Making
of Tennessee

At the fork of the Holston and Watauga rivers—near where the first settlement of Tennessee was planted—stood a plain, commodious and heavily comfortable house of white oak logs. Its owner and occupant was William Cobb, a farmer of substance and culture, who entertained his guests more with profusion than with plenty. His servants, his spacious grounds, his simple and unpretentious equipage were always at their bidding. His horses, dogs, rifles and traps were more in their hands than in his own. “They felt themselves at home, and never said adieu to him or his family without the parting regret and the tenderness of an old friendship.”

In the fall of 1790 Cobb entertained a most distinguished guest: William Blount, Governor of the “Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio.” Significant events had preluded Blount’s appointment to the post. In December 1789 North Carolina at last ceded her western lands to Congress which in the ensuing spring accepted them and converted them into a federal territory. President Washington considered Blount the best qualified of all the candidates for the governorship. He had long been a loyal friend, had a good military and Federalist record and was thoroughly familiar with, and sympathetic toward, frontier affairs and leaders. Feeling confident that a man of such qualifications would calm the turbulent frontiersmen and perhaps even align them with the administration, Congress in June appointed him to the post. At the same time he was made Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Department.

Though still young—he was only forty-one—the governor was a man of wide and diversified experience. Born of wealthy par-
ents in eastern North Carolina, he received a private education superior to that of many of his contemporaries. At the outbreak of the Revolution he supported independence and became a paymaster in the army. Entering a political career, he served first in the North Carolina assembly, twice in the federal House of Representatives and then again in the state assembly. While he pursued politics he embraced a business enterprise of no small scope. As spokesman for his associates in the Muscle Shoals project, Blount sought to secure legal titles from either North Carolina or Georgia—both of which claimed ownership to the area—and to buy the land by private treaty with the Cherokee.

Much to his chagrin, Blount soon learned that federal commissioners had chosen to treat with the Southern Indians. Armed with Richard Caswell’s financial support, he hurried southward with the intention of purchasing the Muscle Shoals area before the federal commissioners should award it to the Indians. But on the treaty ground at Hopewell, South Carolina, General Andrew Pickens, federal Indian agent who had “a vast contempt for the common white settler and an interest in Indian welfare,” opposed him and succeeded for the time being in frustrating his plans. Turning to federal problems, Blount represented North Carolina in the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia, though he played no prominent part in that body. When North Carolina accepted the constitution in 1789 Blount signed it as a member of the state convention. He unsuccessfully sought election as one of North Carolina’s first senators.

Pending the location and establishment of a territorial capital, Blount made Cobb’s home his residence as well as his executive mansion. Comfortable in a room with such frontier luxuries as glass windows and a fireplace, he moved with an air of dignified affluence, conducting state affairs, entertaining, and beguiling idle hours by reading John Trusler’s Principles of Politeness. Then in November just before the cold snap set in, he and Judge Campbell undertook a tour of the territory. They covered the old Washington District, stopping at every county seat, naming officers whom Campbell swore in, and receiving the encomiums of the citizenry.

Later in the month the two men journeyed to Nashville where
James Robertson proudly showed them his estate of 4,000 rich acres, his grist and saw mills, his orchards and his blooded stock. Everywhere governor and citizens scrutinized each other with intense curiosity. The citizens saw a handsome, fair-haired man in lace, buckled shoes and a coat of the finest cloth, who spoke with learned phrases that sounded almost foreign but who, nevertheless, was friendly, practical, sincere and greatly interested in them and in their country.

As for Blount, he saw a society in transition. In the East he had pictured the people whom he was to govern as drunkards, brawlers and ear-croppers. Instead, he found them to be hard-working men, behaving more or less like those in the East. Fights and brawls were few and far between, and most settlers managed to keep their ears intact. Buckskins were giving way to eastern dress. Clubbed hair, once seen only in the inns, was becoming the common custom. Religion and education was strengthening frontier morality.

As he toured the counties Blount proclaimed the new government and notified those who held commissions under authority of North Carolina. To the citizenry he read the act of Congress accepting the cession of North Carolina, mentioned his own commission as governor, and disclosed that henceforth Congress would assume and execute the government of the territory in a manner similar to that which it supported north of the Ohio. He was alluding to the Northwest Ordinance which the Congress of the Confederation had passed on July 13, 1787, as the instrument of government for the territory acquired from Great Britain by the Treaty of Paris which ended the Revolution.

Blount explained that the Ordinance—adopted in its entirety by the new Federal Congress—established three stages of government for each territory in its progress toward statehood. In the first stage a governor, a secretary and three judges appointed by Congress were authorized to enforce laws and control the militia. A territory reached the second stage when it attained 5,000 free white males of voting age. At this point it would have a legislature consisting of a House of Representatives elected by the people and a Council of five members selected by Congress on nomination of the territorial House of Representatives. Also
at this stage a territory would also send a delegate to Congress, who could participate in the deliberations of that body but could not vote.

A territory attained the last stage of government when it could count 60,000 inhabitants. It would then frame a constitution and apply for admission to the Union "on an equal footing with the original states, in all respects whatever." The Ordinance granted religious freedom, guaranteed trial by jury and declared that "schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

In the interest of unity, Blount shrewdly recommended for office many of the adherents of the old Franklin government. John Sevier and James Robertson were commissioned brigadier generals of the militia in the eastern and western districts of the territory, respectively. To the minor military and civil offices the governor nearly always appointed men acceptable to the people.

Blount's position called for unusual tact. The settlers constantly complained that, as a hireling of the federal authorities, he pursued their policy of favoring the Indians. On the contrary, the federal authorities often upbraided the governor for failing to stop the settlers from making incursions on Indian lands. This state of affairs seldom bewildered Blount. While he steadfastly did his best to provide protection for the settlers against Indian attacks, he applied no mean diplomatic skill to avoid a break with the federal authorities. And he always tried to instill in the settlers a feeling of loyalty for the Union.

Returning to Cobb's late in December 1790, Blount found a message from the federal government requesting him to treat with the Cherokee. Embittered against the Franklin authorities for permitting speculators to appear on the bend of the Tennessee in violation of the Treaty of Hopewell, the Cherokee had gone on the warpath in a fanatic attempt to drive the whites from the region. More recently they had derived much encouragement from word of an Indian victory in the Northwest in October 1790 over Colonel Joshua Harmar, commanding a force of American militia. With this event the Indian marauding parties in Tennessee had increased. The settlers, fearing a general
attack, had appealed to the federal government for assistance.

Blount, therefore, hastened his plans for peace. He sent Major Robert King, United States agent to the Cherokee, to summon their chiefs to a conference. At the same time he did not neglect his personal interests. Eager to procure the purchase of the Muscle Shoals area, which Pickens had frustrated at Hopewell, Blount wrote Secretary of War Henry Knox, arguing in favor of scrapping the treaty and of obtaining further Indian concessions for an annuity of $1,000. The authorities gave their approval.

Meanwhile King had returned from the Cherokee with the good news that they were willing to talk peace. Still the governor found discouragement on every side. Pickens, angry with him over their differences at Hopewell, warned the Cherokee that Blount was their secret enemy and that his only ambition was to grab all their lands. At about the same time the Cherokee harkened to rumors that Blount, in summoning them to a conference, planned to have them all massacred. The governor found them so skeptical of his good intentions that he had to send Robertson to reassure them.

In June 1791 Blount departed for White's Fort where the Cherokee had finally agreed to meet him. Among the 12,000 that gathered were two of the leading chiefs of the nation, John Watts and Bloody Fellow, both of whom had been friendly to the Americans until the Treaty of Hopewell disillusioned them. Watts was an astute, strong-willed and witty man whose father had been a trader of the same name and whose mother was a daughter of Chief Old Tassel. The Chickamauga were to make Watts their chief at the death of Dragging Canoe. Bloody Fellow was not as sanguinary as his name indicates. He seems to have derived it, not from any predilection for bloodshed, but from a fondness for bloody meat.

Though the Chickamauga were absent, Blount persuaded himself that enough of the Cherokee were present to formulate a binding treaty. Aware of the Indian love of ceremony, he overlooked no detail in his plans to entertain the chiefs with respectful attention and colorful pomp. By the bank of the river in the shade of huge elms he erected a marquee under which he sat in full dress with military hat and sword. Around him, uncovered
and respectful, stood his civil and military officers. Here and there were gathered small bands of settlers from the surrounding countryside. The Indian braves, decorated with eagle feathers and the insignia of their rank, and the older chiefs and medicine men in common Indian dress, approached the marquee where James Armstrong, familiar with the etiquette of European courts, acted as master of ceremonies. One of the interpreters, in Indian costume, introduced each chief to Armstrong, who in turn presented him by his Indian name to Blount.

The negotiations were conducted in the style of an Indian council. Each speaker stood alone while his colleagues sat respectfully silent and fixedly attentive on the ground in a circle around him. Blount spoke first, announcing that the purpose of the conference was to buy another piece of ground from the Indians. Watts and Bloody Fellow, thinking that the conference had been called to iron out procedural kinks in the Treaty of Hopewell, were deeply chagrined. They protested loudly, but the hard-headed governor pressed his attack, demanding that the boundary be drawn in the Cumberland region. Watts and Bloody Fellow countered with a flat no, whereupon Blount, mindful of Muscle Shoals, proposed a larger cession whose boundary he said he would enforce by settling upon it. An even more emphatic no forced Blount to retreat to his first proposal which the Indians again rejected.

The debating grew more and more acrimonious with each proposal and counterproposal until Watts flew into a rage. He denounced North Carolinians, including Blount, as treaty-breakers, warned the other chiefs that negotiations with them was useless and threatened to go to Philadelphia and appeal to the Great White Father. To Watts's torrent of anger Blount made cool replies. He claimed all the disputed lands by right of conquest in the Revolution and reminded the chiefs that they could not appeal to President Washington without money to make the journey to Philadelphia.

At last cooler tempers prevailed. The Indians agreed to cede a tract of land running from a ridge on the Holston to the North Carolina border and westward to the mouth of the Clinch. As compensation for the cession Blount offered the chiefs an annuity of $1,000 and certain valuable gifts. The chiefs scorned
this paltry sum. It would not buy, they said, a breechcloth for each person in their nation, but they accepted it temporarily when Blount promised to apply to Congress for a larger sum.

The Treaty of Holston, as it was called, established “perpetual peace” and restored friendship “between all the citizens of the United States and the whole Cherokee nation.” It stated that the Cherokee agreed to place their fur trade under the protection of the United States, to grant American citizens navigation of the Tennessee River and the free and unmolested use of the road running between the Washington and Mero districts, and to surrender horse thieves and other felonious fugitives to the American authorities. In return for these concessions the United States gave the Cherokee a free hand in dealing with white intruders on Indian lands, requested passports for entry into Indian territory and renounced acts of retaliation. The two parties agreed to an exchange of prisoners by the following April and to the appointment of a joint commission of whites and Indians to mark the boundary guaranteed by the United States.

From a public and private point of view the treaty may be considered a success. Though Blount failed to secure the coveted Muscles Shoals area, he succeeded in regularizing on paper the points of dispute between the Cherokee and the settlers. Further, he legalized the settlements south of the French Broad and added a considerable slice of valuable wooded ground to Tennessee. The treaty, too, included certain equivocal terminology which could be construed to favor further cessions and more squatters within Indian territory.

Convinced that he had struck the best possible agreement with the Cherokee for the present, Blount sent the treaty to Philadelphia by express. In October it was laid before the Senate which soon ratified it. President Washington was as pleased with the Treaty of Holston as was Blount. In a letter of thanks he praised the governor for his zeal in promoting the interests of the United States and in endeavoring to obtain “a peace on the basis of justice and humanity.”

During his sojourn at White’s Fort, Blount was convinced that there was the best site for his capital. Much of the ground belonged to General James White, who had built the fort and given
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it his name. White was commissioned to lay out the streets and lots for a town which Blount named Knoxville for his superior officer, Secretary of War Henry Knox. On a knoll near the river Blount planned to build a weatherboarded log cabin where he would live with his family until he could realize a more fitting residence.

Knoxville grew rapidly. Settlers, anticipating the rising value of the ground, flocked there in large numbers; within a year it became the largest town in all Tennessee. It boasted more than two hundred houses, most of which were built of wood. John Chisholm, Blount's personal Indian agent and general handyman, built Knoxville's first tavern where such dignitaries as Attorney General Andrew Jackson and former Governor John Sevier often wined and dined. Chisholm's rates were considered "steep" for his day: "one shilling for breakfast, one shilling for supper, and one and sixpence for dinner; board and lodging for a week costing two dollars, and board only for the same space of time nine shillings."

Few stores in the East were as well stocked as those in Knoxville. The merchants procured their goods in the great trade centers of Richmond, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Because of the scarcity of coin and bank notes, most of the trade was carried on by barter. The manufacturers would specify the kinds of goods they would take and the different values they placed on them. The salt works of Washington, Virginia, for example, sold their product at seven shillings and sixpence per bushel if paid in cash or in such prime furs as mink, 'coon, muskrat, wild-cat and beaver; at ten shillings if paid in bear or deerskins, bees-wax, hemp, bacon, butter or beef cattle; and at twelve shillings if paid in ordinary garden produce. For their articles the manufacturers also accepted cash, tallow, lard in "white walnut kegs," new feathers, good horses, corn, rye, oats, flax and depreciated Continental currency. The stores sold nails, calico, axes, broadcloths, books, silks, furniture and salt over the counter. Such articles as drapery, mercury, drugs, fine earthenware and tea were brought directly from India to the United States in American ships. The Caribees furnished coffee and raw sugar. France sent taffetas, stockings, brandies and millstones.

Tennessee's earliest newspaper, the Knoxville Gazette, was
The Appalachian Frontier

printed first at Rogersville in 1791 because of troublesome Indians around Knoxville. The publisher was George Roulstone, who, with the assistance of R. Ferguson, also printed the paper. It was a double sheet, each page being ten by sixteen inches in size, containing advertisements as well as reading matter. The printers introduced the first issue in this manner:

We have now the pleasure of presenting the public with the first number of the ‘Knoxville Gazette’. . . . The ‘Knoxville Gazette’ shall be published once in every two weeks. Each subscriber to pay two dollars per annum, one-half on subscribing, the remaining half in six months.

On Wednesday, October 10, 1792, the paper announced that it had moved to Knoxville which became its permanent home.

The Knoxville Gazette is a gold mine of information for almost every aspect of pioneer life in Tennessee. In politics it was strongly Federalist, mirroring in an emotional manner the policies of George Washington. Roulstone, like most journalists of the time, sympathized with the French Revolution; but in 1794 he ranged himself against it when he learned of the beheading of Marie Antoinette and of the Jacobin terror in Paris. The paper was full of poignantly quaint advertisements by persons whose friends and kinsfolk had been carried off by Indians and who anxiously sought their whereabouts. The many collection notices showed that the creditors realized that the people would pay their obligations if they could possibly do so. Another type of collector as well as of debtor is presented in the following advertisement:

TAKE NOTICE ALL YE WHISKEY DRINKERS—That I will positively sue every person indebted to me in 21 days from this date, if they do not make payment.

Benjamin White

The columns of the Gazette were by no means confined to the opinions of white people; even an Indian used them. Chief Red
Bird of the Cherokee put into the paper, for two buckskins, a talk to the Cherokee chief of the upper towns, warning him to desist from disturbing William Cocke, "the white man who lives among the mulberry trees," for, said Red Bird, "the mulberry man talks very strong and runs very fast." Chief Red Bird ended his letter by the expression of a rather quaint wish, "that all the bad people on both sides were laid in the ground, for then there would not be so many mush men trying to make people to believe they were warriors."

A few contractors, or "undertakers" as they were called, were busy in eastern Tennessee. In 1792 the Knox County Court appointed Thomas M'Culloch, George M'Nutt, James Cozby, Joseph Greer and John Adair as commissioners to let a contract for the building of a courthouse, prison and stocks for the county. They were authorized to give the contract to the lowest bidder, and to require the "undertaker" to make bond or give approved security before they accepted his bid. The project was advertised to the public in the following manner:

To be let to the bidder who plays lowest fox,
And by him to be raised from the stump,
A house that will hold all the justices of Knox,
And the cash will be paid by the lump.
Not too high, nor too low, but a neat little box,
To hold quarter-sessions and pleas,
And to punish the rogues, both a prison and stocks
For then we may sleep at our ease.
The plan may be seen in the ville of Knox
On Monday, the first day of Court,
Where those who love fun may meet
And thus attend business and sport.
M'Culloch presides, & the sign is three knocks,
When the building is taken in care
But the bond must secure both the keys & the locks
To M'Nutt, Cozby, Greer, and Adair.

In September 1791 Blount returned to eastern North Carolina to look after some business matters and to fetch his wife and children back to Tennessee. During his absence a printed copy
of the Treaty of Holston reached the Cherokee, who, acquainting themselves with its contents for the first time, regarded it as a piece of diplomatic trickery. Its provisions, when set down from oral agreement in Cherokee to written English, had offered opportunity for honest misunderstanding as well as for deliberate chicanery. The Cherokee were greatly angered to learn, for example, that American citizens were given free navigation of the Tennessee. They also charged that Blount had deceived them in fixing the western boundary of the cession and insisted that an annuity of $2,000 had been agreed on but that only half of that amount had been inserted in the treaty.

Their anger changed to clamor for war when they received word that on November 4, 1791, the Indians in the Northwest Territory had crushed an American force under General Arthur St. Clair. This defeat, which was the second suffered by American troops in about a year, encouraged the Southern Indians to revive a confederacy to rid themselves forever of American invaders. The Cherokee, furious in the belief that they had been cheated in the treaty, took advantage of Blount's absence to send a delegation headed by Bloody Fellow to President Washington, who graciously listened to their complaints and proposed to increase their annuity to $1,500. He also changed Bloody Fellow's unpleasant name to Eskaqua or Clear Sky and conferred upon him the title of general. Bloody Fellow was perhaps the only member of his race to receive this honor prior to the Civil War. He returned with his comrades to his people sporting a scarlet match coat with silver epaulets, broad silver lace and a shining silver star, and vowing eternal gratitude and loyalty to his Great White Father and benefactor.

The young men of the tribe, however, had already gone on the warpath, killing and burning and stealing in every white settlement they could successfully attack. Even more venomous were the Chickamauga and the Creeks. The Creeks were encouraged by their half-breed chief, Alexander McGillivray, and by the English adventurer, William August Bowles, who declared that neither the Americans nor the Spaniards had any right to control the Indians and that with the help of the English their lands
would be restored to the original boundaries described in the Proclamation of 1763. Another source of support was Baron Hector Carondelet, Miró's successor as governor of Louisiana and West Florida, whose policy called for nullifying all American gains in previous treaties by uniting the Creeks and whatever other tribes wished to join in an offensive and defensive coalition against the whites.

Such was the humor of the Southern Indians when in March 1792 Blount moved to his new residence in Knoxville. The month opened with renewed attacks and retaliations. All eastern Tennessee was a stage on which shifted scenes of murder, ambush, horse stealing and cabin burning. Blount, hearing reports of an impending alliance between Spain and the Creeks and Chickamauga, diverted the company raised to guard the Cumberland district to the Washington District and ordered another company to the Cumberland.

At this point John Watts invited the governor to visit the Indian town of Coyatee, situated at the junction of the Holston and the Little Tennessee, for the first annual distribution of gifts under the Treaty of Holston. Blount accepted the invitation for several reasons. He hoped to correct the stories which the Indians were said to have told in Philadelphia concerning his dishonesty in the Treaty of Holston. He also saw in the visit an opportunity to retrieve the friendship of those Cherokee chiefs whom the Indian trader, Joseph Sevier, had exculpated from participation in the recent attacks.

Watts spared no expense in his endeavor to make the conference one of the most brilliant in Indian annals. For Blount and his party he built a spacious hut before which flew the Stars and Stripes on a long pole. First to arrive in Coyatee were the chiefs, who were painted black and sprinkled over with flour to denote that they had been at war but that they were now for peace. When they learned that Blount was approaching they sent a well-dressed young warrior on horseback to request him to halt until he should be notified of their readiness to receive him. Eventually invited to Coyatee, Blount found some two thousand warriors arranged in two lines of about three hundred yards in
length. As he entered between the lines, they began firing salutes and shouting joyously. The clamor increased when, under the flag, he greeted Watts, Bloody Fellow and other chiefs.

Indians and whites devoted the next day to drinking and eating and watching a ball game, the national sport of the Cherokee. The object of the game was for one of the teams to drive by means of rackets a ball of stuffed deerskin through the goal of its opponent. The captain of each team placed the ball in the center of the field while his twelve players took their places about twenty yards out in the opponent's ground. Amid the cheers and yells of the spectators, one of the captains lifted the ball with his racket and tossed it up thirty or forty feet. When it descended each captain, though he did not otherwise take part in the game, leaped high in the air and struck furiously in his effort to reach the ball and drive it in the direction of the opponent's goal. Back and forth flew the ball to the pounding of as many of the twenty-four rackets as could reach it. While by the rules of the game no player was permitted to strike, scratch or bruise any of his opponents, he could double him up by lifting him by his feet and pressing his head and shoulders to the ground until, disabled in the back, he was carried off the field. The breathless game went on until one side drove the ball across the goal of its opponent.

The chiefs bet the garments they wore, down to their flaps. Bloody Fellow's team lost. To recover his garments, he resorted to a bit of strategy. He got all the best players of the opposing team drunk while he kept his own best players sober. Thus on the following day he realized his aim. Only then was he ready to enter the conference.

The governor delivered a carefully written speech. While he approved the favors Bloody Fellow had obtained in Philadelphia, he gently chided the Indians for minimizing the powers President Washington vested in him. Recalling the Indian atrocities since the Treaty of Holston, Blount stated that fifty whites had been killed and hundreds taken prisoner and their properties destroyed. Yet he was careful to assure the Cherokee that they were only partially responsible for the crimes, and he asked their support in finding and punishing the guilty parties. In return for
this favor he promised to submit the dispute about the boundary to the more representative Cherokee council scheduled to meet at Estanaula in the latter part of June. Bloody Fellow promised him a reply from that conference, and the Chickamauga delegates assured him that the whites would obtain satisfaction from it. Thus heartened, Blount left the division of the gifts to the Indians and departed for Knoxville.

His hopes for peace were vain. He was only a few hours out of Coyatee when Watts and Bloody Fellow received from William Panton an invitation to a conference in Pensacola.

Panton was a wealthy Scotch merchant with strong Tory sympathies. Early in the Revolution the Americans had confiscated his vast estates in South Carolina and Georgia. Embittered, he had moved from Charleston to Pensacola where he established an extensive trading house. When Spain took the town in 1781 he had formed with her a commercial treaty which enriched him and brought the surrounding tribes to an understanding with the Florida government.

In the name of Arturo O’Neal, commander of Pensacola, Panton requested Watts and Bloody Fellow to come down with ten pack horses, promising them all the arms, ammunition and supplies they needed to fight the Americans. The two chiefs hastened southward, but Bloody Fellow gradually repented his ungrateful course. The honors President Washington had conferred on the chief were too great and too recent to permit him to take the Spaniards by the hand. He went as far as the Coosa River and then, casting a longing eye in the direction of Pensacola, turned homeward. He discreetly stayed away from the council in Estanaula, which expressed dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Holston.

O’Neal received Watts with open arms and easily won him over by loading him with presents and conferring on him the title of colonel. Painting himself black, Watts raised the war whoop against the United States and summoned the chiefs to a council at Wills Town to explain his visit in Pensacola.

Wills Town was about thirty miles from Running Water where Dragging Canoe had lived. When Watts succeeded Dragging Canoe as head of the Chickamauga he made Wills Town his
home, as did Bloody Fellow. Thenceforth Blount considered Wills Town the capital of the Chickamauga.

On the designated day the Cherokee assembled to hear Watts's report and to attend the annual green corn dance. The chief, standing in the circle of his seated friends, delivered an elaborate speech, explaining that O'Neal had received him like a brother and had assured him he wanted no Indian ground. Wherever the Spaniards land, said Watts, they sit down, whereas the Americans first take your land and then make a treaty by which they give you little or nothing for it. Your Spanish Father across the sea offers you all the powder, lead and arms you need to war against the United States. You young fellows—you have always wanted war. Well, now you can have as much of it as you want. The Creeks, the Choctaw and their old brothers, the Spaniards, back you to the last man.

All the Indians save Bloody Fellow greeted the speech with joyous shouts. Bloody Fellow stood alone in the circle and manfully and courageously opposed war. To go to war, he warned, was a false step; you will stumble, will fall. "Look at the flag; do you see the stars on it? They are not towns—they are nations. There are thirteen of them," he said, forgetting or ignorant of the recent admission of Vermont and Kentucky. "They are people who are very strong, and yet fight as one man."

With these words Bloody Fellow clenched the silver medal on his scarlet coat and asked: "When was the day that you went to [Colonel Stuart] and brought back the like of this?" Angered by the truth of this remark, Watts yanked off the medal and threw it to the ground.

This encouraged one of Dragging Canoe's brothers to declare for war: "My father was a man," he said to Bloody Fellow, "and I am as good a man as he was. To war I will go, and spill blood in spite of what you say."

Whereupon Watts took the brave by the hand, saying: "You are a man. I like your talk. To war we will go together."

Another chief joined them: "With these hands I have taken the lives of three hundred men, and now the time has come when I shall take the lives of three hundred more; then I shall be satisfied and sit down in peace. I will drink my fill of blood!"
To which Bloody Fellow, still standing, replied: "You go to war if you will, but I will not!"

Stripping to their flaps, Watts’s party painted themselves black and danced the war dance all night long around the Stars and Stripes. At dawn they wanted to fire on the flag, but Bloody Fellow stopped them by threatening to kill some of them.

The next day Watts and his party went to Lookout Mountain, from where they planned to proceed to the Cumberland country. But they met Chief White-Man Killer, who filled them with so much firewater that Watts had to defer his plans. Then two traders, Richard Findleston and Joseph Deroque, learning of Watts's intentions and being friendly toward the whites, contrived to delay him further by pretending that they had come at the request of the British authorities to ascertain how the settlements could best be invaded. Watts saw half of September fritter away before he could organize his campaign.

As Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Department, Blount maintained, among the Cherokee, agents who furnished him with information of the planned invasion. He immediately requested Robertson to muster his brigade with which to repel the invaders should they attack the Cumberland country.

Anticipating this precaution, Watts hastened to counter it by a clever ruse. He induced Bloody Fellow, who still opposed war, and another chief named Glass to write Blount a letter calculated to throw him off his guard. They alleged that Robertson, in a meeting with the Chickasaw and Choctaw, had told them that he would sweep clean with their blood any blood they might spill in Nashville. Bloody Fellow and Glass wrote that the threat had caused the young men of the aforementioned tribes to plan an attack on the white settlements, but that they, with the aid of Watts and some other headmen, had frustrated it by sending them to their different homes to mind their hunting.

Blount’s desire for peace and his faith in Watts led him straight into the trap. On September 14 he ordered the Knox Regiment and the Mero Brigade to disband; but when four days later he heard, much to his chagrin, that a large force of Indians was crossing the Tennessee, he ordered augmented by seven the number of militia companies in the Washington District under John
Sevier. Robertson, meanwhile, shared none of Blount's faith in Watts. Findleston and Deroque by their reports only supported his undying suspicions of Watts, Bloody Fellow, Glass or any other savage. He ignored Blount's order to disband the Mero Brigade.

Before long Robertson's suspicions proved well-founded. On the night of September 30 Watts with a force of between two and three hundred warriors marched silently and swiftly on Buchanan's Station, a fort which housed several refugee families and which was defended by a garrison of fifteen men. Warned by disturbed cattle, John McRory and a few other settlers fired on the Indians when they came to within ten yards of the gate. The Indians retaliated by a heavy discharge which lasted for an hour. Thirty balls passed through a single porthole of the "over jutting" and lodged in the roof within the circumference of a hat. The women, under Mrs. Sally Buchanan, assisted the defenders in every possible way. They molded bullets, distributed ammunition, loaded guns and, on pressing occasions, even killed a few Indians.

Nevertheless, Watts managed to gather around the walls of the blockhouse a goodly number of his men. One of the chiefs, a half-breed, leaped to the roof, but he was shot through the thighs and fell to the ground. Despite his wounds he managed to set fire to the walls of the blockhouse by blowing with his dying breath into the flames. The fire was eventually put out. The fitful glare of the cane torches gave proof that the black walls remained standing while countless tongues of fire streamed around them.

Before dawn the Indians became discouraged. Watts fell with a rifle shot through both thighs and was carried away on a stretcher pulled by a horse. White-Man Killer was dangerously hurt and Dragging Canoe's brother was mortally wounded. Four other warriors were wounded, two or three of whom later died. At sunrise the Indians heard the report of a swivel in the direction of Nashville, four miles away, signaling that Robertson had started to the relief of the garrison. The Indians withdrew. None of the defenders was killed. Near the blockhouse they
found hatchets, pipes, kettles and a sword with a fine Spanish blade richly ornamented with martial designs.

The joy of the whites knew no bounds. Blount claimed that it "really surpassed that experienced on the surrender of Cornwallis." Through printer Roulstone he covered the settlers with glory and his critics with contempt. But all his elation found no sympathy in Philadelphia. Knox, involved in a war against the Indians in the Northwest Territory, opposed war in the Southwest. He assured Blount that the Creeks would be restrained but reminded him that, since Congress alone could declare war, any military action against the Indians must be purely defensive. They must not be attacked until Congress, which would convene in March, decided what measures might be taken.

To this unpromising letter Blount replied with long and careful arguments and explanations. He placed the blame for the attacks, not on the encroachment of the whites on Indian lands, but on the schemes of "the Officers administrating the Government of Louisiana and their Instrument Mr Panton." He enclosed a list of persons killed, wounded or carried into captivity by Creeks and Cherokee since the beginning of 1791. Most of the depredations, Blount explained, were attributable to a distortion of the Indian law of retaliation in tribal feuds: instead of killing their own people the Indians now substituted white victims.

Blount devoted considerable space to horse stealing and its bloody effects:

The Indians go into the Frontier settlements in search of Horses and if they find an unarmed person or family fall on them and if they take horses and are pursued kill in their own defense. As soon as the Indians return to the nation with the horses those who encouraged the stealing of them become the purchasers and shortly after knowing the quarter from whence they were taken carry them out of the nation in a different direction and sell them to a great profit.

The government of the Creeks and of the Cherokee, Blount continued, was such that all the chiefs of the nation could neither restrain nor punish the "most worthless fellow in it nor for
a violation of the existing treaties lest the enormity of it be ever so great or evident nor if demanded by the United States dare they deliver him up to be punished.” The Cherokee, he argued, had no well-founded claim to the land lying on the Cumberland River, for they had ceded it by two treaties to the United States. He concluded with a warning of rising anger among the settlers whose “thirst for revenge or, what is here termed, satisfaction, will lead them to break through the Bounds of good order and Government, notwithstanding what can be said or done to prevent it.”

These arguments and explanations and warnings drew from the indignant Knox a scathing reply. He repeated that a war with the Southern Indians must be avoided at all costs. While he admitted that the Cherokee could have received encouragement from Spanish officials, he insisted that they must have reasons for their hostility to the Cumberland settlers. He informed the governor that James Seagrove, United States agent to the Creeks, had been ordered to meet with their chiefs at the headwaters of the St. Mary’s and to urge them to persuade their young men to cease their depredations. The Chickamauga, who “seem the germ of the evil,” should then be bought off.

Knox admitted that the militia Blount had called into service in times of danger was necessary, but he urged the governor to retain it only as long as circumstances required, for it was a great expense to the public and, moreover, its members were exposed to unnecessary dangers. After a long lecture on economy, Knox announced the imminent appointment in Philadelphia of a new quartermaster and paymaster, David Henley, who was to “have rules and regulations prescribed to him which will be communicated to you and by whom all expenditures must be conducted. This arrangement will greatly tend to your ease and prevent all anxiety about the settlement of Accounts.” Knox also announced the impending dispatch of two brass cannon which, however, needed repairs, and a company of volunteers from North Carolina.

Blount could give as much as he could take. He wrote Knox an even longer letter than Knox had written him, denying the Indian claims and justifying his own expenses and measures with
characteristic vehemence. Yet, in the face of loud and angry protests, he carried out Knox's orders. He requested Robertson and Sevier each to disband his entire brigade save for a company of infantry and one troop of cavalry. In the Cumberland country where relentless fire, theft and murder had driven scores of hapless settlers to the protection of the forts, the reaction was so violent that Robertson had to strain every modicum of his influence to maintain order.

Meanwhile Blount's reputation sank lower and lower as the toll of dead, wounded and captured mounted. The governor was bombarded from all sides with proposals for securing peace and with demands for an offensive expedition against the Creeks, who were accused of committing most of the depredations. Small wonder that Seagrove's assurances of their pacific disposition brought down on him a torrent of scorn and irony. The Gazette each week applied to the local situation the words with which Cato was wont to close every speech before the Roman senate—Delenda est Carthago—and added for the benefit of unlearned settlers, "The Creek nation must be destroyed."

The newspaper seethed with letters attacking the governor and ridiculing Congress for sending corn to the distressed parts of the Creek nation, thus "invigorating" them to carry on their murdering raids. "Where," asked one of the settlers, "will all these mischiefs end? What are the blessings of government to us? Are we to hope for protection? If so, when?"

Some settlers spurned mere words for efficacious action. John Morris, a Chickasaw warrior visiting Knoxville as a guest of the governor, was killed by an unknown assailant. To soothe the feelings of the Chickasaw Blount gave Morris the military funeral due to a warrior of a friendly nation. In the procession to the local graveyard for white people, Blount and Morris' brother walked together as chief mourners. The governor vainly offered a reward for the apprehension of the assassin or assassins.

Early in February 1793 Secretary Knox, in the interest of peace, requested Blount to accompany Watts and other leading chiefs to Philadelphia for a conference with President Washington. Anticipating such a move, Blount had sent Watts's bosom
friend John McKee to persuade him to bury the hatchet. The two men embraced like long-separated brothers at Chattooga, about twenty miles from Wills Town, and began to entertain one another with lively conversation.

Over cups of the whisky brought by McKee to assist in his mission, Watts inquired about Blount’s health and spoke pleasantly of the war which, he said, several chiefs had tried unsuccessfully to induce him to renew. Far from feeling bitter about his failure at Buchanan’s Station, Watts treated it as a joke on himself. He was recovering from his wound, he said, and had no intention of risking another. He laughed as he told how the village of Nickajack had sent a runner to him to ascertain whether his wound still hurt, and how, when he answered in the negative, the runner had replied tauntingly that he did not expect it would be well so soon. But he broke off this geniality when McKee stumbled on the question of peace. Watts wanted, he said, to ruminate on an answer in solitude. As he left, he accepted McKee’s invitation to meet him on March 8 at Spring Hill.

At that time and place, however, Watts failed to appear. McKee waited until March 16 and then sent a messenger to him. The chief replied that an important ball game, about to be played, kept him from coming. The truth was that he had been detained not by a ball game which was scheduled for later in the month, but by a quarrel between him and another chief over his meeting with McKee. Watts was so incensed that he packed up and left Wills Town, but young warriors of his tribe overtook him and persuaded him to return.

McKee had just returned to Knoxville when Watts appeared on the border and sent Blount word that he was at Hanging Maw’s village with other chiefs and that they wished to talk with him in Knoxville or anywhere he deemed safe. Blount went to near-by Henry’s Station and summoned the chiefs. After filling them with food and drink and good cheer, he made known to them Knox’s desire that they go to Philadelphia for a conference with the President. Watts, as spokesman for the chiefs, replied that in twenty-one nights they would hold a full council at Running Water and he would then let him know their answer.

No council took place. Watts, unsure of what course he
wished to pursue, remained wisely noncommittal. But the chiefs assured Blount of their pacific disposition and agreed to proceed to Philadelphia under McKee, whom the governor had employed for the purpose.

On June 7 Blount, satisfied with his arrangement with the chiefs, departed for Philadelphia, leaving General Daniel Smith, secretary of the territory, in charge as acting governor. Printer Roulstone rode in Blount's coach as far as Jonesboro and Sevier later joined for a ten-mile ride and "a very long Talk" on the possibilities of pacifying the Indians. But peace, if he envisioned it, proved only a chimera. On June 16 while he was still traveling in the territory, Blount received word that Captain Hugh Beard and a company of Indian-hating militia had four days before raided Hanging Maw's town, killing eight or ten Indians and their white friends and wounding Hanging Maw, his wife, his daughter, and Betty Martin, the daughter of Nancy Ward and wife of General Joseph Martin. Smith, fearing that this assault on the most influential pro-American chief among the Cherokee would precipitate a general war, wrote to the chiefs Hanging Maw, Doublehead and Watts, pleading with them to restrain any retaliatory act and to go to Philadelphia and talk with their Great White Father who, he assured them, would give them satisfaction if they forbore to take it themselves.

John Watts assumed a stony silence, but Hanging Maw and Doublehead were too angry and aggrieved to be mollified by mere words. They demanded that Smith arrest Beard and his party. "I am still among my people," wrote Doublehead, "living in gores of blood. I shall not go from this place until I get full answer from you." Hanging Maw sarcastically pointed out in his reply that nothing had happened as long as Blount was present in the territory. "Surely," he wrote, "they are making fun of you. If you are left in the place of the Governor you ought to take satisfaction yourself." To the Great White Father he dispatched a note curtly announcing that the chiefs would not go to Philadelphia at this time. Smith had Beard arrested and tried before a court-martial, but most of the settlers regarded him as a hero, and he was acquitted. Smith admitted with shame that he was powerless for the present to punish Beard by law.
Blount, dwelling on the possible results of the assault, had a notion to turn back; but he persuaded himself that Smith had done all he could to stay Indian wrath until the President could act. On the night of July 19 he reached Philadelphia.

Knox received him with cool courtesy. This changed to angry disappointment when he learned of Beard's attack and of the consequent refusal of the chiefs to come to Philadelphia. A good part of his irritation was caused by the fact that he was just then grappling with a weightier problem than that of the Indians. The French minister to the United States, Edmond Charles Genet, was endangering American neutrality by fitting out privateers to prey on British shipping in the conflict between France and England. Preoccupied with this situation, Knox could see Blount only intermittently. The governor for once enjoyed the support of Andrew Pickens, who had also been summoned to confer, and the two men, by conference and correspondence, worked hard to win Knox to their views. They urged that the government establish a military and trading post at the mouth of Bear Creek near Muscle Shoals. Such a post would serve to divert Chickasaw trade from Spain to the United States, to secure Chickasaw and perhaps Choctaw assistance in a common war against the Creeks, and to protect the Cumberland country. Last but not least, it would preclude the possibility of an alliance between the Northern and Southern tribes.

These were strong arguments, but they failed before the determination of Congress and the President to avoid punitive measures against the Creeks. On August 5 Knox, bowing to the wishes of Congress, asked Blount and Pickens for suggestions as to how a Creek war might be postponed. On the following day they replied wearily that "sending some Person of Address and knowledge of Indian affairs" disguised as a trader to distribute gifts to the Creek headmen might induce them "to commit fewer Murders and Robberies than they otherwise would." They added wishfully that the trader "might collect much Information that would be useful in the War with that Nation." With this they brought their futile conference with Knox to a close. As the governor made his way homeward, he reflected ironically that all he had gained by his journey was the painful duty of having
to inform his people that they must continue to suffer. Eventually, he hoped, the government might experience a change of heart. Wayne's possible success against the Indians in the Northwest could result in a subsequent diversion of troops against the Creeks and Chickamauga.

During his absence from the territory, Indian affairs had gone from bad to worse. Beard's attack on Hanging Maw had precipitated many bloody reprisals. In retaliation the settlers invaded "Indian territory and killed Indians usually innocent of the immediate outrage which had provoked the attack." The climax came on September 24 when Watts and Doublehead led a force of 700 Creeks and Chickamauga across the Tennessee with the intention of surprising Knoxville. When they came to within eight miles of their destination, they heard the report of a cannon fired by United States troops in the town. Construing this as evidence of their expected approach, they turned instead on near-by Cavet's Station. By promising to spare its defenders, Doublehead induced them to surrender. Scarcely had they emerged from the building than the chief and his party fell on them and butchered thirteen men, women and children. Among them was Alexander Cavet himself. He had just put seven bullets into his mouth to expedite the loading of his gun and gone to his garden to defend himself. After plundering and burning the station the Indians withdrew.

On learning of the massacre Acting Governor Smith ordered John Sevier to pursue the Indians to their own country. Sevier immediately marched southward with 700 men and on October 14 reached Estanaula. Finding the town deserted and full of supplies, he made it his temporary headquarters. That night he repulsed some Indians attempting to surprise the camp and took several prisoners who told him that a few days before the main Indian force had passed Estanaula on its way to Etowah near the present site of Rome, Georgia, on the river of the same name. After refreshing his horsemen he approached the river and learned that the Indians had entrenched themselves on the opposite bank to hinder his passage. Had he attempted to ford the river he would have faced a deadly fire and perhaps defeat, but a fortunate mistake on the part of his guides saved the day for
him. The guides led Colonel Kelly and a few of his men about a half mile below the ford to a ferry where they immediately swam the river. The Indians, discovering this movement and construing it as evidence of a design against their town, abandoned their intrenchments and rushed down the river to oppose Kelly. The rest of Sevier's army, however, discovered the mistake and forded the river with the intention of riding to the town and attacking it. They advanced so rapidly that the Indians, having no time to regain their trenches, found themselves scattered and hemmed in on the riverbank. The whites dismounted and, shielding themselves behind trees, mowed down many young warriors with deadly accuracy. One of the chiefs, King Fisher, resisted bravely and made a daring sally, but he soon fell and his warriors fled to the fastnesses of the adjacent country. Sevier burned Etowah, rescued Colonel Kelly and his horsemen from the place where they had concealed themselves and returned home. The dejected Watts put down his hatchet and never took it up again.

The Creek and Chickamauga attacks against the Cumberland settlements temporarily ceased. The calm permitted Blount, who had returned to the territory early in October, to reduce the militia, though through Seagrove he warned the Creeks that he could no longer restrain the infuriated settlers from taking retaliatory measures against fresh attacks. He was not retreating but advancing by another road. The settlers had long demanded the second stage of territorial government which, in accordance with the Ordinance of 1787, called for a legislature composed of a council and representatives. Such a body, Blount believed, might persuade the government to undertake a military campaign against the Indians. In addition, the second stage of territorial government must inevitably lead to the third—statehood—in which Blount hoped to reap a senatorship as the reward for his services. The opportunity he sought came in October when the grand jury of Hamilton County complained of Indian attacks and demanded a legislature as a means of stopping them. Blount replied by calling for elections of representatives for late December. In February 1794 the successful candidates assembled in
Knoxville and in accordance with the Ordinance nominated the ten councilors from whom Congress was to choose five. Blount had good reasons for selecting this early date. He wanted to make sure that Congress would be in session when record of the meeting of the representatives reached Philadelphia, for it was to include a demand for offensive measures against the Creeks.

After nominating the councilors, the representatives passed a resolution to send Congress an address in which they demanded a war against the Creeks. Reminding Congress that the Indians had killed 200 settlers and destroyed property valued at $100,000 since the Treaty of Holston, they warned that self-preservation might induce the settlers to take unauthorized measures against their enemies. They claimed they were "as much entitled to be protected in their lives, their families and little property, as those who were in luxury, ease, and affluence in the great and opulent Atlantic cities." They sent the list of nominees to Congress by express and delegated Dr. James White to deliver the address.

The ensuing months saw a renewal of Indian attacks in the Cumberland country. Again Blount was forced to revoke his late orders and enlarged the militia; again his popularity sank as the toll of murders, assaults and thefts rose. In the face of this new storm he maintained his usual equilibrium; he urged patience and practiced it himself in waiting the outcome of Dr. White's mission to Congress. But as usual he was doomed to disappointment. On May 29 the House passed a bill authorizing the President to build in the Southwest Territory a chain of forts with permanent garrisons and scouts, and to call out 10,000 militia for offensive operations against the Creeks and Chickamauga; but the Senate made such heavy amendments in the bill that the House rejected it. The best that Knox could do, therefore, was to build a post at Cumberland crossing and to permit a small increase in the Cumberland militia. In a last-minute gesture of generosity he threw in for Nashville six small iron howitzers and about two hundred old muskets that needed repairs.

Enraged by this niggardly treatment, the Cumberland settlers resolved to take matters into their own hands. Heeding the popular clamor, Robertson, in defiance of federal policy, planned an expedition against the Chickamauga. Blount gave unofficial
approval to the project and then pressed Knox for authorization of an attack. When Knox refused it, public sentiment flared. The legislature, convening in August, was constrained to address Congress another petition demanding punitive measures against “those two faithless and bloodthirsty nations, the Creeks and the Cherokee.” The petition included a painstaking account of the murders, captures and stolen horses from February to September 1794, denounced the policy of gifts to Indians and assured the government that “fear, not love, is the only means by which the Indians can be governed.”

In accordance with this conviction, Blount and Robertson proceeded with their plans. The governor sent Major James Ore with sixty-nine men to the Cumberland country for a scouting expedition under Robertson’s orders. Robertson himself sent Sampson Williams, former sheriff of Davidson County, to invite Colonel William Whiteley of Kentucky to join the intended expedition. Colonel Whiteley had often expressed to Robertson readiness to assist him in any movement against the Indians and promptly responded with 100 militia. Robertson later justified the expedition on the ground that “a man of as much veracity as any in the nation” had advised him of an impending Chickamauga invasion of the Cumberland country. He could thus claim that he had struck first in self-defense.

Robertson and Blount agreed that the governor should give no official sanction to the proposed attack. Indeed, Robertson, long weary of his official duties and desirous of relinquishing them, was happy to assume full responsibility for the expedition. Anticipating Knox’s wrath, he sought to appease it by tendering his resignation—actually written by Blount—and by helping the governor choose his successor. But Robertson was so enthusiastic about his scheme that he revealed it to his friends with the result that it soon became common knowledge. So many settlers volunteered for the campaign that when on September 6 he held a meeting of his force at Brown’s Blockhouse, he found himself at the head of nearly four hundred men. He entrusted the chief command to Ore because that officer commanded the only federal troops and could, therefore, claim pay for their services.
Robertson ordered him to march against the Creeks and Chickamauga before they could threaten the Cumberland country. Ore wasted no time in realizing his mission. He fell on the towns of Nickajack and Running Water on Muscle Shoals, crushed all resistance, captured nineteen women and children and killed scores of braves. After burning the two towns to the ground in one day, he returned in triumph to Nashville. His only losses in the expedition were three men wounded, two slightly and one mortally.

The Cherokee and Chickamauga soon made peace. This, however, was due to other factors as much as to the destruction of Nickajack and Running Water. In the previous June the Cherokee signed with the federal government the Treaty of Philadelphia by which their annuity was raised from $1,500 to $5,000 in goods but was subject to a deduction of $50 for every horse they stole and failed to return within three months. Less than two months later the martial designs of the Chickamauga were frustrated by General Wayne's victory over the Indians at Fallen Timbers in the Northwest Territory. At the same time Blount strengthened the possibilities of a permanent peace, and certainly prevented the repetition of such occurrences as the Beard attack and the Etowah expedition, by erecting in the Indian country five blockhouses which were garrisoned not by militia but by regular federal troops. Finally in November the governor, availing himself of the aforementioned factors as well as the Nickajack expedition, held a conference with the Chickamauga and Cherokee at Tellico Blockhouse where Watts and Hanging Maw each pledged his people to a lasting peace and friendship with the United States.

The Creeks still remained at war. Throughout the fall of 1794 they not only attacked various settlements but deepened their hostilities against the Chickasaw, who since 1783 had been at peace with the United States. Blount, however, was now confident that the Creeks could be easily handled. The suppression of the Whisky Rebellion in southwestern Pennsylvania and Wayne's victory convinced him that the Southwest Territory would now receive the support it had long been denied. He
therefore resolved on the bold scheme of sowing discord among the tribes for the purpose of getting the Chickasaw and the Cherokee to join the United States in a war against the Creeks. While Robertson egged on the Chickasaw, Blount at Tellico Blockhouse in December 1794 and January 1795 pressed the Cherokee to keep the Creeks from crossing their towns and therefore from striking at the white settlements, to join the Chickasaw and to permit sixty of their young warriors to serve with pay in the militia of the Cumberland country. In letters to Knox he argued the inevitability of war against the Creeks and the practicality of obtaining for it the support of the Cherokee, the Chickasaw and even the Choctaw. The destruction of the Creeks by the assistance of these tribes, he reasoned in one letter, would not only be accomplished much cheaper than by an army of whites but would have the added advantages of preventing a coalition of the Southern tribes against the United States in the future. "If the Citizens of the United States," he concluded, "do not destroy the Creeks, the Creeks will kill the Citizens of the United States, the alternative is to kill or be killed."

Blount’s scheme early bore fruit. On January 2, 1795, a force of about seventy Chickasaw under the half-breed Billy Colbert scalped five Creeks. Going to Robertson with the scalps, they begged him to permit them to join the whites and to build and defend blockhouses on the Tennessee River. They also requested him to inform Blount that they had been waiting “to see you retaliate on the Creeks for the many injuries done your people.” Robertson reported these sentiments in a letter to Blount, who replied that war was now certain between the Chickasaw and the Creeks, “and thereby it is highly probable, the Southwestern frontiers will, for a time, be relieved from the tomahawk and scalping knife.” He relayed a copy of Robertson’s letter together with a copy of his reply to the Secretary of War. He was in a happy mood. He immediately spread word among the Cherokee that what the Chickasaw had done was proof of their love for the people of the United States. At the same time he advised Robertson to accept the services of sixty Chickasaw to protect the frontier and to dismiss an equal number of militia.
On February 13 the Secretary of War received, read and forwarded the Robertson-Blount letters to the President, who in turn directed them to Congress for its decision. The Senate, dominated by high Federalists, opposed the frontier and therefore passed a bill rejecting war against the southern tribes. The House, being anti-Federalist, rejected the bill and attempted to substitute a milder measure which, however, failed in the rush of business that swamped Congress just before it adjourned. This meant a victory for the opponents of the Creek war. The high Federalists, suspecting that the governor’s motives in desiring war were related to his well-known Muscle Shoals and other extensive land speculations on the frontier, disapproved of his and Smith’s military acts. On March 19 territorial delegate White had the unpleasant duty of informing Blount that, despite his strong representations, Congress deemed the Etowah expedition of 1793 not defensive but offensive and that, therefore, it had refused to appropriate the money with which to pay the soldiers who had served under Sevier in it. Referring to the governor’s representations, White wrote: “Pardon me if I inform you that your candid & generous Statement of the necessity of Congress resenting the outrages committed against your Government by the Creeks, occasioned a Person high in office to observe that the ardor you Showed for that object indicated a disposition interested for that Purpose: which mistaken idea I had the mortification to hear uttered in my own presence.”

This was mild compared to the devastating attack which was soon to come from the Secretary of War. On December 31, 1794, Henry Knox had resigned his office and had a few days later been succeeded by Timothy Pickering. The new Secretary had early formed an unfavorable impression of the governor. William H. Masterson in his excellent biography of Blount states that David Henley, the paymaster whom Knox in 1792 had appointed to supervise territorial expenditures, charged the governor with

... duplicity toward the Indians, with using his office for private gain through illegal contracts for supplies, and with disregard
of United States policy in the interest of his private land specula-
tions. From his first days in office, therefore, the Secretary was
convinced that Blount was a self-seeking swindler, and he re-
fused to consider rationally any Blount suggestion, whatever
its merits.

Repudiation of Blount's Indian policy by Congress furnished
Pickering with a golden opportunity to administer official cen-
sure on the man he disliked. On March 23 he informed Blount
that Congress had refused to declare war against the Creeks and
that, therefore, "all ideas of offensive operations" were "to be
laid aside and all possible harmony cultivated with the Indian
Tribes." In pursuance of this aim Congress had appropriated
$50,000 on measures of peace and $130,000 "for the Defensive
Protection of the Frontiers." All of the Indians, Pickering
averred, were at peace save "small parties of plundering Creeks,"
whom Seagrove would be instructed to restrain by "some pointed
declarations." The angry and rambling pen then heaped censure
on the governor and Robertson for promising assistance to the
Cherokee and the Chickasaw in a war against the Creeks. This
error he ordered the governor to correct as soon as possible and
he warned him to refrain henceforth from encouraging the Cher-
okee to attack the Creeks. "It was not necessary for you," he
scolded, "in your answer, pointedly to commit the United
States" at Tellico Blockhouse. The Secretary could not "discern"
the inevitability of a war between the Creeks and the Chickasaw,
unless the governor incited them to further hostilities, and this he
must stop doing in the cases of both the Chickasaw and the Cher-
okee. As for the governor praising the Chickasaw in the presence
of the Cherokee for killing five Creeks, Pickering asked sarca-
stically: "Was not this saying—you Cherokee Chiefs and Warriors
go and do likewise?" His anger grew as his stilted pen ran over
the paper:

In your letter... to General Robertson you express your opinion
that Congress will order an army, in the course of the ensuing
Spring or Summer, Sufficient to humble, if not destroy the Creek
Nation: but the General has acted very unadvisedly in expressing
and repeating the same opinion to the Chickasaws. . . . Upon the whole, Sir, I cannot refrain from saying that the complexion of some of the Transactions in the South western territory appears unfavorable to the public interests.

He ordered the governor to dismantle three and to reduce the garrison of another of the forts he had built if they displeased the Indians, and to remove all white encroachers on Indian lands by Federal troops if necessary. The settlers, continued Pickering, had no good reason to complain of horse stealing which Blount had represented as "a great source of hostility" so long as they robbed the Indians of their lands. With this thought his anger seems to have subsided. He brought his letter to a conclusion in a philosophic tone: "One Species of robbery affords as just ground of hostility as the other."

The governor had no choice but to extricate himself from his difficulties "as best he could and to convert the territory into a state as soon as he could." Fortunately for both him and Pickering, a series of well-directed measures brought the long Indian problem to a peaceful conclusion. Seagrove, by his judicious handling of the Creeks, persuaded them to refrain from warring on the Chickasaw. In June 1795 their chiefs, Mad Dog and Big Warrior, assured him that all they wanted was satisfaction. At Blount's request, Robertson conferred with the Chickasaw and persuaded them to return all the Creek prisoners they had taken during the short period of hostilities. Blount then apologized to the Creeks in behalf of the Cumberland settlers who had joined Billy Colbert. Later in the summer Colbert visited President Washington, who expressed strong disapproval of Robertson's doings. The general, he said, "was wrong in telling your nation last year that the United States would send an army against the Creeks last summer." That fall Seagrove was instrumental in getting the Creeks to hold a full council in which they ratified proposals of peace with the Chickasaw. Finally Captain John Chisholm, acting as agent for both the United States and the Creeks, carried peace overtures to the Chickasaw who accepted them. At last the territory enjoyed peace for the first time in several years.
It was soon to become the state of Tennessee. With the solution of the Indian problem, Blount pushed his great objective: statehood for the territory and the Senate for himself. Without waiting for Congress to pass an enabling act, he convened the territorial legislature on July 11, 1795, and ordered it to have a census taken and, if this showed the requisite 60,000, as set forth in the Ordinance of 1787, to proceed with steps for the election of a constitutional convention. The final returns of the census showed a population of 77,262, of which 10,613 were slaves. Whereupon Blount proclaimed an election of constitutional delegates who met on January 11, 1796, with Blount as president of the convention. The delegates soon drew up a constitution which was submitted to the Secretary of State. On March 28 the first state assembly met and the next day chose John Sevier, the most popular man in the region, governor of Tennessee, and William Blount and William Cocke senators. The admission of Tennessee as the sixteenth state of the Union on June 1, 1796, brings to a close the epic of the pioneers in the Appalachian Frontier.