WASHINGTON'S RELATIONS TO TENNESSEE AND KENTUCKY*

By Samuel M. Wilson

This year of grace, which marks the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Washington, and upon which we have just entered, will be signaled by magnificent, multitudinous, and diversified celebrations throughout the United States and the world, designed to commemorate the natal day of the greatest of Americans and to revive our knowledge and appreciation of his character, his service to mankind, and his worth as a man.

After the somewhat artificial and formal fashion of the period in which George Washington fulfilled his destiny, the portraits drawn of him in his later life and those which appeared in profusion in the years following his death, were characterized by an austerity of excessive veneration in the mind of the artist, and the true personality of "The Father of His Country" was concealed, if not distorted, by an air of remoteness.

No American was ever more perfectly endowed with native nobleness and dignity, but modesty bordering upon diffidence and a total absence of affectation were also prominent traits of his character, and nothing could have been more foreign to his wish than that, to his contemporary or future fellow-countrymen, he should be represented as a detached, unapproachable, and bloodless mortal, possessing and exhibiting the attributes of divinity. Washington in the role or posture of a demi-god is not only unnatural and unbecoming to the man, but it is precisely the posture and the role in which he, above all others, would have refused to exhibit himself. Artists and biographers of an earlier age have too often done Washington an injustice and his fellow-men a disservice; but happily, more recent views and estimates have tended to correct the false impressions created by the extravagant worship or sycophantic adulation of these ever-zealous devotees.

*This address was delivered at the annual banquet of the Society at the Andrew Johnson Hotel in Knoxville, January 8, 1932.
It is not the purpose of this paper to provide or to attempt to provide a new or full-length portrait of Washington which shall be true to life and which might serve to place the man in a faultless perspective; but an exposition of a single aspect of his many-sided nature and of his variform activities in the early West, which illustrate that single aspect, may not be useless in helping us to form a just and more reasonable and more satisfying notion of what this greatest of Americans was like. Hence this paper is offered as a slight contribution toward a more comprehensive and adequate treatment of the subject.

Let me begin by reminding you of the familiar bonds by which the sister states of Kentucky and Tennessee are linked to the life of Washington. During his first term as President, and on the 4th day of February, 1791, Washington signed the act of Congress by which Kentucky was granted admission to co-equal fellowship in the Federal Union. This act became effective on June 1, 1792. In his second term as President, on June 1, 1796, Washington signed the act of Congress admitting Tennessee into the Union upon an equal footing with the original States.

These were not the earliest official dealings of our first President with either of the twin states, for, in the case of Kentucky, Washington had, on the 29th of September, 1789, signed and issued on Honorable Harry Innes a commission constituting him the Judge of the United States Court for the District of Kentucky, and, in the case of Tennessee, on August 7, 1790, Honorable William Blount, one of the "Signers" of the Federal Constitution, who, as a delegate from North Carolina, had served and associated with Washington in the famous Convention of 1787, received his commission, duly signed by the President, as Governor of the "Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio". North Carolina, as you know, did not ratify and adopt the Constitution until December 22, 1790, several months after the new government had gone into operation. In the first year of the new national government, North Carolina passed an "Act for the purpose of ceding to the United States of America certain western lands therein described", and, in conformity with one of the provisions of this act, a deed to the United States, in the words of the cession act, was executed on February 25, 1790. On the 2nd of April, of the same year, the deed of cession was accepted by Congress in an act, which Washington, as President, signed, and a supplementary act of May 26, 1790, he also signed, and an ordinance for the government of the ceded territory was passed on August 7, 1790.
Washington's Relations to Tennessee and Kentucky

which he likewise signed. Doubtless other transactions of an official character were negotiated between Tennessee, both as territory and as state, and the first President of the United States, as there were other official transactions between him and Kentucky, both as district and as state, but the instances here mentioned will suffice to show how early and immediate were the contacts of Washington with both Tennessee and Kentucky during his tenure of the office of Chief Magistrate of the Republic. If he was not, in strictness, the father of these first-born political sovereignties of the early West, at least he presided as accoucheur at their births and godfather at their christening. Quite fittingly, therefore, the first celebration of Washington's birthday in Tennessee appears to have been held in Knoxville on February 22, 1793, on which occasion, we are told, the only toast drunk was: "Health and long life to the President!"

It is, of course, quite well known that the eyes of Washington, as a youth, were turned intently toward the west. Some years before he attained his majority, he entered the service of his great and good friend, Lord Thomas Fairfax, as a surveyor and, in the course of that service, explored, surveyed, and mapped considerable tracts of wild land on the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge and across that range westward as far as the foot-hills of the Alleghenies. As successor to his brothers, Lawrence Washington and Augustine Washington, he became a co-partner in the famous Ohio Company of Virginia, which was originally projected in 1748, and, about 1763, he joined in forming another land company, the Mississippi Company of Associates. On behalf of himself and others of his comrades of the French and Indian War, he sought to make good the bounty warrants for military service, which had been pledged in 1754 by Governor Dinwiddie to the volunteers in the Virginia regiments as an inducement to enlistment, and which were confirmed by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763. Washington had not yet reached his twenty-second birthday, when, in 1753, he was despatched by the royal governor of Virginia to carry important messages to the French commandant at Fort Le Boeuf, on the upper waters of the Allegheny River, near the present Waterford, Pennsylvania. Captain Christopher Gist, who accompanied him as pilot on this dangerous mission (with Jacob Van Braam, an old Dutch friend of the Washingtons, as interpreter), had previously visited the Ohio Country as agent and scout for the Ohio Company of Virginia, and no doubt from Gist, Washington obtained his first authentic and dependable account of the region bordering the Ohio
River. His report of this mission was published in 1754, both in this country and in England. From boyhood to old age, Washington was constantly lured by the West and his interest was intelligent, sympathetic, and lasting.

Turning for a moment from consideration of the evidences of Washington's own liking for the West and his repeated projects and journeys in that direction, let us note how Tennessee and Kentucky responded to these overtures and the inveterate fondness for the "Western Waters" which they betokened.

First among all the states, Virginia, it is believed, first honored the name of Washington by applying it to that huge country which originally embraced the major portion of Southwest Virginia and lay adjacent to what was shortly afterwards known as Washington county, North Carolina, since divided into numerous counties of lesser size, within the jurisdiction of Tennessee. Washington county, Virginia, was created December 6, 1776, out of Fincastle county, at the same time that Montgomery and Kentucky counties were formed from the same imperial domain. It was the merest accident that the county which then acquired the name of Kentucky did not receive instead the name of Washington, and, if that had occurred, there can be little doubt that it would have been retained as the permanent designation of the entire region embraced within the limits of the parent county, and the state of Kentucky would today be the state of Washington, and the state by that name on the Pacific coast would have borne a different name. The state of Washington, I may here remark, owes its name to a Kentuckian. Before becoming a state of the Union, in 1889, it was organized as a territory by an act of Congress passed March 2, 1853. At that time one of the Representatives in Congress from Kentucky was Honorable Richard H. Stanton. While the act was under consideration and before its passage, it was proposed therein to call the new territory "Columbia," but, upon motion of Judge Stanton, the name Columbia was stricken out and that of Washington substituted.

Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina were not far behind Old Virginia in creating new counties on their westernmost frontiers by the name of Washington.* Having lost the name in

* My friend, Judge Samuel C. Williams, the eminent jurist and historian of Johnson City, Tennessee, has pointed out that, in 1776 and previous to the creation of a Washington county by Virginia or any of the other American commonwealths, the Watauga Association, of East Tennessee, had petitioned the government of North Carolina for recognition as a constituent political appendage of the Old North State and a legal subdivision thereof under the name of "Washington District." This, it seems, was the first time the name of Washington was ever proposed as a designation for any civil or political establishment.
1776, almost by chance, Kentucky did not begin to boast a Washington county in her midst until the year 1792, but Washington county, created in that year out of Nelson county, was the very first of the new counties formed by Kentucky after it became a state. Seven years previously, however, the picturesque and historic little town of Washington was laid out in what was then a part of Bourbon (now Mason) county, Ky., and in the following year (1788) it was regularly constituted as a town by the General Assembly of Virginia.

Washington county, formed from parts of Wilkes and Burke counties, was established by North Carolina in November, 1777. Like its contemporary counties in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, the mighty and majestic county of Washington, North Carolina, of almost illimitable extent when originally created, has been dwarfed by repeated dismemberment, until it now retains but a fraction of its primitive lordly dimensions and political sway. But with Jonesboro (originally Washington Court-House) left to it as its ancient county seat and hallowed as that town and vicinity are by indissoluble association with the deeds and memory of Tennessee's beloved hero, the renowned John Sevier, Washington county, Tennessee, preserves a pre-eminence and prestige which are immortal. In 1784, the District of Morgan was divided and the counties of Washington, Sullivan, Davidson, and Greene were constituted the "District of Washington", with appropriate judicial tribunals and functionaries.

The formation and activities of the enterprising Transylvania Company, which, in March, 1775, consummated at Fort Watauga a colossal bargain or treaty with the Cherokee, injected a new and formidable factor into the beginnings of both Tennessee and Kentucky, and, therefore when the pioneer founders and foster-fathers of Kentucky set about establishing a school of learning in the backwoods of Virginia, they not unnaturally adopted the name of "Transylvania" for this infant school, not in 1780, when the institution was first launched, but three years later, in 1783, when it was reorganized and renewed efforts were put forth to set it in motion. The pioneers of education in East Tennessee were apparently more forward in their devotion to the name of Washington, however, for their first institution of collegiate grade, which owes its paternity to that capable and consecrated servant of God and man, Rev. Samuel Doak, was gratefully called "Washington College" at the date of its incorporation, on July 8, 1795, by the government of the Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio. The
long-standing controversy over the question as to whether "Father" Doak’s "Washington College" or Kentucky’s "Transylvania Seminary" was the very first institution of higher learning west of the Allegheny Mountains, possibly admits of contradictory solutions, depending not so much upon divergent viewpoints as upon the varying tests or criteria which may be applied to the problem. Someone has lately said, quite sapiently, that "the more esoteric geometries are logical artifices," and so it may be that our answers to the much-debated question of priority hinge, in the final analysis, upon the "logical artifices" we employ in support of the preferred hypothesis.

If the digression may be permitted, the case, nevertheless, when fairly analyzed, it seems to me, may be stated thus: A seminary or school of elementary instruction in Kentucky was definitely provided for by the Virginia Assembly in May, 1780. This Act recited:

"It being the interest of this Commonwealth always to promote and encourage every design which may tend to the improvement of the mind and the diffusion of useful knowledge even among its most remote citizens whose situation a barbarous neighbourhood and a savage intercourse might otherwise render unfriendly to science," there is appropriated 8,000 acres of escheated lands, within the County of Kentucky, "as a free donation from this Commonwealth for the purpose of a publick school or seminary of learning, to be erected within the said county as soon as the circumstances of the county and the state of its funds will admit."

At about the same time, it is said, Samuel Doak opened a private school of his own in the Holston settlement, at or near the confluence of the Watauga with the Holston. A private school was opened at Lexington, Kentucky, at about the same time, by John McKinney, popularly known as "Wildcat" McKinney, and instruction had been given by Joseph Doniphan at Boonesborough and Ann Poage McGinty at Harrodsburg even before this. John Filson taught in Lexington in 1782, and, in the same year, Isaac Wilson, of Philadelphia College, established the Lexington Grammar School. The "Seminary" for Kentucky, projected by Virginia in 1780, did not get under way immediately, and in May, 1783, a new act of incorporation was passed, by which the name "Transylvania Seminary" was, for the first time, affixed to the embryonic nursery of science and literature. The work of the seminary was not actually organized until November 4, 1784, when pupils were received and a "Century" of "near the dozen" was not far from overcrowding the campus. It is only occasional reference to Kentucky had gone to 1782 until myxt "Academy" and the "centenarians" to collegiate degree as late as 1799.

Rev. Samuel Martin Academy, we are told, in the early years of the state of Franklin, Kentucky became "the first college in the Mississippi Valley," was the first for, although such Alleghenies," a broad range of our hundred miles, by the way of the well-known Princeton College, seminary schools in the east and Saint Louis, New Orleans, years before the building of Ann Street, Boonesborough, and Rice, at Cincinnati.

More vital is the fact of the Seminary for Kentucky, in May, 1783, are to the Commonwealth, in the Seminary was, in 1782, only 1782; for 1784, substantially 1783; Martin in Mecklen-
question as to whether “Father” Kentucky’s “Transylvania Seminary” of higher learning west of the Alleghenies, was an attempt on the part of contradictory solutions, derived from viewpoint as to how to apply the varied means supplied to the problem. Some say that “the more esoteric geometrics,” may be that our answers to this problem hinge, in the final analysis, upon the test of support of the preferred notion.

Undoubtedly, the case, nevertheless, when stated thus: A seminary or college was definitely provided for in Kentucky by 1780. This Act recited that the Commonwealth always to do what may tend to the diffusion of useful knowledge among citizens whose situation is such that “savage intercourse might ensue.” There is no specific name given, within the County of Franklin, from which this Commonwealth other than a seminary or college was as early as 1769. The state of its funds will be appreciated.

Samuel Doak opened a prison settlement, at or near the Holston. A private school at the same time, by “Wildcat” McKinney, and John Doniphan at Boonesborough even before this. In May, 1783, a school was established by which the name “Transylvania Seminary” was affixed to the embryonic work of the seminary was 4, 1784, when pupils were received and grammar school instruction was regularly provided “near the dwelling” of “Father” David Rice, in Lincoln county, not far from the present city of Danville. Thence forward, with only occasional and temporary intermissions, the work of Transylvania had gone on until this day. It remained a “Seminary” from 1780 until 1798, when it was consolidated with “Kentucky Academy” and transformed into “Transylvania University.” “Commencements” were held and students were graduated, but no collegiate degrees appear to have been conferred by Transylvania prior to 1799.

Rev. Samuel Doak’s private school of 1780 or thereabouts was incorporated by the legislature of North Carolina in April, 1783, as Martin Academy. Two years later, i.e. in 1785, a second charter, we are told, was obtained from the legislature of the ephemeral state of Franklin. Then, after the lapse of a decade, Martin Academy became Washington College, whose proud boast it is that it was “the first school in Tennessee and the first literary institution in the Mississippi Valley.” Now, a possible though somewhat tenuous distinction in favor of Transylvania may be this: that it was the first institution of higher learning west of the Alleghenies, for, although Washington College was west of a portion of the Alleghenies, it was hardly westward of the onermost ridges of that broad range of mountains. Then, too, Transylvania was some two hundred miles nearer the majestic Father of Waters, the great waterway of the mid-continent, than Washington College. Neither Washington College nor Transylvania Seminary antedated English grammar schools in Western Pennsylvania and French schools at Detroit and Saint Louis, beyond the Mississippi; and Spanish schools at New Orleans, in the Mississippi Delta, certainly flourished some years before the English schools of “Father” Doak on the Holston, of Ann Poage McGinty at Harrodsburg, of Joseph Doniphan at Boonesborough, of John McKinney, at Lexington, and of “Father” Rice, at Crow’s Station or Danville, came into existence.

More vital distinction between the Transylvania Seminary foundation of May, 1783, and the Martin Academy foundation of April, 1783, are to be found in three significant facts, viz., Martin Academy was, in effect, declared a private school, whereas Transylvania Seminary was denominated a public school; no endowment was provided for Martin Academy, whereas Transylvania Seminary was substantially endowed in 1780 and this endowment was increased in 1783; Martin Academy, like its prototype, Liberty Hall Academy, in Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, was given no power to
confer degrees, whereas the collegiate status of Transylvania Seminary was explicitly set forth in the amendatory act of May, 1783. This last point may better be brought out by comparing the grant of powers in the respective charters. Thus, in the act creating Martin Academy, it is provided that its president and trustees "shall have, hold, exercise and enjoy all the powers, authorities and privileges which the president and trustees of Liberty Hall, in the county of Mecklenburg, possess and are invested with by virtue of said Act for their incorporation, passed the 9th day of May, 1777". Turning to this last-mentioned act, we find it provides that the president and trustees, or a majority of them, shall be authorized "to give Certificates to such students as shall leave the said Academy, certifying their literary Merit, and the Progress they shall have made in useful knowledge, whether it be in learned Languages, Arts or Sciences, or all of them". The language of the Transylvania Seminary charter of May, 1783, on the other hand, is much more pretentious, and unmistakably defines the "Seminary" as an institution of higher learning and of collegiate grade. Section X of the Act reads as follows:

And be it further enacted, That the said trustees shall, once at their stated session in every year, and again on any convenient time, either on or before their second stated session in the same year, in the presence of as many gentlemen of liberal education as may choose to attend, cause all the students in the said seminary to be carefully examined by the professors and masters of the same, on the several branches of learning which they have respectively studied, that the fidelity of the teachers, and the diligence of their pupils may appear; and at the second stated session aforesaid, the president in open assembly shall, as has been accustomed in like cases, confer by diploma, signed by the president and any five or more of the trustees, the degrees of Bachelor or Master of Arts, upon all such students, if there be as the said trustees, with the concurrence of a majority of the professors shall adjudge to have merited the honors of the seminary, by their virtue and erudition; and at the same time confer any honorary degrees which, with the like advice, shall be adjudged to other gentlemen on account of special merit.

The "Act for the Union of the Transylvania Seminary and Kentucky Academy", of December 22, 1798, by which Transylvania University came into being, does not in any way alter or enlarge

the collegiate character, but simply states that is said the degrees which on the 17th day of August were conferred by an institution. The Transylvania diploma reads:

Transylvania University

For yons possess by the red forces of like condition or temporaneous. There is grace to say that the glow of noon-tide was college from unseemly magnanimity and their splendor being mutual Amity and controversy. Pose different service in The limbo of Washington, Tennessee, Tennessee. Enumerate Washington of the "West" which went Spain or England called "Spanish Enterprise". With respect
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The collegiate status of Transylvania Seminary, long recognized in the amendmentary act of May, 1783, was brought about by comparing the grant of academic institutions. Thus, in the act creating the college, the president and trustees were invested with the powers, authorities, and responsibilities of Liberty Hall, a private institution. As the 9th day of May, 1783, the act was passed, it provides that the majority of them, shall be authorized to confer degrees as they may choose to attend. The language of the Transylvania Seminary, on the other hand, is much more formal and less elegant. The “Seminary” is an institution of a different grade. Section X of the Act reads:

That the said trustees shall, in every year, and again on the day or before their second stated session, be present of as many gentlemen as they may choose to attend, cause all students to be carefully examined of the same, on the several subjects of study, and the diligence of their studies and the second stated session aforesaid shall, as has been already mentioned, be judged to have merited their virtue and erudition; and any honorary degrees which, after adjudge to other gentlemen

Transylvania Seminary and Kentucky, 1798, by which Transylvania Seminary was not in any way affect or enlarge the collegiate powers theretofore vested in Transylvania Seminary, but simply recognizes, retains, and perpetuates those powers. It is said the first college exhibition in the western country was held on the 17th October, 1796, at Washington College, and that degrees were conferred on that same year, upon two graduates of this institution. As yet, no evidence has been found by the writer that Transylvania Seminary ever conferred any academic degree by diploma regularly granted prior to 1799. Potentially, therefore, Transylvania preceded Washington College, but in practice the Tennessee institution holds the lead.

For myself, however, the question of primacy in point of time possesses but slight interest. I am far more interested in the kindred forces which, operating at practically the same period and under like conditions in the life of the several frontiers, produced contemporaneously, if not simultaneously, substantially the same results. There is glory enough for all concerned, and I may be permitted to say that the friends and admirers of Old Transylvania rejoice in the glow of the golden morning and the splendor of the brilliant noon-tide which have shone upon the pathway of Washington College from its genesis to its full-orbed maturity. Not in a spirit of unseemly rivalry or ill-natured contention, but in the spirit of true magnanimity, we wish to see these two noble institutions maintain their splendid traditions and expand their usefulness, while exchanging mutual felicitations and forever cherishing mutual good will. Amity and reciprocal concessions may not positively settle ancient controversies or banish rivalry, but they will moderate debate, compose differences and lead to united and harmonious and beneficent service in the cause of education and universal enlightenment.

The limits of the hour will not permit extended reference to Washington’s intimate connection with Indian affairs as related to Tennessee, and more especially to the Cherokee and Chickasaw of Tennessee. Nor is it necessary, for the purposes of this address, to enumerate the occasions on which the advice or intervention of Washington was sought by those arch-patriots among the pioneers of the “Western Waters,” who looked with disfavor on the intrigues which went on both in Tennessee and Kentucky in the interest of Spain or France or, finally, of Great Britain. The story of the so-called “Spanish Conspiracy,” as it affected Kentucky and Tennessee, has been rehearsed at full length by various writers, and the “French Enterprise,” engineered by Citizen Genet, has likewise received due attention at the hands of historians both of Tennessee and Kentucky. With respect to the Genet episode, Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey, the gifted
chronicler and interpreter of Tennessee's earliest annals, has dis-
played his insight and candor by remarking that "the intrigue of
M. Genet was successful in unveiling, rather than in producing, a
spirit of serious disaffection on the part of the people of the West
with the Federal Administration". Washington was not only keen-
ly interested in all that went on in relation to these abortive move-
ments of a restless and unruly element, but through his personal and
official contacts with friends in Kentucky and Tennessee, he kept
himself constantly advised concerning them, and yet he preserved
his wonted balance and clear-headed sense of proportion, and frank-
ly sympathized with, even where he could not approve, the griev-
ances and complaints of the restive borderers. Of the soldiers who
had served with Washington, on the Braddock campaign or under
him in the Continental Army, many veterans, both officers and pri-
vates, settled in Kentucky and Tennessee after the close of the Revo-
lution.

The intervention of the General Government to allay the hostility
and arrest the periodical incursions of the Indian tribes north of the
Ohio into the Kentucky and Tennessee country, the organization of
boards of war and the embodying of troops for the protection of
the two states, the efforts to pacify the Southern tribes and the
negotiation of treaties with the Choctaw, Creeks, Chickasaw, and
Cherokee, which went on with slight disruption between 1789 and
1795, all took place during the administration of Washington as
President, and these and other relevant activities, both civil and
military, excited the personal solicitude and received the constant
watchcare of this faithful guardian of American rights and liberties.
The successive expeditions of Generals Harmer, Scott, Wilkinson,
St. Clair, and Wayne, all originated directly or indirectly with the
War Department of the United States, and Washington, as Com-
mander-in-Chief, was responsible for the orders that brought these
campaigns of retaliation and conquest into being. The winning
of the Battle of the Fallen Timber, (otherwise known as the Battle
of the Rapids of the Maumee or Miami of the Lakes,) by "Mad"
Anthony Wayne, on August 20, 1794, virtually ended the peren-
nial Indian menace and the Treaty of Fort Greeneville, consum-
mated on August 3, 1795, released the harassed settlers of Tennes-
see and Kentucky from further serious molestation by the red-skin-
ned savages of the Northwest.

After his retirement from the Presidency and when once again he
was free to enjoy the repose of Mount Vernon and to turn his
thoughts unreservedly to his own private affairs, we find Washin-
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renewing his connection with the western country. Even

before he had left the Presidency, traces of his reviving interest are

discoverable. Thus, under date of January 17, 1795, Washington

wrote from Philadelphia to one Charles Morgan, then a resident

of Washington County, Pennsylvania, as follows:

Your letter of the 26th of November came safe (but

not expeditiously) to hand.

I hope Colo. Cannon has, long ere this, surrendered to

you, all the papers respecting my business, which are in

his possession; together with a full and complete state-

ment of what is due to me either from the tenants, or

from himself, up to the period of your taking the manage-

ment of it yourself, and that you will be able without fur-

her procrastination or difficulty, to collect the amount of

what may be found due to me from the close of the

As I am more inclined to sell than to rent the lands I

hold on the Western waters, and giving leases, although

for a short term, may be a hindrance to the former. I

would have you rent from year to year only.—I have no

doubt of obtaining what I ask for the tract in Washington

Cty. (County), (giving credit)—viz.—four dollars an acre;

the number of full-handed emigrants that are pouring into

this country from all quarters owing to the disturbed

state of Europe—and the quantity of money brought

by them, and sent over by others, to be vested in lands

have given an astonishing start to the price of this article.

If therefore I do not sell soon on the terms I have just

mentioned I shall raise my price.

If I do not sell my lands on the Ohio & Great Kan-

hawa in a lump—or at least by whole tracts, they will

not be sold at all, by me.—These will fetch me fifty pr.

ct. more at this time than I could have sold them for

two years ago.

Charles Morgan, to whom the above letter was written, was proba-

bly a son or near relative of General Daniel Morgan, under whom

he served as a soldier during the Revolution. He also served un-

under General George Rogers Clark on the Illinois and Wabash

campaigns. With his brother, John Morgan, who seems to have

been killed by the Indians prior to the year 1780, Charles Morgan

came to Kentucky with Captain Hancock Lee, the surveyor for

the Ohio Company of Virginia, in May-June, 1775. As heir-at-law
of his brother John, Charles Morgan applied for and was granted, on January 28, 1780, by the Virginia Land Commissioners, a certificate for a pre-emption of 1,000 acres of land in the District of Kentucky "on account of marking & improving the same in the year, 1776, lying on the most easterly branch of Stoner's Fork of Licking Creek (River), near the head thereof, including a Spring known by the name of John Morgan's Spring & a Cabin". Charles Morgan came to Kentucky, after the close of the Revolution, it seems, and settled in Clark county, purchasing a large body of land on the Kentucky River, at the mouth of Howard's Lower Creek. His experience qualified him for the duties of a land agent, and doubtless he was recommended to Washington for this appointment by General Morgan. Charles Morgan was one of the party who accompanied Washington from Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) on his voyage down the Ohio, in October, 1770. Under date of October 20, 1770, Washington notes that "We embarked in a large Canoe with sufficient store of provisions and necessaries and the following persons (besides Dr. Craik and myself) to wit: Captain (William) Crawford, Joseph Nicholson, Robert Bell, William Harrison, Charles Morgan, Daniel Reardon, a boy of Captain Crawford's, and the Indians who were in a canoe by themselves". Writing to Presley Neville, of Pittsburgh, from Philadelphia, on June 16, 1794, relative to his lands in Pennsylvania, particularly those on Miller's Run of Chartier Creek, Washington said:

Inclosed is a blank power, authorizing Mr. Charles Morgan, or any other with whose name you shall fill it, to collect the rents arising from my land in Fayette and Washington counties in this State, together with such arrearages as may be due for the preceding years, if any there be. Another blank is also left, which I pray you to fill up with the percentage to be allowed as a compensation for the trouble and expense of collection. The inducements to this are, first, because I do not recollect what Colonel Cannon (i.e. Col. John Cannon, the founder of Cannonsburg, Pa.) has been allowed for his services; and, secondly, because there is no invariable allowance established, places and circumstances varying it.

In this letter to Presley Neville, Washington gives vent to a sense of disillusionment with respect to his land ventures in the West, saying: "From the experience of many years, I have found distant property in land more pregnant of perplexities than profit. It became necessary later to resort to litigation to oust stubborn
Morgan applied for and was granted, Virginia Land Commissioners, a certain tract of land in the District of Kentucky, containing 1,000 acres, on the branch of Stoner's Fork of Lick Creek, and including a Spring, known as Spring's Spring & a Cabin. Charles Washington, close to the close of the Revolution, it seems, having a large body of land on the bank of Howard's Lower Creek. His duties of a land agent, and doubtless for this appointment by General Washington, was one of the party who went to Pittsburg (Pittsburgh) on his voyage in 1770. Under date of October 30th, 1770, "We embarked in a large Canoe, with necessary stores and the following men: Captain (William) Bell, William Harrison, Charles Elkins, of Captain Crawford's, and the carrying party." Writing to Presley Elizalde, on June 16, 1794, relative to the lands on Miller's Run of Kentucky, he authorize Mr. Charles Morris, whose name you shall fill in, to take any land in Fayette and Washington Counties together with such arrearages of years, if any there be, which I pray you to fill in, and provide for as a compensation of collection. Thejejus I do not recollect what the name Cannon, the founder of the town of Knoxville, allowed for his services; and, without any variable, it is not varying.

Morgan Washington gives vent to a form of his land ventures in the expression, "in many years, I have found more perplexities than profit," and to litigation to oust stubborn squatters from these Miller's Run lands. Washington made a visit to these lands in September, 1784. On June 1, 1796, he sold the entire tract, containing by survey 2,813 acres, to his local agent, Matthew Ritchie. At that time it appears it was already subdivided into thirteen farms.

Although, in his letter to Morgan, of January 17, 1795, Washington manifested no disposition to acquire any more lands in the Ohio Valley, we know from indisputable records that this is precisely what he did in the closing years of his life. The land-hunger, with which Americans everywhere were possessed, remained a ruling passion with Washington even unto death. In fact, but a little more than a year before his death, Washington concluded a purchase from General Henry (“Light-Horse Harry”) Lee, of “Stratford”, Westmoreland county, Virginia, by a deed of November 5, 1798, of two tracts of land in Kentucky, one of 3,000 acres and the other of 2,000 acres. The original contract for these lands was made on December 9, 1788, some ten years before the final consummation of the trade. These lands were sold by General Lee at 500 pounds or 600 pounds, and Washington gave in exchange for them a valuable thoroughbred stallion, called "Magnolia", which General Lee immediately shipped to South Carolina. The lands were located on Rough Creek, a tributary of Green River, and were thought to be valuable for the iron ore which they contained, but the deposits subsequently proved to be disappointing.

Filson’s “Map of Kentucke” of 1784, which had been dedicated by the cartographer to “His Excellency George Washington, late Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, and with which Washington was no doubt quite familiar, bore witness to the presence of an “Abundance of Iron Ore” in the locality drained by the waters of Rough Creek. But with his usual prudence, Washington was not disposed to proceed headlong with his bargain, and in 1797, through a personal examination of the lands by General Alexander Spotswood, he sought to acquire explicit information as to their situation and value. From Spotswood’s report, Washington seems to have been impressed with “the general good quality of the land” and the fact, (as he himself records it,) that “there is a valuable Bank of Iron Ore thereon”, and the schedule attached to his will, in which these comments occur, also mentions the important fact that Rough Creek, “a branch of Green River affords ample water for Furnaces and forges”. As a matter of fact, from a very early day, iron has been more or less successfully mined and smelted in
that section of Kentucky which embraces the Washington lands in Grayson county, but there is no evidence as yet discovered to show that any ore, of merchantable quantity or quality, was ever extracted from the deposits of the mineral on these particular lands. They are now and have always been used mainly, if not exclusively, for agricultural purposes, and no town of any size or consequence has ever been built within their boundaries. Washington still owned them at his death, and they passed under provisions of his last will.

In the month of June, 1795, while the Federal Government was still located in Philadelphia, Rev. James Blythe, as agent for the "Kentucky Academy", solicited and obtained a donation for the infant institution of $100.00 in cash from President Washington, as did from Vice-President John Adams and several other dignitaries of the national government, and a number of prominent private citizens. The original parchment subscription list, bearing the faded and now undecipherable autograph of President Washington, is still preserved among the archives of Transylvania University at Lexington. It is recorded that the President received Dr. Blythe with great courtesy and expressed his warm interest in the cause of popular education. By Doctor Blythe's report, he collected as the result of his canvass for funds in the East, in the summer of 1795, a total of $2,000 in cash and about an equal amount in value of books.

As is well known, General Washington refused to accept any pecuniary or other emoluments for his services in the War of the Revolution, and, while many other officers and privates were granted bounty lands for such services, Washington resolutely abstained from profiting by any such gratuity. To his nephew, Lieutenant George Washington, however, a warrant, No. 135, was issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia, on February 20, 1783, for 2,666 & 2-3 acres, "in consideration of his services for three years as a Lieutenant in the Virginia Line". The full name of this young soldier was George Augustine Washington. He managed the Mount Vernon estate for Washington during the latter's second term as President. His record may be found in Saffell's Records of the Revolutionary War, in Eckenrode's List of Revolutionary Soldiers of Virginia, and in Heitman's Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army, During the War of the Revolution. He died in February, 1793, and, in the division of General Washington's lands on the Great Kanawha River, the heirs of Lieutenant George A. Washington, who are expressly mentioned in Washing-
embraces the Washington lands in evidence as yet discovered to show identity or quality, was ever extracted on these particular lands. They were mainly, if not exclusively, for a portion of any size or consequence has spreadaries. Washington still owned land under provisions of his last will, were allotted lot No. 12, containing 1,180 acres. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that when the patent for Washington's lands on the Great Kanawha, embracing 10,999 acres, was issued to him, on December 15, 1772, they lay in what was then Fincastle county, Virginia, (created out of Botetour in February, 1772, to commence December 1, 1772,) which wide-spread county, at the time, also included all of Kentucky. Other members of the Washington family also became interested at an early day in Kentucky lands.

In the Public Library, at Lexington, Kentucky, hangs a large oil painting, representing the Washington family group at Mount Vernon. This beautiful canvas is by the artist, Henry Inman, who copied it from the original well-known painting by Edward Savage. The Savage painting, now belonging to Mr. Thomas B. Clarke, was exhibited, in 1929, in the collection of famous portraits gathered by the Virginia Historical Society at "Virginia House", the home of Mr. Alexander W. Weddell, in Richmond, Virginia. The reproduction by Inman is owned by Mr. George B. Clay, of Lexington, Kentucky, who is a grandson of the Honorable Henry Clay, and it has an interesting history. This is revealed in a letter, written by the donor, Mr. James C. Johnston, a North Carolinian, to Henry Clay in 1844, and which reads as follows:

Edenton, N. Ca., 24 July, 1844.

My dear Sir:

I have employed Mr. Inman, an American artist of New York, to make a painting of the Washington Family, which I have not seen, but am informed is finished in a handsome style. It accompanies this letter.

May I beg the favor of you to present it with my best respects to Mrs. Clay as a mark of the high esteem I have for her character, particularly as the Patroness of Domestic Industry, while you are its great Patron.

I present this painting to her because I think there is a great similarity in her character to that of Mrs. Washington, who remained at Mount Vernon and attended to General Washington's domestic affairs while he was fighting to establish the Independence of our Country. So Mrs. Clay has devoted herself to your concerns at 'Ashland' while you have been fighting with the greatest mental energy to preserve that independence. But for Washington we might still have been colonies of Great Britain,
and but for you we should certainly have been her tributaries—and while, Sir, I esteem you more worthy to fill the seat of that great man as President than any successor he has had, so I know no one more worthy the place of Mrs. Washington than Mrs. Clay.

If she shall think the Painting worthy a place at ‘Ashland’, I shall be truly gratified and highly honored by its acceptance.

Here it may not be amiss to remind you that Lucretia Hart Clay, the wife of Henry Clay, was a daughter of Colonel Thomas Hart and his wife, Susanna Gray, daughter of Colonel John Gray, of North Carolina. Barbara Gray, the mother of Governor William Blount, was of the same family, and Governor Blount and Mrs. Clay were in consequence near cousins. In honor of Governor Blount, then governor of the Territory of the United States South of the River of Ohio, which later became the state of Tennessee, Blount College, chartered by the territorial legislature on September 10, 1794, was so named. It was, as you well know, the forerunner of the present University of Tennessee. Greeneville and Blount colleges, both chartered in 1794, antedated Washington College as colleges, but not as literary institutions. The “Kentucky Academy”, by the way, which in 1798 was merged with “Transylvania Seminary”, was chartered on December 12, 1794. The Blount Papers will, doubtless, furnish many proofs of the intimate official relations and frequent correspondence between President Washington and Governor Blount during the period when Tennessee occupied a territorial status. Many such indirect contacts are revealed in the manuscripts of Colonel David Henley, in the Calvin Morgan McElroy Collection of the Lawson McGhee Library, here in Knoxville.

I can cite but two examples to illustrate what I mean by “indirect contacts”. At my request, the secretary of the East Tennessee Historical Society has kindly brought to this meeting a contemporary printed copy of the Holston Treaty of July 2, 1791, concluded by Governor William Blount with the Cherokee Nation of Indians, together with Washington’s proclamation of November 11, 1791, announcing the ratification of the treaty. Writing to General Henry Knox, Secretary of War, on August 5, 1792, Washington, with that rare wisdom he always displayed, said:

I wish Governor Blount may have been able to terminate the conference which he was to have had at Nashville about the 25th of last month with the Cherokees, Chickasaws and Choctaws, to the mutual advantage and satisfac-
tion of all the parties concerned; but the difficulty of deciding between lawless settlers and greedy land speculators on one side, and the jealousy of the Indian nations and their banditti on the other, becomes more and more evident every day; and these, from the interference of the Spaniards, if the reports we have been true, and other causes, which are too evident to require specification, add not a little to our embarrassments.

A tribute to Washington, even more personal and impressive than the naming of Washington College in his honor, was paid him by Tennessee's redoubtable "Nolichucky Jack". In token of his admiration for the great soldier who was "first in war" as he was "first in peace", General John Sevier, to demonstrate that he was, more than all else, "first in the hearts of his countrymen", named his first son by his second marriage to "Bonny Kate" Sherrill, George Washington Sevier. This son, born on February 1, 1782, before the last guns of the Revolutionary conflict had ceased reverberating, called his first-born child and eldest son, George Washington Sevier. And, not to be outdone in loyalty to "Harry of the West" by the distinguished North Carolinian who had compared Clay to Washington, George Washington Sevier, the elder, named his eleventh child and youngest son, Henry Clay Sevier, in honor of Kentucky's favorite son.

From first to last, Washington was the land surveyor, par excellence. An illustration of this will be found in a letter he wrote to James Overton, in September, 1796, with respect to his appointment as surveyor general of the Northwest Territory. James Overton was a member of that family of Overtons, which has been notably prominent in both Tennessee and Kentucky from the earliest times. This letter, the original or duplicate of which is now owned by a resident of Lexington, Kentucky, reads as follows:

Philadelphia 12th Septr., 1796.

Dear Sir:

By a recurrence to the Acts of the last Session of Congress, you will find one for disposing of the ungranted lands No. Wt. of the Ohio,—and for appointing a Surveyor General for the purposes therein mentioned,—and you may have heard, that Mr. De Witt who was Geographer to the Army at the close of the War, after the decease of Mr. Erskine, and at present the Surveyor General of the State of New York, (a man of profound knowledge
in mathematics, and sufficiently skilled in astronomy,) was nominated to that office, and has declined the acceptance of it.

It is yet vacant;—and you have been mentioned to me as a Gentleman to whom it might be acceptable.

Without taking then a circuitous route to ascertain this fact, I shall apply immediately to yourself, for information;—and will frankly ask, because I am sure you will candidly answer (if the appointment should meet your wishes) whether your knowledge in mathematics, practical surveying, and so much of astronomy as is useful to a skilful exercise of the latter, for discovering the Latitude, Meridian, &c., now are, or easily could be made familiar to you.—These questions are propounded because affirmative qualifications are essential.

As the season & circumstances begin now to press for an appointment and as my continuance here, and the road I shall travel back to Virginia (for the purpose of returning with my family for the winter) are somewhat uncertain, I request the favor of you to put your answer to this letter under cover to the Secretary of State, who will be directed to open it and to fill up the blank Commission which I shall deposit in his office with your name, if you are disposed to accept it;—or with that of another Gentleman who is held in contemplation, if you do not.—You may if it is not too troublesome, address a duplicate to me at Mount Vernon, to remain in the Post Office at Alexandria, until called for.

Many of Washington's collateral relatives have lived in Kentucky; some are living there now. Honorable George Washington, a member of this family, was a delegate from the county of Campbell to the last constitutional convention of Kentucky, held in 1890-91, and was temporary chairman of that Convention. Heirlooms and keepsakes associated with the life and person of Washington are still religiously preserved in the families of his Kentucky kindred. No doubt the same may be said of many Tennesseans.

The present survey of Washington's contacts with Tennessee and Kentucky of necessity leaves much to be supplied. Important and illuminating incidents, as yet unknown to the writer or unmentioned herein, will doubtless be recalled by the reader, and
others of equal significance will be developed by research. If this imperfect exposition of the subject should lead to a more exhaustive, circumstantial, and satisfying narration of all the verifiable facts which attest the close relations of General Washington with the two states immediately concerned, the result cannot be other than most instructive and gratifying. Tennessee and Kentucky, as was happily observed by one of Washington’s successors, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, while possessing distinctive characteristics peculiarly their own, are more nearly alike than either is like any of the other states of the American Union; and it is not strange to find that Washington himself looked upon these pioneer commonwealths as virtually twin-born.

Bringing my paper to a close, let me venture the remark that, if in this year of the Washington Bi-Centennial, with its world-wide commemorations, a benediction could be pronounced upon the United States of America by their first President, I incline to think the words he might utter would take form somewhat like Charles Hanson Towne’s “Prayer for the Old Courage”:

Brave soldiers of the spirit, guard ye well
Mountain and fort and massive citadel:
But keep ye white forever—keep ye whole
The battlements of dream within the soul!