major also sent back to me Reverend R. H. King's other letters. Looking them over I find one giving a list of genealogies of the Polks and Brevards which may interest you. I have no authority from Major Wilson to tell you to keep it or I would say so. Perhaps he will expect me to return it.

As you probably see the Southern Home I do not this morning send a letter contained in it from Edward Wallis to National Intelligencer on some general subject in 1853 I believe. Nor have I ever sent to you my own recollections of nursery tales derived from my mother and General White and others of the olden times. I prefer not to say and have never written a word of what I know myself. It is not necessary, but I have heard it all my life and never allowed myself to doubt a single word J. McKnitt Alexander ever said or wrote. Jefferson himself has never asserted that it was not genuine but the suggestion about the father and the son not having the same name did create some suspicion in the minds
even of candid men. I have heretofore explained all that obscurity and misapprehension to you in a former letter. I suppose that came to hand. In North Carolina it is all understood and there it has never been misconceived.

I am on my *Abridgment* and need very much a wise suggestion from you about the size of the volume. It stops at 1800.

Wisconsin has done nobly and Will Allen of Ohio is the only one who can carry his state in 1876. Allen and Vance of North Carolina or Harris of Tennessee make a strong team. God bless you, prays yours truly . . .

January 18, 1876

My last informed you that Major Wilson had written to me that he had found and forwarded to you his grandfather’s letter and inquired whether you had received it, and also inclosed another letter from Reverend R. H. King which contained some genealogical lists of the Polks, Brevards, etc., which I supposed might interest you a little. I have been ever since anxious to hear from you. Did you get Major Wilson’s letter concerning Mr. King’s lost letter? Please let me hear at once. I have feared that you were sick—perhaps you are gone somewhere to publish your *magnum opus*. I am distressed to think the former, which would be a great public calamity and would leave me in a state of *historical orphanage*.

I write today to inquire how and where you are? and to assure you that in my opinion you are one of the most important personages now living. Do relieve my anxiety and write me at once . . .

P. S. It is a nursery tale with me that on the occasion of a wedding in his neighborhood Colonel Thomas Polk, though the invitation was to him and family, positively forbade his son Charles from accompanying him to the house of the bride, saying, “You are so much of a Devil I can’t allow it.” His coach and four went, leaving Devil Charley behind. He, however, was not easily thwarted. He hitched two old shabby horses with plough harness to a sled in the wood yard and just as Colonel Polk drove up to the house—here came Charley hooping and hallooing at his team, passed the coach containing the family, arrived at the gate first, dressed in an unbecoming suit but was well received by the host, etc., etc.
The colonel had drunk freely and was telling of his war exploits and his courage to the guests. Charley withdrew, waylaid his father's coach, disguised—came out of the woods, stopped the driver and the coach, demanded the colonel's pocketbook and naturally received it and returned it to him next morning at breakfast. Other such tales without number.

January 31, 1876

I unite my thanks with your own to Almighty God for your preserved life and health. It was in no vain spirit of adulation that I said in my last that your life appeared to me to be more important and valuable than that of anyone else. I really felt it to be true. Take care of it. You have no conception of the loss which a suspension of your great and useful labors would inflict upon this age and country. Your letter shows how well preserved you are. The hand steady, the mind clear, the purpose determined. Happy and fortunate Wisconsin! When can Tennessee aspire to and reach your encouraging example? I thank you for the able and satisfactory Report of your State Historical Society and the memorial you sent me. I am sorry that the sixteenth state of our union lags so far behind her younger sister. While you have such able coadjutors—a cabinet of which you are chief—I stand nearly unaided and alone. I received last week a contribution of old papers and documents which fill a box 5 x 3 x 2 feet deep—some of them very valuable—and all of them old. These I am arranging for our collection at Nashville, believing that no one else would have the patience to do it right but myself. Labor ipsi voluptas. I can transfer it to no other and undertake it cheerfully.

Consider the letters of Reverend R. H. King as presented to yourself from me. Major Wilson authorizes this. I have others but of less value.

I have a request to make which I hope you can grant without much interruption of your persistent labors. I am investigating the career of General Griffith Rutherford. To save you unnecessary research I will say in advance that he commanded the Mecklenburg militia in May 1771 called out by Governor Tyron to put down the insurgent Regulators in Alamance, but sympathizing with the justice of their cause failed to join the royal army under Tyron; was the commander of the North Carolina troops against the Cherokees in 1776, penetrated into what afterwards became Tennessee and devastated their Over-Hill villages, was a decided Whig, was captured at Campden in 1780 and sent to prison at Charleston.
and St. Augustine and some years after the peace of 1783 secured lands for the North Carolina soldiers in (I believe) 1786 on Sucahatchee River in the present Shelby County near Memphis where he located military warrants for my grandfather's Revolutionary services 3,660 acres and for many other North Carolina officers and soldiers and perhaps located General Nathaniel Greene's large grant on Duck River, Maury County, held civil office under the territorial government and the state. About this time I lose him only that our Rutherford County and that in North Carolina and Rutherfordton also in North Carolina were all so called for him. Can you help verify these items of his biography and further tell me where he was born and where and when did he die? Further. For whom was our Williamson County called? Was it for General Williamson who went to the Over-Hill Cherokees in 1776 in command of a similar expedition (from South Carolina) to Rutherford's—though not with him till they reached the center of the Nation where their commands met? Please solve these questions and excuse me for troubling about them.

Dr. Hunter (Cottage Home, Gaston County, North Carolina) is preparing biographical sketches of Mecklenburgers and gives that of one of the men as Captain J. McKnitt Alexander. My grandfather was above the military age in the Revolution but acted as pilot and one of General Greene's aides on his celebrated escape from the pursuit of Cornwallis in February 1781. His claim for land warrants was that of a colonel, 3,660 acres, of which I inherited a part. Do your Mecklenburg papers mention his grade in the service? Dr. Hunter may refer to another of same name.

The tribe was the largest of that Israel.

I have fatigued you and can only add that I am making satisfactory progress in my *Abridgment*. Can you refer me to a similar work anywhere which you can recommend to me as a model? ...
Wrightstill Avery, Colonel McGimpsey,—the Irvines and the Martins all patriots of the Revolution but am not certain as to Isaacs. After writing thus far Honorable T. Nixon Vandyke of Athens, Tennessee came over to see me and while he was here I inquired for Colonel Elijah Isaacs. Judge Vandyke says he thinks that a congressman of that name once represented the Winchester district in Middle Tennessee; does not recollect his first name, nor does he know further about him but that Judge J. T. L. Sneed or Judge Turney of our Supreme Bench will hold his court here soon and that he can tell all about him. I have not at hand the list of congressmen from Tennessee to refer to. You doubtless have one. After seeing Judge Sneed or Turney and further inquiries, I will write you again with more accurate and reliable details. I have heard the name, I know. A biographer, Dr. Cyrus Hunter of Cottage Home P. O., Lincoln County, North Carolina is preparing and will soon publish a work on the Revolutionary men of Western North Carolina and is writing me very earnestly about a family named Jack. Had heard that a descendant of one of them once lived in upper East Tennessee and was a circuit court judge here many years since. Our Jacksboro in Campbell County may have been named for him, but I cannot get on the trail and beg to ask you whether you have anything of that family? He is said to be a connection of Captain Jack, the bearer of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia in '75.

What I have said of Evan Shelby I must have got from Haywood as the Shelby papers in my hands before my house and office were burned in 1863 referred only to the son, Isaac Shelby, and did not mention the father, Evan Shelby, at all if I recollect right. When the latter undertook his campaign against the Chickamaugas by water he was supposed to live in Virginia, under whose authority the nautical enterprise was undertaken and on his return he was made Brigadier General by Virginia. I have been at his old place in Sullivan County, and it is several hundred yards this side of our state line and near Bristol, Tennessee. Across the line and in exact contact with it is Goodson, they really are parts of the same town, one of whose streets follows the state line through the town. Finding that he did not live in Virginia, he would necessarily become frinctus officire and was not known as General Evan Shelby afterwards though he retained the title ever afterward and is, I believe, so designated on his monument which I have seen. In 1784? or near that date Sevier was commissioned by North Carolina Brigadier and Evan Shelby could not be a
Brigadier at the same time. Every county in North Carolina had its own regiment and of course when Sullivan County was struck off of Washington County the new county had to have its colonel commandant and thus Captain Isaac Shelby became the colonel—say in 1779. I will look further into this some other day as I happen at this moment to be very much engaged.

I write this early so as to add one thing more to yourself about your Mecklenburg, still on your shelves as you cannot get a publisher to undertake it. Have you ever tried the Methodist Publishing House at Nashville, Tennessee? Eastman and Company? These Methodist people are very clannish and have made a success of everything (even Calvinistic and non-sectarian works) which they publish. They have the *machinery* in their circuit riders to give popularity and éclat to all their publications. Tennessee is the best field you can find anywhere for your bantling—everyone nearly in it being of North Carolina descent. Their terms are: The author furnishes the manuscript, they stereotype and manufacture it into a volume, put it into their *machinery* for selling, retain enough of the proceeds of sale for the extinguishing of the expense of manufacture first, and then each party is equal in all the sales, author retaining the plates. They will publish my abridgment or *Manual of Tennessee History* on these terms. Yours will sell better than mine. Suppose you write them. The Burke County people, except W. Avery, were from Pennsylvania, as probably Isaacs was. I will see ______ and write you.

I am preparing a paper on the prerevolutionary and the revolutionary history of Tennessee, for the next meeting of our state historical society. Do you ever see the *Christian Observer*, Louisville, Kentucky? In the last number you will find an article, “Mnemonika” on Old Lebanon-in-the-Fork. God bless, guard, guide and direct you prays your sincere friend. . . .

P. S. Before I had sealed this letter, yours of the sixteenth reached me. *Gap Creek* is a large tributary of Watauga, still known by that name and on this side of the Alleghenies. *Brights Trace* was, I suppose, one of the blazed paths across the mountains and so called for one of the first hunters or explorers, and did pass directly through the *Bald Place* that gave that name to the mountain. In 1805 the place was still *bald* and may be still so. I saw it so when eight years old and can still recollect it well. *Brights*
*Place:* I don't know where it was. He may have *blazed* the trail but may have lived elsewhere. This was done with a tomahawk of a hunter or pioneer. I don't think the Bald Place showed any marks of having been cleared when I saw it. Not a cabin was then on it nor a fence, but on the edge of the Bald Place was a camp and ashes, etc. The men may have paraded there. Mr. Andrew Cresswell told me they were ordered to discharge their rifles and load and prime afresh—Tories might be waylaying them. They did discharge them but made little explosion. *Trace,* as I understand it, meant a blazed line of considerable length say from the eastern base of the Blue Ridge clear across the high mountains to their western base. At the same time, 1805, this trace crossed *Lindle* Ridge, perhaps Lindville, a considerable elevation east of Yellow (Bald) Mountain. Not far from its foot we crossed Catawba River (small), came to the house of Colonel Wrightstill Avery (one of the members of the Mecklenburg Convention). He lived near the present Morganton, Burke County. Lindle Ridge was abundant in izing glass and attracted the notice of an eight year old boy from Knoxville.

I fatigue you with these boyhood recollections. I saw near the trace we traveled the place where a noted Tory was followed and I asked years afterwards who had with three others waylaid and murdered a Whig over in Hopewell. That county is full of history.

I hope *Paulette* may not disappoint your Mr. Thomson. He is experienced in book enterprises and travels extensively. If he comes to Knoxville soon I will try to see him.

June 20, 1876

I have been busy lately preparing a centennial offering to the people of Tennessee. *"Tennessee in the Revolution"* is the title of the address. It will be read at the next meeting of the historical society of the state on July 4 in the capitol. I am one of the first born of the sons of the State of Tennessee and I thought that occupying the position I do in the society, and especially as I am the connecting link between the pioneers and their successors in the Volunteer State, it would be very appropriate and well timed for me to seize the centennial occasion to make the offering. Am I right? But having now finished the last line of it, I take up your favor of the twelfth, knowing that you can now see and appreciate the cause of *apparent* delay.
Your present chronology about Evan Shelby must be accurate from other circumstances than those you enumerate. I briefly refer to them: On examining the "Annals" I see they do state that Shelby was made General by Virginia. I cannot now recollect on what authority this statement was made. At first he seemed to be a citizen of that state but after the line was drawn it became evident he lived in North Carolina. I know his old residence and have been at it—not a quarter of a mile from the dividing line. As he was invested by Virginia with the chief command in providing for and carrying on his Chickamauga expedition, as he had the regiment of Colonel Hamilton placed under him, etiquette or courtesy would concede to him the title of general, or perhaps Virginia may have appointed him or offered to appoint him general, which, of course, he could not accept as he lived out of her territory and of course had to decline it. How and when did he become General under North Carolina? Colonel Sevier, you recollect, was appointed general in 1784 when the Franklin difficulties began in order to oppose these discontents and in fact, after this appointment of Sevier was made, he himself used it as an argument why the malcontents should drop all idea of separation or a new state. But becoming soon afterwards the head of the revolt he became incapacitated to be a general under North Carolina and at the same time governor of the new state. He may have resigned or been deposed—perhaps both. At all events there became a vacancy in the brigade and none was better qualified to fill that vacancy than Evan Shelby. See Annals, page 3, 5, 7, 8 and elsewhere in my chapter on Franklin. Then the gap you find, in the Shelby letters you refer to from 1783 to 1787, is easily explained. Colonel to 1784 and in 1787 a general under North Carolina wishing to resign. The dates correspond exactly. Shelby was and had been a friend of both parties. I do not mean a fence man. Far from it. He had tried to heal the breach between the old and new state by negotiation with Governor Sevier. The latter would not yield and the other could not fight unnecessarily with his countrymen and best friends. Hence his request to be allowed to resign. I concur with you in dating his commission about 1786 and wishing to resign in 1787. These dates all agree to this hypothesis. See Annals. 1799 is the proper date of his death, in December.

I do not know that Charles Robinson went to Chickamauga with Evan Shelby, nor that it was a joint expedition between Virginia and North Carolina. "Our early history needs a good deal of honest revision" you say truly. I have not yet received answer from our Judge Turney about
Colonel Elijah Isaacs. When received you shall certainly hear from me promptly.

Did you receive my letter stating that Eastman, Tarvel and Company of Nashville are publishers, etc., etc? They are executing our *Manual of Tennessee History for Schools, Academies*, etc., etc. I think they would be suitable publishers for your Mecklenburg. I still hope to see it before I depart home. Dr. Cyrus L. Hunter of *Cottage Home*, Lincoln County, North Carolina expects to bring out his volume on the same subject in all this month. It will be well done.

One word on politics. The convention at Cincinnati has done the Democrats great harm by nominating Hayes. He is a negative man, but all the worse to us for that. It will require all our wisdom and virtue to repair the mischief or prevent complete disaster.

God bless, keep, protect and save you prays your old but sincere friend!

*J. G. M. Ramsey*