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Suggested Citation:

“Executive Journal of Gov. John Sevier.” Ed. by Samuel C. Williams. Part I. The East Tennessee Historical Society’s Publications 1 (1929): 95-126. (Part 1)

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EXECUTIVE JOURNAL OF GOV. JOHN SEVIER

With Introduction and Annotation by

SAMUEL C. WILLIAMS

The Journal kept by the first governor of the State of Tennessee, preserved in the State Archives at Nashville, has never been printed, though it is of prime importance as source material for the beginnings of the State government. It shows a new State commencing to function under pioneer conditions. It should not be surprising to observe in the document how little of governmental power was exerted, or needed. The attention of the Chief Executive of the Commonwealth, particularly in the early years, turned to the management of Indian affairs and of the militia; indeed, the latter may be fairly deemed incidental to the former, save in two instances when it seemed that a foreign foe was to be confronted.

The Journal is of interest, also, as the product of Tennessee's most popular governor. John Sevier holds a unique place among governors of American States. No one else presided as chief executive of his people as long as did he. Sevier had served two terms as governor of the State of Franklin, which preceded the Southwest Territory; and, when these are added to his six terms of office as governor of the State of Tennessee, we have approximately fifteen years of service in a gubernatorial chair. No such hold on his people has been demonstrated by any other Tennessean or American.

His previous experience as executive as well as his popularity marked Sevier for choice by the electorate as the first governor of the Sixteenth State of the Union. It has been generally remarked by historical writers that he was elected without opposition; but it would be truer to say that he was elected practically without opposition. The Journal of the House of Representatives of 1796 merely recited that the returns of the election for governor were examined in the presence of both houses, "and a majority of votes appearing in favour of Citizen John Sevier, he was accordingly declared to be legally and constitutionally elected as governor of the State of Tennessee."

The old-time factional feeling between the Sevierites and the Tiptonites was not wholly allayed, and we may be sure that it had outcropping in the poll. Phelan, in his *History of Tennessee* (p. 241), says that the distillers and innkeepers scattered throughout the valleys of East Tennessee constituted the bulk of the Tipton faction. But the opposition was so feeble as to be quite negligible, and faded out as to demonstration when Sevier stood for re-election at the end of his first term. That term did not extend over a two-year period, running from April, 1796–September, 1797, due to the fixing of the latter date as the beginning of the second gubernatorial term.

A number of the entries in the Journal can only be fully understood in the light of the history of the Nation, of the Southwest Territory and of the first Constitutional Convention of the State. Almost upon the adjournment of that convention, in pursuance of its action the governor was elected and the legislature met. The State began to function, as such, regardless of non-admission into the Union, time for which indeed, was not allowed. This fact is at the bottom of the saying that "Tennessee volunteered into the Union." It was the first State to pass through a territorial status, and precedents for action were lacking. In this connection: there was proposed for discussion and decision in the Convention the question, whether "if we should not be admitted by Congress as a member State of the general government, that we should continue to exist as an independent State." The mover, it scarcely need be said, was an old adherent of the State of Franklin. The question was passed over without a vote; but the chances are that the people would have asserted their independence and continued a State government had Congress refused admission.

As if the State were already in the Union, the legislature proceeded to the election of Senators in Congress. After the North Carolina method, various nominees were presented from whom two should be chosen. There were four such nominees: Wm. Blount, Wm. Cocke, Judge Joseph Anderson and Dr. James White, the latter only from the Cumberland region. The names of the last two were withdrawn, and Blount and Cocke elected.

An act was passed providing for the election by the people of *two* Representatives in Congress, manifestly upon the assumption that the population of the State, as shown by the census taken in 1795, justified that number. Another act provided for four electors—one for each Senator and Representative.

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Before the adjournment of the Constitutional Convention, it ordered that a copy of the Constitution be sent to the Secretary of State, at Philadelphia, by express. Joseph McMinn was the messenger. He was instructed to urge Dr. James White, the delegate in Congress from Southwest Territory, to do all in his power towards the admission of Tennessee into the sisterhood of States.

President Washington laid the Tennessee Constitution before Congress for suitable action (April 8th), accompanied by a message the tenor of which was favorable to the pretensions of the proposed State, though he made no formal recommendation.

The committee of the House, to which the bill for admission was referred, through Henry Dearborn, of Maine, (later General in the war of 1812), reported that Tennessee was entitled to the rights and privileges of a State. Blount and Cocke reached the seat of government while the debate in Congress was pending, and they forbore presentation of their credentials. They, indeed, were in an anomalous situation—embassadors of a State not yet admitted. The debate in the House took a partisan turn. James Madison, Wm. B. Giles and Robert Rutherford, of Virginia, Nathaniel Macon, of North Carolina, and Albert Gallatin, of Pennsylvania supported the claims of the applicant for statehood. Tennessee has shown her gratitude by naming counties for Madison, Giles and Macon, and a county seat for Gallatin.

Madison and others saw in the effort to defeat admission a purpose to deny Jefferson the electoral vote of Tennessee in the approaching presidential election. A close friend of Jefferson and a tower of strength to any cause, Madison urged that the people of Tennessee were "at present in a degraded condition . . . deprived of a right essential to freemen—the right of being represented in Congress;" that "an exterior power and authority presided over their laws; and exterior authority appointed their executive, which was not . . . justified by anything but an obvious and imperious necessity."

Rutherford said: "He did not wish to cavil with this brave, generous people. He would have them taken out of leading strings, as they were now able to stand alone. . . . We should not be too nice about their turning out their toes, or other trifles; they will soon march lustily along. They have complied with every requisite for becoming a State of the Union; they wishes to form an additional star in the political hemisphere of the United States."

For the opposition, Samuel Sitgreaves, of Pennsylvania, fell upon the strategy of insisting that it might be good policy to carve *two* States out of the territory ceded by North Carolina in 1790. He referred to the separation of East Tennessee and the Cumberland region by a wide and wild mountain plateau, and seized upon and emphasized the strong vote of Mero district against statehood, in the election of 1795. "Under the circumstances and until they should be satisfactorily explained to his mind, it did appear that the interest and wishes of that [the Cumberland] people required a division of the Territory. . . . The people of the Western district seem sensible of the inconvenience of an arrangement so unnatural as the one proposed; and, so far as their wishes can be collected from documents before the committee, they desire as yet to preserve their connection with us in the present mode, and to remain under the Territorial Government."

The bill passed the House by a vote of 43 to 30, only one being recorded in its favor from New England.

In the Senate, which had a Federalist majority, the committee of reference, Rufus King, chairman, reported against the measure on the main ground that there could be no recognition until Congress should have, precedently, authorized a change from territorial to statal status. But, finally, on May 31st, as Congress was about to adjourn, the majority relented and permitted the bill to come to a vote, with provision for *one* Representative in Congress (with three electoral votes, in consequence). Even then the bill passed by one vote—that of the presiding officer, Samuel Livermore, of Massachusetts, who was severely criticised for his action by many of his State.

President Washington approved the bill on June 1st, and on the 6th Tennessee by proclamation entered the sisterhood of States.

The admission act left the election of Blount and Cocke to the Senate of the United States doubtful, so far so that they were denied seats by that body. Amendment of the Tennessee act for the election of two Representatives was also necessary; and Governor Sevier was compelled to call the General Assembly in extra session to be held on July 30th.

In the new election of Senators, Dr. James White, Blount, Cocke and Judge David Campbell were placed in nomination. On August 2nd the balloting gave Blount and Cocke the two senatorial seats.

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The election of a Representative in Congress was provided to be held in August, 1796; and a number of leading men announced their candidacies, Andrew Jackson among them. East Tennessee at the time had a voting strength much greater than that of the Cumberland district, where Jackson resided. The original provision for two Representatives, doubtless, was of purpose to give a member to each of the two sections. The governor, two senators and two of three judges had been chosen from East Tennessee. It was generally felt that the Representative in Congress should come from the West, where, we may infer, Jackson had been favorable to statehood in the test of the previous year.

Judge Joseph Anderson, of East Tennessee, seemingly unaware of the election of Blount and Cocke to the Senate two days before, wrote, evidently from his country home, to Jackson on August 4th: "I shall make a point of informing my fellow-citizens generally and specially of your intention of holding a poll as a representative to Congress. If Blount and Cocke should be again elected Senators, you will be most certainly elected. If only one of them, and the other Senator should be Dr. White, I cannot answer so certainly; but, in either event, you may count upon my interest and all that of my friends. Colonel [Alexander] Outlaw has already told me that he shall resign in your favour, and some of us are determined to push you in if possible, although you should have a Senator from Cumberland."

Bassett, in his standard *Life of Jackson*, says that Jackson "was triumphantly elected;" but there was no one over whom he could triumph. He was conceded the honor of serving as the State's first Representative in Congress. Dr. James White had been the delegate from the Territory to the Congress.

Thus, in the first year of statehood, the only two offices open to choice by a statewide electorate were filled by Sevier and Jackson. These two natural born leaders of men were to come into hot rivalry in later years, Sevier to triumph over the younger man in his years of greater political activity; but, in his old age, fated to see the star of Jackson in the ascendant after the battle of New Orleans, and to die in an unspectacular service in Alabama, with shouts of acclaim of Jackson ringing throughout the land.

Fortunately, after the passing of more than a century, both have been chosen, and fittingly, as Tennessee's representatives in the Nation's Hall of Fame at Washington.

In the first session of the General Assembly, in providing for the inauguration of the governor, the two houses disagreed as to who should administer the oath of office to Sevier. The Senate contended that it should be administered by its clerk; the House that it should be by one of the judges of the superior court. The House prevailed; and thus was set a precedent that has governed to this day.

The inauguration took place March 30, 1796. Sevier was attended by committees appointed by the two houses: From the Senate, Joel Lewis, of Davidson; Alexander Kelly, of Blount, and James Ford, of Tennessee County. From the House, Alexander Outlaw, of Jefferson; John Blair, of Washington; John Cocke, of Hawkins; Samuel Newell, of Sevier, and Thomas Johnson and Wm. Fort, of Tennessee County.

The inaugural address was very brief:

"Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives:

"The high and honorable appointment conferred upon me by the free suffrages of my countrymen fills my breast with gratitude, which, I trust, my future life will manifest. I take this early opportunity to express, through you, my thanks in the strongest terms of acknowledgement. I shall labour to discharge with fidelity the confidence reposed in me; and if my exertions should prove satisfactory, the first wish of my heart will be gratified.

"Gentlemen, accept of my best wishes for your individual and public happiness. And, relying upon your wisdom and patriotism, I have no doubt but the result of your deliberations will give permanency and success to our new system of government, so wisely calculated to secure the liberty and advance the happiness and prosperity of our fellow-citizens.

John Sevier."

In editing the Executive Journal, the original spelling, and, for the most part, the capitalization of the writer have been left without change or correction. In some instances, the punctuation has been modernized. Sevier was given to the use of a colon or semicolon at the end of many of his sentences. His orthography compares favorably with that of Jackson and others of his time. Governor Sevier's signatures have been omitted in order to save space.

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EXECUTIVE JOURNAL

Knoxville 31st March 1796

Sir, I should be happy to have a comferance with you on sundry occassions, particularly on public affairs in order to obtain information on subjects which you may deem necessary to impart, and think useful and important to the interest of the State; of this I have no doubt of your willingness so to do and will wait your time and place.

Permit me to congratulate you on your success of this day.¹
Governor Blount.

Knoxville April 1st 1796

Mr Speaker and Gentlemen of the General Assembly:

I have the honor to lay before you Governor Nanderkort's letter together with several resolutions entered into by the Assembly of South Carolina, accompanied by sundry other papers, relative to the making a waggon road over what is commonly called the western mountains.² I need not point out to you Gentlemen the general Utility and advantages of such a road; And I flatter myself that in your deliberations you will not hesitate to provide ample and necessary means to effect the same.

Knoxville, 2nd April 1796.

Sir, I have the honor to send forward to you your Commission,³ and have no doubt, you will fill the same with honor and reputation to yourself, and satisfaction to the State who have committed such a great and important trust to your charge.

During the time you may be employed in Session and all other times your correspondence and communication will very greatly oblige, your Obedient Servant.

The Honorable William Cocke, esquire.

Knoxville, 2nd April 1796.

Friends & Brothers,

It is some time since I talked to you upon paper, and living so great a distance from each other, we can seldom speak face to face.

I am but lately come to this place and as yet not acquainted with all the things that have happened for some time past.

¹ Blount's election by the legislature to the United States Senate.

² Through the gorge of French Broad River, by way of Warm Springs, N. C., into Greene County. See later correspondence of date June 7, 1796, etc. The commercial intercourse of the western people with Charleston is thus indicated.

³ As U. S. Senator.

I am sorry to hear that some of my red brothers are missing or lost if it is the case we cannot as yet find out who it is that have done so wrong and black a deed, but when it is known our laws will then punish him with death.

It is very wrong to punish the innocent for the fault of rogues and bad men, neither will it bring back our friends that sleep in the dust. It is enough for one to be lost by bad people, and not a great many, perhaps on both sides was either of us to begin to take satisfaction, for you know every body have their friends.

You that are men and warriors must listen well to my talks, and not let foolish and inconsiderate people break the white belt of peace, that now so happily extends from our hearts to those of our red brothers.

Don't think harm when I say you are only a handful of people, and that war will ruin you if ever you enter into it again, look back thirty years ago, you were then a great people, more than ten times the number you have now and if you had never went to war, you would have been ten times stronger now, than you were at that time.

Brothers you know I have always advised you to live in peace. I pitied your women and children; and warriors ought always to take care of them, for they are harmless and innocent and depend upon men for their safety and protection.

I shall always endeavour to keep the path of peace wide and straight between us, and if ever war is again known in your land it will not be our fault.

Your good and great friend Governor Blount is going to Philadelphia to set in the great and beloved Council of America. Your beloved Father Washington, the President, is there, and so long as your Nation keeps bright the chain of peace they will both be your friends.

The Chiefs and Warriors of the Cherokee Nation.

Knoxville, 6th April 1796.

Sir, It is necessary for me to know the situation of the frontiers with respect to the protection, at this time afforded, by the Militia; the places of defence, and the numbers at block houses or otherwise, and the manner in which the Militia have generally been called into service to guard the same.

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Could you spare so much time, before your departure from this place, as would enable you to furnish me with a short detail of the above particulars, you would greatly oblige.

The Honble W. Blount

Knoxville, 9th April 1796.

Sir: I have the honor to send forward to you, your Credentials, and I have no doubt but the trust reposed in you will be discharged with fidelity.

During the time you may be employed in Session, and all other opportunities your correspondence and communications will greatly oblige

Honorable Mr. Blount

Knoxville, 11th April 1796.

Mr Speaker and Gentlemen of the General Assembly:

Permit me to remark to your Honorable body, that as our Senators are about to proceed to the Federal legislature it may not be inexpedient to remind them of the necessity of taking under consideration the embarrassed situation claimants of lands are under to those lying south of the line concluded on, in the treaty of Holston, and now within the Indian boundary.

In my humble opinion it is a matter of great public importance, and particularly interesting both to the State and to individuals, to either have the Indian claims extinguished, or the adventurers compensated for those lands.

I have no doubt but you will take the premisses under due deliberation, and give your Senators such instructions as you in your wisdom may deem necessary and advisable.

Knoxville, 22nd April 1796.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the General Assembly:

Your Session is now near a close, the safety and protection of the Frontiers requires your serious consideration. Tranquility, amity and mutual friendship with the neighboring tribes is the principal means of securing the same; permit me to remind your honorable body the deplorable condition our frontier Citizens would be plunged into, should this Country unhappily again be involved in a war with a Savage nation. The calamities of the last is recently in our memory; and the Spoils and ravages occasioned thereby, is daily presented before us. The rapid emigration into our State

is truly flattering,⁴ but a single hostility might be the means of occasioning the prospect wholly to vanish and cease; many thousands have removed to our Government; not many are wealthy, their resources small, and their wants great and were they reduced to the melancholy dilemma of entering into forts and blockhouses, I am assured, their condition would be distressing and painful in the extreme.

Let me remark to you Gentlemen, and I make no doubt you will readily coincide with me in opinion, that a few years peace would be the most legal and eligible mode to reduce our neighbouring tribes to reason and good order.

The present appearances of indian affairs has a pacific colour, and should proper methods be adopted by your Legislative aid and interposition so as to prevent violations and encroachments, I have no doubt but peace and tranquility will abound, throughout the government.

One thing more, beg leave to observe. It is well known to you that the brave Officers and privates that composed the Army, who performed the last Campaign⁵ is still unpaid, from which circumstances many of our Citizens are much embarrassed and disappointed on the occasion.

I have lately been advised to go forward to the war office personally to state the expediency and authority that produced the expedition. Now if the present Session of Congress should fail to make provision for the payment, I wish to know the sence of the Assembly whether or not I might be permitted to go forward to the next Session to lay the same before Congress. It will be a journey attended with much fatigue and expence, but nevertheless I feel it my indispenable duty to give every aid and assistance in my power, to have the Officers and privates duly compensated for their hazardous and toilsome services.

Circular to the Senators in Congress.

Knoxville 25th April 1796.

Sir: Since your departure from this place very little have occurred the Assembly adjourned on the 23rd. There was great exertions

⁴ Population increased in the decade 1790-1800 from 35,691 to 105,602.

⁵ Sevier's campaign against the Cherokees in North Georgia, 1793. The claims were piloted through Congress by Andrew Jackson. Jackson to Ore, *Knoxville Gazette*, May 22, 1797; *Annals 4th Congress*, 2nd Session, pp. 1738-46. Jackson made one of his few speeches in Congress in support of the claims.

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made for taxing the indian lands. And on the other hand every prudential method taken to obstruct the passage of the bill, which was effected, and by which means there is not new act for taxation.

By an act of the Assembly, the Governor is empowered to provide a seal for the use of the State, and there being no proper artist (in my opinion) in this State competent to the completion of a seal that might be considered and thought sufficient. You will pardon me Sir, when I take the liberty to request, that our Senators will take the trouble on themselves to have a suitable seal made, and provided, at the expence of the State.⁶ You will have it in your power among the great number of ingenious machanics that are to be found in the City of Philadelphia to have such a one made as will be elegant, comprehensive, and sufficiently expressive of the purposes and use the same is intended for.

I hope your attention will not be lacking, to endeavour for to procure the monies due the Officers and privates for their services, in the late expedition against the Cherokees, under my command; I flatter myself that the present Secretary of the War department will consider the propriety and legality of the measure.

Knoxville 27th April 1796.

Sir: You are going into the Cherokee country among my red brothers, a people I wish may do well, and hope their rash, and inconsiderate young men, has seen the folly of going to war, which occasions their Country to be destroyed, and much blood to be spilt. I hope that you and the white men that travel into that land will always advise them people for their good.

I can't as yet find out what person it was that killed the Indian near Clinch, neither has the Indian been found, which appears

⁶The engraving of the Great Seal of the State of Tennessee did not fall to a Philadelphia artisan, but to one of Jonesborough, William Atkinson, grandfather of the James E. Dosser, of Knoxville. Uncertain of the admission of Tennessee until Congress was about to adjourn, Blount and Cocke took no step towards the preparation of a seal. Not until September, 1801, did the legislature again move in the matter. In the meantime, the governor applied to public documents his private seal. A committee appointed by the General Assembly let a contract to Atkinson, who delivered the seal in the spring of 1802. It was first used by Gov. Roane in issuing a voucher for the payment of the Washington County Silversmith, Apr. 24, 1802. *American Hist. Magazine*, VI, 195-212. The committee composed of Clack, Cantrell, Stewart and Lillard was charged with the duty of preparing "a device and motto for the same." Who actually prepared the device and wording for the committee will, perhaps, never be known. The silversmith's tools used in engraving the seal were (1912) in the possession of Miss Kate Atkinson, of Tate Springs; and, seemingly, passed to her brother, Benjamin Atkinson, on her death. They should find their way into the museum of the Tennessee Historical Society, at Nashville. Did the "Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio" have a Seal? See Jefferson to Secretary Daniel Smith. *Jefferson's Works*, VIII, 266.

very strange. The people who lives near the place says that they are sure no person among them killed the indian; for, if they had, they would have found it out and also have found the indian. It is generally believed that he has been lost in some way that no body can account for. If he has been killed by any white man and and it known who, the person will surely be hanged.

You may tell my red brothers, that my heart is tender towards them, that my wishes is, for them to do well, and shall always be happy to hear of their welfare and happiness.

Captain John Chisolm.⁷

Knoxville, 28th April 1796.

Sir: This moment I have received information by letter from a Mr. Puckett⁸ that a party of indians, to the amount if ten or twelve, fired on a John Bird, Robert Henderson⁹ and John Phillips, Citizens of Sevier County. They returned the fire, and say they killed one indian, and wounded another; it is supposed this happened about twenty five miles above the forks of little pidgeon on the west fork; the men was out hunting horses that they supposed was stolen; and while on the tracts was fire upon.

I have wrote the indians relative to this affair and the contents you will have an opportunity of seeing.

I most earnestly wish to keep the peace between the two parties, but this seems an unfavorable circumstance. I have no doubt of your good Offies to effect conciliatory measures, and beg you will take every method, your prudence will dictate to promote the same.

Colonel John McKee,¹⁰

Tellico block house

Circular to the Senators in Congress.

Knoxville 30th April 1796.

Sir, Since my last of the 25th I have received information that a John Bird, Robert Henderson and John Phillips as they were hunting horses thought to be stolen, near the head of the west branch of little pidgeon, was fired on by a party of ten or twelve indians; several balls passed through their cloths, but did no other

⁷ For sketch of John Chisholm, see *ante*, p. 60.

⁸ John D. Puckett, of Sevier County, whose letter to Sevier may be found in *Tenn. Hist. Magazine*, VII, 215.

⁹ Bird and Henderson had, probably, been lieutenants of militia in 1793. Ramsey, 590.

¹⁰ For McKee, see Williams, *Lost State of Franklin*, 273; *Early Travels*, 462, and notes 41 and 47 below.

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Early Travels, 462, and

damage. They returned the fire; killed one indian on the spot, and wounded, as they suppose, another. I have not heard from the nation since, but expect to do it this day. I know not what may be the result, but am determined to make use of every conciliatory measure in my power to have the breach amicably settled and compromised.

I shall do myself the honor to communicate to you on this and every other occurrence that may happen, as early as opportunity may offer.

Knoxville 4th May 1796

Friends and brothers:

I have heard by your friend Colonel McKee, that one of your people is wounded. I am sorry for it also am glad that no body was killed.

You may be sure my heart is friendly towards your Nation; that I wish you peace, safety and all the good that the great being above has intended and reserved for you.

If your people keeps deeply buried the hatchett and scalping knife, you will become a happy nation. You may soon have all the things you stand in need of. Work your corn fields in quietness; hunt your game in safety, go to sleep at night, and rise up in the morning without being afraid.

Listen well to this my advice, and your Nation will soon be great beloved and numerous. Think deep in your hearts of what I say to you; let not a few foolish and bad people, on either side, cause you to let go the white chain of peace that keeps our nations bound up, and united so firmly to each other.

The two guns you say was taken from your people I will send after; so soon as they can be had, shall be sent unto the owners; in case they cannot be obtained, you shall have others in place of those that was taken.

My heart felt pleasure on hearing how prudently and wise you have considered the matter. It discovers that you love your women and children as all good men do; and [you] ought never to throw away many lives on account of a few bad and inconsiderate people that do not care for either party.

I will be down to see you soon. We will talk all matters over, and I hope that a good understanding will ever subsist between us. Cheifs and Warriors, of the Cherokee Nation

Knoxville, 5th May 1796.

Sir: Information has come from the Cherokees that a party of four was out hunting on the borders of your County; they were fired on by three white men, who wounded one of the indians, and took from them two guns. By information from little pidgeon, I have reason to believe the persons were John Bird, Robert Henderson and John Phillips who fired on the Indians.

I am sorry that such an inconsiderate piece of imprudence should have taken place by those men, viewing them all as good orderly citizens.

There has never been a time when war could have been more ruinous to this Country as at the present crisis. Scarcely one family in twenty has bread to eat, and hundreds crouding the roads every day through the Wilderness, and thousands in all quarters preparing to remove to this Country; and should the report of war get circulated abroad, all this promising prospect of population immediately ceases.

The indians promise that if the guns are returned to them in a short time, that no rupture shall happen on the account of what has been done. On considering the baneful consequences, in case a war was to be brought on, and we charged as being accessary thereto and the dangers that would ensue, I have wrote to the indians, that the guns shall be returned; if not, others in the lieu of them that was taken.

I beg you sir to use your endeavours and influence to get the guns from the persons who has them and let them be returned.
Colonel Samuel Weir, Sevier County.¹¹

Circular to the Honble Messrs Blount and Cocke, Senators.

Knoxville, 6th May 1796.

Sir: Since my last of 30th Ultimo, I have had more certain information respecting the indian affair on the west fort of pidgeon; the truth of the matter is, that those three men mentioned in my last fired on a camp of four indians, slightly wounding one and took from them two guns. The indians has since concluded, that if the guns are returned, they will be satisfied. I have wrote their guns shall be sent to them; if not, they shall have others. I expect to have the guns got in a few days and peace continued.

¹¹ Usually, and even later in this correspondence, written "Wear." For sketch: Williams, *op. cit.*, 321.

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Knoxville, 6th May 1796.

Sir: I am under expectation I shall be ready to sit out for Wash-
ington¹² some time to day, or early tomorrow morning. Shall I
suppose be absent from this place three or four weeks. In the mean-
time I beg you to have a watchful eye towards the frontiers, and
your neighbours the Cherokees.

If any thing of moment should occur, let me know by express
as soon as possible.

Circular

Colonels White, Kelly & Weir.¹³

State of Tennessee, 7th June 1796.

Sir: A favourable opportunity presenting itself for the immediate
conveyance of a communication, I do myself the honor of inform-
ing your Excellency, that your dispatches forwarded to my Prede-
cessor (Governor Blount) respecting a waggon road being opened
through the western mountains,¹⁴ was laid before the General As-
sembly. That body being engaged in business of great importance
at the time, and some obstacles appearing, not easily surmounted,
the Legislature only proceeded to act in the manner you will dis-
cover by the resolve herein inclosed. Nevertheless I have the
pleasure to inform you, that the good Citizens of this State, con-
ceived themselves so much interest in having the road that they
have contributed in such a manner as to enable Charles Robertson,
of Green County¹⁵ (a gentleman of reputation and respect) to under-
take the clearing and opening of a waggon road from the Warm
Springs crossing the mountain and extending to a main road in
Green County to a neighbourhood known by the name of Sher-
rill's Cove, being the route and way recommended by the Com-
missioners from your State. Mr. Robertson has entered into bond,
to have the road compleatly finished on or before the first day of
October next, so as to enable a waggon with only four horses to
travel and pass the same with fifteen hundred weight. I have no
doubt but the road will be finished by the time stipulated, and have
full expectations that the same will tend to mutual and reciprocal
advantages. Permit me futher to add, that nothing shall be

¹² Washington County, where was Sevier's home, "Plum Grove."

¹³ James White, of Knox; Alexander Kelly, of Blount; and Samuel Wear, of
Sevier County.

¹⁴ See note 2 above.

¹⁵ Charles Robinson, not to be confused with Charles Robertson, of Washington
County. Ramsey, 286.

lacking in me to forward on a friendly and interesting intercourse; and have long since viewed Charleston as a place well situated for the commercial transactions of this Country, provided goods could be obtained on reasonable terms.

His Excellency

Governor Nanderhorst
South Carolina

Circular to the members of the General Assembly.

Knoxville, 4th July 1796.

Sir: I have received information from the Honorable Messrs Blount and Cocke that Tennessee is by an act of Congress admitted as a member State of the Union.

By this act we are only entitled to the privilege of having one Representative. The Senate of the United States objected against our Senators taking seats within their body.

Matters being thus deranged, it becomes expedient and necessary, for the Assembly to be convened at an early day, in order to alter and regulate our present mode of election for Representatives, Electors of President and Vice President of the United States, re-elect Senators and other business of Public utility.

Your punctual attendance at the seat of Government, on the last Saturday in the present month will be expected.¹⁶

Knoxville, 7th July 1796.

Friends & Brothers:

Since peace has taken place between us I shall always be happy to hear of your welfare. I am rejoiced to find your people have seen their folly of going to war, and have concluded to keep underground the hatchett and scalping knife; by such measures and conduct of your nation, you may become strong, numerous and have all the good things you stand in need of.

This letter will be delivered unto you by Colonel Whitley from the State of Kentucky,¹⁷ who is going into your Country to see and get some white people, that some of your people took prisoners from that Country some time ago; also to get some black people that was taken from the same place, (a woman and three children

¹⁶ For letter of same date Sevier to Gen. James Robertson: *Am. Hist. Mag.*, IV, 285.

¹⁷ Col. Wm. Whitley, who at the solicitation of Sampson Williams aided with his Kentucky troops in Ore's campaign of 1794 against the Chicamauga Indians.

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Robertson: *Am. Hist. Mag.*, IV,

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that belonged to general Logan of that Country.) Now my Brothers I shall earnestly expect that you will immediately give up all those people, and let them be conveyed home to their own Country, which in our last treaty of peace you have promised you would do. I shall also do the same, if any of your people is among us; but I know of none but one boy, who is now going to school and he told me a few days ago that he did not want to go home until he could learn to read and write, which was very good in him; and whenever he wants to return he shall be sent safe to you. If there is any more I don't know of them. I have but lately come into office, and am not acquainted with all things that have happened in the time of Governor Blount.

Colonel Whitley is a beloved Warrior among the white people, and a friend of mine. I shall expect your people will treat him like a brother, as he does your people when they go to his house, and I shall hope to see him return safe, with all his people, that he is now going after.

Chiefs and Warriors of the
Cherokee Nation

Knoxville 20th July 1796

Sir: Yours of 20th Ultimo I had the honor to receive. An extremely sorry any uneasiness should be occasioned by any of the Citizens of the South Western Territory, now State of Tennessee.

You are pleased to mention, you have been informed that numerous forced Settlements are made on Indian lands, as confirmed to them by treaty; but have not informed me where, or by whom the same have been made.

It is not unknown to the Executive, that I have but recently come into the Administration, and that Indian affairs at best are generally managed with much difficulty and trouble; and, what causes it to be more complicated and intricate, few and very few, from the want of experimental knowledge of Indian business, can be had suitable to transact in that department.

I have had an extensive acquaintance with several Indian tribes upwards of thirty years, and I can with great propriety say, that the more my knowledge is of those people more difficult it is to find a person calculated with address sufficient to transact the business of a savage Nation. A lack of knowledge of the human heart, (particularly the savage) the laws of nature and of Nations, disqualifies in general such young persons as chiefly undertake

this kind of business. Their want of the language occasions them to have recourse to persons who have but a mere smattering of one or the other of the tongues which often times causes the interpretation to be very imperfect.

Previous to my administration, there was a small settlement on the bank of the river Clinch. I am informed that the settlers chiefly claim under Patent grants obtained some time since from the State of North Carolina. If there are any actual settlements made elsewhere, I am not informed, except a few families near and about the Tellico block house (to wit) a black smith and some others for the mere purpose of accommodation to such as may resort to that place, and this I have been led to believe was consented to by the Indians; neither has any complaint been lodged with me by them on either of the occasions.

I flatter myself, it will readily occur to you that it will take some time to remove obstacles of such magnitude, particularly in new governments; for we find that in some of the most ancient States great enormities and outrages of various kinds are frequently committed.

I do not mean to excuse the people of this Country, and say that none of them are not guilty of encroachments and often times doing injustice to their neighbouring tribes; neither is it to be expected when we find the laws of the original States at various times have been insufficient to restrain the unruly from various innumerable disorders of this kind. And when we consider the many unprovoked and wanton barbarities, so often and recently exercised by the savages on the frontier Citizens, might we not wonder that the spirit of discord and irreconciliation does not in a much greater degree prevail.

Permit me to assure you, that I am authorised to say our Legislature together with myself are sincerely disposed to regard and observe all the treaties, that are or may be sanctioned and ratified by the federal government, so far as they are not pernicious, odious nor inequitous. It is common and requisite for every nation to be jealous of its own interest, careful of its dignity and preserving of its independance. Under these considerations, nothing shall be lacking in me to fulfil and discharge all the duties relative to my Official Character, so far as any thing may be committed to my charge and I am furnished with ample powers and means to effect the same; observing at the same time, we are not ignorant of the

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sacred regard we owe to our federal head, and the incumbent obligation to perform every thing required for its preservation and safety.

The act inclosed by you is already promulgated in the Knoxville Gazette, and shall proceed to the completion of your ideas on that head.

I shall always be desirous of preserving and supporting peace between the frontiers and our indian neighbours, by restraining, as much as possible, the former from intrusion and encroachments of every kind; at the same time hope the latter will be suffered to pass off with impunity, for any violences and depredations they may unprovokedly and wantonly commit. It is a well known fact and shamefully obvious, that all the erratic tribes are accustomed and habituated to lecentiousness; and educated to a vagrant, lawless, debauched and immoral life, and nothing but a sufficient conviction of being chastised will ever deter those itinerant nations from their common desperate and rapacious practices.

It is to be lamented measures so harsh and cruel in the operation must inevitably be inflicted on any part of the human race; but in case of self preservation, and the injoyment of tranquility, a nation is not only warranted to punish unjustifiable attacks; but may put the aggressors in such a condition as will prevent them in future from being guilty of like offences.

I have the consolation fully to believe that an indian war with the Cherokees is not likely to take place, nor do I think their disposition is pregnant with any such intentions in the present crisis of affairs.

With respect to the trading houses, time can only discover the efficacy of the institution. I have reason to believe it may be attended with some embarrassments, though the idea is not conclusive with me, and shall forbear giving at this time my reasons for such a suggestion, but beg leave to say, so far as may come within my province, or any of that business may be consigned to my superintendency, I shall most cheerfully lend my aid to the Government in behalf of its support and welfare; and in every other respect, it will yield and afford to me much pleasure to co-operate with the President in all his arrangements.

The several posts, block houses & (etc) supported by Militia in the time of my Predecessor will soon be unoccupied, as the time expressed in his last order will soon expire, and being very few

regulars remaining in Rickard's company, I shall be under the indispensable necessity of a renewal of similar orders to supply those places, until I am informed the President's pleasure on the subject. I presume the Posts being supported will have a tendency to prevent the meditation of any attacks from the indians. On the other hand [it] may serve to prevent intrusions and disorders of various kinds being committed by the people on the frontiers, and will cherish in them a full confidence that they will be amply protected against any depredations from the neighbouring indians.

I have this moment received information that a few families are attempting to form a settlement near the Tennessee, over the supposed line concluded on in the Holston treaty. Should it be the case you may be assured I shall cause them to relinquish their pretensions, and carefully endeavour to remove every other obstacle of the same nature.

Beg leave to observe the Cherokee settlements are in our vicinity, and great part of that nation [being] within our territorial limits of course they frequently resort among our inhabitants, and particularly at this place. And notwithstanding the Agents resident among them, we are constantly engaged, and much time taken up, in the transaction of indian business, in order to prevent any misunderstanding, and a wish we might mutually cultivate friendship and tranquility with those people. I shall have no objection to lending my assistance in any thing that may not be incompatible with the dignity and duties of my station.

Secretary of the department of war
Philadelphia

Knoxville 20th July 1796

Friends & Brothers:

I have not heard from any of your Chiefs for some some time except Double-head¹⁸ who I dont know much about, or wheather he is a beloved man in your nation or not. If he is you would do well to let me know it.

If you at any time have any business to do with me, send to this place where all public business is transacted, and I shall at all times be ready to hear you, and do every thing in my power to redress your complaints if any you have.

¹⁸ Doublehead (Taltsuska); even before 1800 he became an outstanding chief of the Cherokees. He was killed by another chief in 1807. Claiborne's *General Sam Dale*, 45-49; Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokees*, 75-85.

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I have heard from your red brothers, the northwards. Some people think they are again geting cross, and are thinking about the tomahawk and scalping knife. I hope it is not true. I think they must have got their eyes open and seen their folly. Surely they have not forgot the treaty so lately made with General Wayne. They then had to give up a large Country of land, and if they make war again they will be obliged to give up much more.

If they should be so foolish as to come to your nation with war talks, dont you listen to them; remember that you have a good country; think well of it and love your women and children; dont hear bad talks from no people, for the beloved men of the United States wish your nation well, and I am sure you now must see the great good of peace.

I have lately heard that some horses are stolen from Cumberland, and that their trail made for the lower Cherokee towns. I hope you will inquire about this matter, and if any of your people have been so foolish as to take horses from their white brothers, you will have them sent back to their owners. I have also heard that a mare was taken from Kulsatehe,¹⁹ near fort Blount; our people followed and has got the mare again, and Kulsatehe will get his creature, which I am glad to hear. It will be best for your people not to hunt too near our settlements, for it often times gives an oppertunity on both sides for stealing of horses, and other mischief to be done by bad people; therefore it would be good for you to give talks to your people, and tell them not to hunt so near unto the white people, and by this means I hope we shall have no disputes, and the chain of friendship and peace will always be bright and clear between us.

The Chiefs and Warriors
of the Cherokee Nation

Knoxville, 30th July 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate and the House of Representatives:

The short time, in which I conceived it was necessarily my duty to convene the Legislature, compelled me to call you together on so short a notice. In the first instance, it was necessary to give all the time the emergency of the occasion would admit of, and in the second from a circumstance, that the election to be held for Representatives was approaching so near at hand, made it necessary, as I conceived, for the Assembly to have it in their power, by

¹⁹ See Williams, *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country*, 484.

a timely meeting should they in their wisdom deem it proper, to make an alteration in the Act directing the mode of electing Representatives to represent this State in the Congress of the United States, before the day election should arrive as directed in the aforesaid Act, otherwise it might be attended with disputes and contentions of a disagreeable nature, for by a late act of Congress the intended number of our Representatives is deminished. Of course it proportionally lessens our number of electors for President and Vice President of the United States. Thus such a derangement will necessarily require an alteration in our Acts passed for such purposes.

Our Senators not being recognized in the Senate of the United States is another matter for your consideration and attention; and for your more ample information, the several acts and communications accompanying this address will elucidate unto you the propriety of my calling the Assembly together at this time.

I hope I may be permitted to observe, that it is of importance and conducive to public happiness to arrange our public acts conformably with those of Congress, so far as they shall respect this State.

The foregoing are the reasons why I have thought proper to convene the Assembly in Session on the present day, and I make no doubt you will, through your paternal care, wisdom and patriotic deliberations, adopt such measures as will tend to promote the public interest and general utility of the State.

I have the pleasure of announcing to you Gentlemen the admission of the State of Tennessee into the federal union, a circumstance pregnant with every flattering prospect of peace, happiness and opulence to our infant State. The period is at length arrived when the people of the Southwestern Territory may enjoy all the blessings and liberties of a free and independant republic.

Permit me to wish you public, domestic and individual happiness, while I have the honor to be

Very respectfully

Your devoted and obedient Servt

Knoxville, 2nd August 1796.

Gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives:

At your last Session by a resolve of your Honorable body it appears, and carries with it an idea, that the road proposed to be

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made and cleared out from the Warm Springs across the mountains into what is called Sherrill's cove, as proposed by the Assembly of South Carolina, met your approbation so far that [when] your finances was sufficient to enable you to prosecute such a task you would readily encourage and promote the same.

It appears that from a confidence reposed in the Legislature a number of persons have contributed considerable sums, in order to have the aforesaid road cleared and opened sufficient for wag-gons, with only four horses to pass with a load of fifteen hundred weight.

In consequence of the monies so subscribed, and confidence in the General Assembly, Mr. Charles Robertson, of Green County, has undertaken to cut and clear out the same for the sum of one thousand dollars, to be finished on or before the first day of October next.

I am informed that Mr. Robertson has made great progress in clearing out the same, and in a short time will have the road fully completed.

In order to inform the Assembly more fully the conditions on which Mr. Robertson is to open the road, I have sent for your information his bond for the performance thereof.

I beg leave to observe, that it is generally expected that the Assembly will reimburse unto the Subscribers the monies they have contributed for the purpose of cutting and clearing the said road, whenever they find their finances in a condition so to do.

I flatter myself that your Honorable body discovers the great utility such a road would be of to the public at large; the great tendency it will have to induce emigrants into the State, besides opening an eaisy and ready communication with the sea ports and trading towns in the neighbouring States, whereby many of the productions of this Country can be transported to markett with convenience.

Permit me to suggest that it will be attended with reciprocal great and mutual advantages between this and several neighbouring States, and as such is the case, I have no doubt you in your wisdom and prudence will afford such aid and encouragement, as may be adequate to a completion of the aforesaid road, and a reimbursement to those public sperited persons who have so liberally afforded their timely assistance to so laudable a purpose.

Knoxville, 15th August 1796.

Sir: Yours of 23d Ultimo together with the duplicate of June last I had the honor to receive. In answer to your first I did myself the honor of replying on the 20th Ultimo which I hope went safe to hand, in which I signified some reasons for supplying the different posts, which were supported by military in the latter of the time of Governor Blount. Notwithstanding the pacific appearances, I am of opinion to withdraw the guards immediately on the charge of the government would impress the indians and the people on the frontiers with ideas not calculated to promote peace and friendship between the two parties. The indians too readily would form an opinion that the protection of the United States was withdrawn and no longer to be afforded the frontiers, which consequently would embolden them, and probably might encourage thefts and robberies to be committed. To suppose no worse, the frontier people on the other hand would conceive themselves neglected, left unprotected, exposed to their common savage enemy and disregarded by the Government. It is well known from experience that little faith can be placed in treaties made with any of the savage tribes, which makes it much more necessary for States, as have such for neighbours, to be in some measure guarded and ready to repel any unjust attacks. For the protection of the frontiers, I am of opinion the usual number, that have lately been called into service, is fully adequate; and it is probable not any will be wanting after the cold season may arrive. It will depend on circumstances, and the necessary measures can be better ascertained when the period will arrive. I flatter myself that, after the present warm season shall end, few of the militia will have occasion to be called out, and have no doubt the expenditures attending such purposes will be very much curtailed for the future, which you may assure yourself, I shall be heartily disposed to favour; and in every instance suppress all kind of unnecessary expences.

Beg leave to observe that it is of importance, in my opinion, that a strong guard be constantly keep up at the Tellico block house. Great numbers of indians resort to that place; the large supplies generally there might induce some of those desperadoes, from a love of plunder to attempt an attack on the store, particularly in some of their drunken paroxisms. Notwithstanding they are not supplied with speritous lyquor's at the store, there is large

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²⁰ *Ib.*, 376.

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and plentiful settlements in the vicinity, and by various means
they get furnished with considerable quantities of whisky.
Secretary of the department of war,
Philadelphia

Knoxville, 25th August 1796.

Brother: The Chickasaw people have complained to me that there
is a negro man, a negro woman and child, belonging to George
Colbert²⁰ in your nation; they say that they were to have been
sent in to this place some time ago, but as they have not yet come,
I am requested to write to you about them, and have sent Joseph
Sevier²¹ on purpose to get the negroes and bring them to this place,
and desire that you will deliver them up to him. If the Chicka-
saws owes your people any thing, they will pay you. You know
it is wrong to swop people for horses, for negroes is not horses
tho they are black. I shall expect and hope you will send the
negroes according to request. I wish you and the Chickasaw
people to live as brothers and good neighbours but you cant ex-
pect it to be the case, if you keep their people from them.

The Little Turkey.

Knoxville 25th August 1796

Sir: It is with concern I hear that some of your neighbours are
going to improve land on the south side of Tennessee river, more
particularly when I hear that you are at the head of the party. I
will admit that it is my opinion that the line²² mentioned in the
act of Congress will cross the Tennessee below the mountains, but
of this I am certain neither Congress nor the President have any
expectation will be the case; and, should any person attempt to
make improvements on that side of the river, we are certain that
it will occasion great murmerings and complaints among the
indians, if nothing worse should happen. And that moment Con-
gress or the President has knowledge of the course the line may run,
my opinion is, that part of the line will be immediately altered;
which can very easily be effected; for the same authority which
agreed upon the first can easily alter, or form a new one, and I
am sensible this will be the case, if such attempts should be made.

²⁰ *Ib.*, 376.

²¹ Gov. Sevier's oldest son whose second wife was Miss Lowry, a half-breed
Cherokee, daughter of George Lowry and Ocatlootsa, a daughter of the great chief,
Oconostota. Margaret, their daughter, married Col. Gideon Morgan.

²² The north boundary line of the Cherokees as agreed upon in the treaty of
Holston (Knoxville) of 1791.

After giving you these hints, I beg sir you will consider the matter and desist from any such attempts. Let us do nothing that will flusterate the peace, that at this time prevails; let us once have a sufficiency of people within our State, then all things will go right. Only view the great emigration into this state, and you will readily perceive that peace is to be preferred to any other advantage that this time could attend us. I hope I have said enough to convince you on this head, and shall rest satisfied you will reflect on the propriety of my observations to you respecting the matter.

Captain Joseph Evans

Knoxville, Oct. 4th 1796.

Sir: As there is a dispute between Mr. McClain and Mr. Nash²³ for the major's Commission, and sundry papers have been exhibited to me respecting the illegality of the election, in order that a fair investigation may take place, I am induced to suspend the issuing of the Commission to either of them, and shall lay the papers before the Next General Assembly, in order that Justice may be done. You will therefore please to give each of them Notice of this my determination, In order that they be prepared for the event, & you will Greatly oblige.

Col. Isaac Roberts,²⁴
of Davidson County

Knoxville, October 4th 1796.

Sir: If any return has been made of the cavalry in Davidson, it is so mislaid that it cannot be conveniently found; therefore, in order that no disappointment may happen on that head, I have taken the liberty to enclose to you blank commissions, requesting that you will please to fill up the same, and deliver them to the Captain and subalterns. I have also sent, inclosed to General Robertson blank commissions for the field officers of the cavalry, requesting him to deliver them to the Gentlemen elected, on the day of the election.

Colonel Robert Hays.

Knoxville, 4th October 1796.

Sir: Your election for Brigadier, and that of the field Officers of the Cavalry, happening on the same day, in some measure embarrasses the business, as it appears by the constitution that it was contemplated the field officers were to have a vote in electing their Brigadier.

²³ Wm. McClain and Wm. Nash, of the region later Wilson County.

²⁴ Later brigadier-general of militia in Middle Tennessee.

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Sir: The elec the cavalry the business plates that a

In order to the election, commissions district, requ person electe sons elected may be entit you will obli James Stuart

Sir: By Mr. August. I h the militia n but as yet ha number, owi would not v I believe I h be the case, necessary, an desirous of c cumilate on entertained a other States consistant w which you e yourself that

will consider the matter as do nothing that will fail; let us once have a trial all things will go right. I hope, and you will readily see, that there is no other advantage that I could wish to convince you will reflect on the matter.

Knoxville, Oct. 4th 1796.
Clain and Mr. Nash²³ papers have been examined in order that I may be induced to suspend the election, and shall lay the matter in order that Justice may be done. Notice will be given to each of them. Notice will be prepared for the

Knoxville, October 4th 1796.
The election in Davidson, it is understood; therefore, in order to put it at head, I have taken the necessary commissions, requesting that you direct them to the Captain of the militia to General Robertson of the cavalry, requesting him to be present on the day of the election.

Knoxville, 4th October 1796.
I have written the field Officers of the militia in some measure embarrassed by the constitution that it was necessary to vote in electing their

Wilson County.
see.

In order to remedy the evil as much as possible, and give to the parties and the officers fair play, I have taken the liberty to inclose unto you, blank commissions for the field officers of the cavalry, requesting that you will be good enough after their election is completed, to immediately fill them up agreeably to their rank and deliver each officer his commission, that they may thereby be enabled to legally vote for their General; in doing of which you will greatly oblige.
General James Robertson.

Knoxville, 6th October 1796.

Sir: The election for the brigadier generals and the field officers of the cavalry being on the same day embarrasses in some measure the business, for it appears to me that the constitution contemplates that all field officers have a right to vote for their general.

In order that all parties may have a fair and equal chance in the election, I have taken the liberty to forward to you blank commissions for the field officers of the cavalry of Washington district, requesting that you will be pleased to fill them up for each person elected agreeably to his rank and deliver them to the persons elected as soon as the election is finished, in order that they may be entitled to vote at the election of the Brigadier; in so doing you will oblige.

James Stuart, esquire.

Knoxville, 7th October 1796.

Sir: By Mr. Hillis I had the pleasure to receive yours of the 14th August. I have wrote the Secretary of War long since respecting the militia necessary to be stationed on the frontiers of this State, but as yet have received no reply. I have been moderate as to the number, owing to an expectation that the Creeks and Georgians would not very agreeably reconcile, to each other, their disputes. I believe I have suggested pretty right; and as it may probably be the case, I have no doubt but a greater number will be highly necessary, and more readily obtained from the executive. I was desirous of discovering to the executive we did not wish to accumulate on the United States unnecessary expences, or that we entertained any Great apprehensions of an indian war; but, in case other States should cause hostilities to be commenced, it will be consistant with our safety to be securely protected. As to peace, which you express a desire should be continued, you may assure yourself that my endeavours and exertions will not be lacking on

that head. My first care and object is to encourage as sufficient number of inhabitants to come into our State; after that is the case, which cant be very distant, I contemplate all things will come right; a war would flusterate the desirable object, because the emigration would of course be obstructed. A country ever so fertile is worth little without being sufficiently inhabited, and the latter is all we want to make us become oppulent and respected. And it is the primary object of all well regulated governments, and of course it is our duty to endeavour to obtain it.

The Chickasaws are at this place, waiting for the Creeks, which is expected daily. As to information from this country your brother is competant, to whom I beg leave to refer you.
Honorable William Blount.

Knoxville, 22nd October 1796.

Brothers and Warriors of the Cherokee nation:

Mr. Henry Morriss is going into your nation in search of a negro woman named Mary and two of her children; she was taken from Zeiglar's station at Cumberland, I shall expect you to assist him to get the negroes, that they may be brought back to their own people, and in so doing you will oblige.

Knoxville, 25th October 1796.

To the Dog Warrior, Mad Blue, and all the Principal Cheifs of the Creek Nation.

Friends, Your talk by Captain Chisolm affords me great pleasure. The desire you so warmly express of peace and friendship with the United States is highly gratifying. And the preparatory step you have so early taken for establishing that friendly intercourse between the two nations, so highly interesting to both, on the principles of good and mutual confidence, is a proof of that wisdom and policy which mark a great nation.

Friends,

I thank you for the assurances you give that no mischief shall be done on our frontiers, and doubt not that our people will not be afraid to meet to take each other by the hand, and eat and smoke together in peace harmony and friendship.

You say that some of your people intend to go to Cumberland this winter to purchase ammunition and other necessities; and wish me to issue my proclamation to protect them, and prevent any mischief being done by ill designed persons among our people.

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²⁵ The U. S.
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I shall with pleasure comply with your request, and be assured that your people may go and return in the utmost security, without any apprehension of being molested or interrupted in their journey.

I thank you for your favourable opinion of me. Believe me, I always was, and ever shall be, a friend to all the red people who wish to preserve that peace and harmony so desirable to all good men. Under the influence of this friendship, I shall be vigilant in preventing any mischief, or encroachment on your hunting ground; under the full assurance that you will, on your part, continue to act on the firm principals of peace, amity and good faith.

Jonesboro, 24 November 1796.

Sir: I am induced to Suppose that there will be several Candidates for the Judge's place.²⁵ John Rhea, Esquire, is among the number; as to his qualifications to fill that office I need not mention to you as you are very well acquainted with his abilities and General Character. Permit me to observe that Mr. Rhea, in my opinion, will be very acceptable to the people at large perhaps more so than any other person I have yet heard of among the number, and I make no doubt you will use your Interest to have him appointed.

Honble Wm. Cocke &
Wm. Blount

Jonesborough, 12th December 1796.

Sir: There seems to be different opinions among the best informed respecting the right to the vacant lands ceded to the United States by North Carolina in their session act; some are of opinion that the right of Congress was at an end, from the time of the admission of the State; and there are others in opposition to that opinion. As to my own part, I am in favour of the former; and it is my opinion that the State of Tennessee is reinvested with all the right of domain that the people of North Carolina ever had as claimed in their Constitution; was it otherways, we should not equally stand possessed of those free and independant rights the original States enjoy; and, as declared, we shall, particularly after a fixed period. As you are in full possession of all the facts and circumstances relative to the matter, I deem it unnecessary to trouble you with any farther detail on the subject, but beg leave to suggest

²⁵ The U. S. District judgeship, which fell to Judge John McNairy in February, 1797. Rhea soon went to Congress. Jackson, then in Congress, expected Rhea to get the appointment.

it will be consistant with the interest of this State for our members in Congress to be opposed to the sale of any of our unappropriated lands.

As to the campaign yet unpaid by the United States, I need not remark any thing to you on that head, as I am fully sensible you will exert your influence to have the same finally and fully compensated for.

Circular, to the
Honble Messers Blount,
Cocke and Jackson.

Knoxville, 11th January 1797.

Sir: Yours of the 13th Ultimo I am duly favored with, and should have done myself the honor to have answered the same before now had I been at this place, being in some measure obliged up into Washington; and some of my family much indisposed, prevented my returning so early as I otherways intended.

It is extremely painful to be informed of the thefts and robberies committed by the indians, and distressing in the extreme to hear the manner in which several people traveling through the wilderness have been striped of their horses and other property. Permit me to assure you, Sir, that I shall take the most effectual and prompt measures that I am capable of and the nature of the case will admit, to have the property restored to the proper owners; and that the perpetrators shall not escape with impunity, if it is in my power to have it otherways effected. Should any person repair to the indian camps in your vicinity in search of any of the property stollen, it is expected and recommended, that they will peaceably make enquiry after the same, and if it should be found in the possession of the indians, and they refuse to deliver it up, the owners will then be justifiable in taking the same, taking care at the same time to make no use of any violence unless their own lives should be in danger.

As soon as I hear from the nation, I will do myself the honor to give you information.

Lieutenant Sampson Williams,
Fort Blount

Knoxville, 12th January 1797.

Sir: Yours of the 8th of November I am duly honored with, and should have done myself the pleasure of answering the same before this time had I been at this place. Some of my family in Washington [County] being much indisposed, which required my presence, is my apology, together with the severity of the weather which

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12th January 1797.
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prevented my return so soon as I intended. I discovered at the first sight of the act of Congress you advert to, that it would have a tendency rather to encourage than discourage settlements to be made as low down as the Tennessee river, tho I make no doubt that Honorable body fully anticipated very salutary and interesting consequences would be derived. The experimental line tried by Messrs. Campbell, McKee and McClung²⁶ is reported, as I am informed, to cross Holeson near the confluence of that and Tennessee river; the act of Congress embraces an idea that from that place, the line is to be extended south to the South Carolina indian boundary. Now sir if the experimental line alluded to is accurate, will not the course to be run south immediately cross the Tennessee? This is an idea generally entertained by all those who are acquainted, and the opinion you know is readily indulged by all who wish to settle on the land.

The line of conduct I am to observe on this occasion does not appear to me sufficiently delineated. Were I to undertake it, I should be much afraid of erring through misconception of the line yet to be run; in this dilemma I must be excused from exercising any prompt and decisive measures on the subject, especially as it is the part of candor in me to acknowledge that I do not see my way clear enough to give such instructions as would have efficacy sufficient to answer the desired intention.

If Congress wish any thing to be done through the executive of this State, it will be expedient in that Body to be more definitive and explicit, which can only be effected by having the line run and properly ascertained, which might perhaps prevent serious events.

I have issued proclamations on the subject long since, and shall proceed to take such measures as circumstances and my power will enable me to exert.

Innumerable complaints are daily lodged against the indians, supposed to be Cherokees, that they have robbed, and plundered many horses and other property from families on the road to Cumberland leaving several in the most disagreeable conditions, without a horse to enable them to travel with, or any covering to secure them from the intensity of the weather. It is painful

²⁶ Judge David Campbell, Col. John McKee and Charles McClung, designated by Gov. Blount under authority of the Secretary of War, in November, 1792, ran a line which, the Cherokees not participating, was treated as an experimental line. *Am. St. Papers, Ind. Affairs*, I, 630. The history of this and a succeeding survey is given in Royce's *Cherokee Nation*, 163, *et seq.*

in the extreme to hear of such a conduct, fearing it may be attended with serious and disagreeable events. The people of this country are far from being in a temper disposed to receive insults accompanied with aggravated injuries, nor will it be prudent in the indians to conduct themselves in a manner that might invite a retaliation for the innumerable murders and other crimes of the deepest die, that they have but too recently committed upon many of the harmless and innocent Citizens of this country.

I beg that you will use your interest and influence to have the goods and horses that have been taken returned as soon as possible; and let the indians be informed the dangers of such a conduct, should they be so unwise as to suffer it to be carried on any longer. I wish sincerely to cultivate peace and harmony between our frontier citizens and the indians, and shall take all the necessary measures in my power to promote the same. Inclosed you will receive a letter directed to the chiefs, which you will please to have read and explained to them.

Silas Dinsmore, esquire,
Agent to the Cherokees.

Knoxville, 12th January 1797.

Brothers: I have now arrived at this place, and am sorry to be informed that some of your foolish young people have been taking horses and plundering waggons on the Cumberland road; such conduct will soon darken the bright chain of friendship that now so happily is joined to each nation. I hope you that are warriors and chiefs do not encourage such proceedings, and I have a better opinion of you than to suppose you would any longer suffer it to be done. You have no reason to think I wish you any ill, neither does the great majority of the white people, in case your nation will be friendly; you know I have always advised you not to let foolish young fellows destroy the good understanding between us.

I request that you will proceed to make inquiry after the horses and other property that have lately been taken by your people and send the same into this place, in order that the owners may have it again; by which means our friendship will continue to be firm and strong, I have wrote to Mr. Dinsmore on this subject, and hope you will persue such measures as will enable you and him to recover the stolen property.

Warriors and Cheifs
of the Cherokee Nation.

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12th January 1797.

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Knoxville, 13th January 1797.

Sir: Mr. Abraham Martin on his way to Cumberland, near South West point, lost a black horse, four white legs nearly to the hams, a bald face, near five feet high, if any brands not remembered.

Mr. Martin is of the opinion he was stolen by the indians, as he followed the tracks to one of their old crossing places; please to make inquiries in the nation and obtain him if possible.

Silas Dinsmore, esquire,
Agent to the Cherokees

Knoxville, 13th January 1797.

Sir: For some time past much of my attention has been engaged to provide ample and permanent protection to our frontiers, for which purpose two full and complete companies of regular troops well officer'd has arrived at this place; and two more is expected by the spring of the year, to be stationed at such places as will be thought most useful and conducive to the protection of this State. Under these regulations and arrangements, I have my firm and sincere hopes our country will enjoy perfect peace and safety.

I have also the strongest assurances that the President of the United States is perfectly disposed to grant us every protection that may be necessary and adequate to our defence and security.

Under these promising and flattering prospects of our affairs, in our embryo situation, give me leave to offer you and my country my congratulations, hoping the time is already approaching when peace, oppulance, numbers and our local advantages will characterize the State of Tennessee.

Circular. To the several
Colonels in Mero District

Knoxville, 17th January 1797.

Sir: Since my last nothing of material moment excepting that several waggons on the road through the wilderness to Cumberland have been plundered by the indians and some of them left without a horse, supposed to be done by the Cherokees.

The Agent to the Cherokees has complained about settlements being made as low down as the Tennessee, on which subject I to him replied, a copy of which is enclosed for your information; should anything on that head be sent forward to the department of war it will elucidate in some measure the circumstances attending the matter, and you will take such measures as in your wisdom,

will best promote the interest of the State. I wish the line could be extended to the Tennessee.

It has for some time been reported that one indian was killed and another wounded on the waters of Clinch; I hope the report is not true, and I am induced so to believe from this reason, that neither the indians nor Agent have complained to me on the occasion.

Our post rider has several times been disappointed in meeting with and recieving in order the mail at Abbingdon, which neglect may prove very injurious to us. A letter from the department of war to the executive of this state dated 13th August last only arrived here on the 11th instant, brought by Mr. John Deaderick from Cumberland; another from same department dated 29th September came by our post a few days before. How these irregularities happen I am at a loss to know; it is not the first time letters directed to me at this place from Philadelphia has went round by the way of Cumberland, and some of them came forward with a broken seal. I hope you will please acquaint the Post Master General of such irregularities, in order that the defect may be remedied.

Captains Wade's and Sparks's companies²⁷ have arrived neither of them compleat, if no more is sent, these will be inadequate to the protection of our frontiers, and the defect ought to be supplied by militia; three companies of infantry and a troop of horse would answer the purpose, on which I have wrote the Secretary of war.

Circular, To the Honorable
Messrs Blount, Cocke, and Jackson
in Congress

Knoxville, 17th January 1797.

Sir: I had the honor of receiving your favours of 29th September by the mail on the 11th Instant and that of the 13th of August on the same day, the latter came to hand by Mr. John Deaderick from the district of Mero; from such circumstances it appears there is great delays and irregularities in conveying your dispatches to this place.

Captains Wade and Sparks have arrived, neither of the companies compleat. I would beg leave to mention, that three companies of infantry and a troop of horse, in my opinion, would not be more than adequate. The valuable consequences that would result from cavalry being employed in addition to the infantry would ensure the safety of the frontiers. The very appearance of well

²⁷ Capts. John Wade and Richard Sparks. The latter married Ruth, daughter of Gov. Sevier, June 29, 1797.

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I have continued the militia guard at fort Blount to remain there until relieved by regular troops.

Several families on the road to Cumberland through the wilderness have had their horses stolen and waggons plundered by the indians. I have wrote the Agent and Cheifs on the occasion, and have my hopes they will put a stop to any farther robberies being committed of the kind.

I shall endeavour to prevent encroachments on the land reserved to the indians for their hunting grounds, altho as in a former letter, I observed to you, it will be difficult to accomplish, and will require time and address, nevertheless have no doubt I shall effect it without having recourse to any violent and coercive means.

Honorable James McHenry,
Secretary of war

Knoxville, 17th January 1797.

Sir: Several times our post rider has been disappointed by not meeting with and receiving the mail at Abbingdon; delays and irregularities too often happen in same quarter.²⁸ A letter from the department of war, dated August 13th, only arrived here on the 11th Instant; came round by the way of Cumberland, and by the hand of Mr. John Deaderick, as a private conveyance; another from the same department, of the 29th September, brought by the mail on the same day. Several other failures in letters to and from this place, has taken place. I have taken the liberty to give you a short sketch of the foregoing circumstances, in order that you may be able to take measures for remedying the defect, lest it should prove more prejudicial and injurious to the public, and to individuals.

The Post Master General
of the United States.

²⁸ In the early days letters were sent by "express"—private messengers—or by merchants and traders going to or returning from markets in the East or on seaboard. Then came private contractors who established post-routes. John Chisholm in the latter part of 1792 established such a route from Knoxville to Abingdon, Va., by way of Greeneville and Jonesborough, with return trip by way of Sullivan Court House (Blountville) and Rogersville. *Ante*, p.—. In 1794, the Postmaster General let a contract in behalf of the national government for carriage of the mails over the first-named route. Mails left Knoxville on alternate Saturdays at 6 o'clock in the morning and arrived at Abingdon 6 o'clock Tuesday afternoon. *Knoxville Gazette*, of July 31, 1794. In 1792 a public or official route was established between Abingdon and Rogersville. *Ib.*, of Dec. 12, 1792.