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At times, too, as in 1774, the pel-
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5: 72, p. 69).

NATHANIEL GIST, FATHER OF SEQUOYAH

BY SAMUEL C. WILLIAMS

The founder of the Gist family, of Maryland, was Christopher Gist, or Guest, who migrated from England and settled in Maryland on the south side of the Patapsco River in 1682, but removed in 1691 to Baltimore county. He married Edith Cromwell, of the family of the great Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England. Their son, Richard (1684-1741), was the father of Christopher Gist, who is known in history as an explorer of the West in 1750 and as a guide of young George Washington in the Ohio River region in 1753 to ascertain the strength of the French. His journal of the expedition is the foundation of much of the early history of the West.

Christopher Gist II married Sarah Howard in Maryland, where three sons were born to them. The first of these was Richard, born September 2, 1729, who was killed in the Battle of King's Mountain, 1780.¹ The second was Nathaniel, our subject, who was born October 15, 1733; and the third was Thomas, who is said to have settled in Kentucky after the Revolutionary War, in which he was a training officer.

Nathaniel Gist bore the name of his father's younger brother, Nathaniel, and in confusion the uncle is credited by some with the adventures of the nephew among the Cherokee. Another brother of Christopher was William Gist.

Young Gist was evidently a visitor, for trade purposes, to the Overhill Cherokee as early as 1753. Manifestly, he was the son referred to by Christopher Gist in the following excerpt from the *Journal* that he kept in 1753 while on a tour to the waters of the Ohio with Major George Washington: "A messenger came with

¹"Richard Gist, a brother of Nathaniel, was at King's Mountain and fell there within thirty steps of the British line, of which I am a yet-living witness. He was a close neighbor of my father." Benjamin Sharp in *American Pioneer*, II, 66. The father of Sharp lived near the site of the present Bristol, Tenn.-Va. Richard Gist was in Col. William Campbell's command. He seems to have had a son named Nathaniel in honor of his brother. L. P. Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia* (Abingdon, Va., 1929), 1117.

letters from my son who has just returned from his people at the Cherokees and lay sick at the mouth of Conegocheague."²

In 1754, at the age of twenty, Nathaniel Gist was again among the Overhill Cherokee. He and another young Virginian, eight years older than he, Richard Pearis, were engaged in the trade to those Indians, Pearis operating from Long Island of the Holston (the present Kingsport) in partnership with Thomas Price.³

The goods were supplied by Christopher Gist, who earlier had been in the mercantile business in Baltimore. Having failed in business there, the elder Gist was now in Virginia endeavoring to recoup his fortunes by supplying or backing traders to the Indian tribes. Both Pearis and young Gist looked with longing eyes on the fertile acres of Long Island, and as early as 1754 Pearis preferred a claim to the island with Governor Dinwiddie, of Virginia. In the spring of that year young Gist bore a message from Governor Dinwiddie to the Overhill Cherokee asking that they come to the aid of Virginia in the great contest with the French for the possession of the Mississippi Valley. In the summer of the same year Pearis went back to Virginia. "Not having the wherewith to answer his credit, when Pearis came there, one Guest, his merchant, and father to the Guest who was sent into the nation as messenger from Virginia, seized on his leather and denied him any further credit, which obliged him here and there to pick up what goods he could get . . . of inconsiderable value, which he packed in bags, and brought two white men (who fled from Virginia for the press). These he sent into Chota with a letter to Old Hop⁴ desiring him to give no credit to Guest or his linguister, Oliver; that they would tell him nothing but lies, and that Guest had stole the governor's letter from him, and he, himself, was the man to have brought it. This letter of Pearis to Old Hop was laughed at."

In fact, Gist bore not only the governor's letter, but also a message from the Indians of the Six Nations in western New York, desiring the Cherokee "as mutual friends of the English to aid in expelling the French."

Pearis did not wish to confront young Gist in Chota, and avoided that town, but went to another, where his Indian wife resided. "Old Hop (the emperor) sent to have Pearis intercepted, and when he

² William M. Darlington, *Christopher Gist's Journals* (Pittsburgh, 1893), 80. It is not improbable that Nathaniel accompanied his father on the tour of 1751-52. "My son had the misfortune to have his feet frost-bitten (January 7, 1752)". "My son hunted up the creek, March 1, 1752." *Ibid.*, 72, 76.

³ *Dinwiddie Papers* (Richmond, 1883), I, 266-68.

⁴ Old Hop was the emperor of the Cherokee.

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was brought in there were high words passed between Pearis and
Gist. Old Hop told Pearis to be quiet, and asked him why he had
lost his way and passed the town, and whether the governor had
sent any message to his woman, and said he could compare him to
nothing but a young buck in rutting time who ran hither and thither
after a doe."

This quarrel between the two young Virginians in the woods of
the Tennessee country was thus reported by trader Ludovick Grant
to Governor Glen, of South Carolina, and in results it was of con-
sequence. It contributed to the loss of the much needed manpower
of the Cherokee to Virginians and the British regulars under General
Braddock in meeting the menace of the French and their Indians
on the upper reaches of the Ohio. It brought a prompt reprimand
of Pearis from Governor Dinwiddie: "If it had not been for the un-
seasonable and disagreeable difference between you and Gist, I am
fully of opinion they (the Cherokee) would according to former
promise have sent some of their warriors before now to join our
forces."⁵

More blamable for the defeat of General Braddock and the death of
that officer than this private dispute was the adverse attitude of
Governor Glen, in the view of Governor Dinwiddie, who wrote to
Governor Dobbs, of North Carolina, on July 28, 1755: "If Mr. Glen,
agreeable to promise, had prevailed over a number of Cherokee and
Catawba warriors to join our forces we should not in all probability
have been defeated, as they would have attacked the Indians in
their bush way of fighting, which the regulars are strangers to;
but . . . that gentleman had a meeting with those two nations
of Indians at the very time they should have joined our forces. He
had all along, I think, done everything contrary to his duty and the
service of the expedition."⁶ Dinwiddie the same day addressed a sharp
letter to Glen, much in the same tone.⁷

Nathaniel Gist returned from Chota to Virginia in time to take
part in Braddock's campaign, serving as lieutenant in his father's
company of Washington's regiment—the Seventeenth Company of
Rangers—and he was in the disastrous defeat and rout of the colonial
and regular forces under Braddock.⁸ Indeed, young Gist had been
sent out from the army camp as bearer of the messages to the

⁵ *Dinwiddie Papers*, II, 76, 77.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 123-4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 125, 225.

⁸ A brother of Nathaniel took part along with the father, Capt. Christopher
Gist. Nathaniel was lieutenant at the time.

Overhill Cherokee, and it is a fair inference that Washington sent him or recommended him to Dinwiddie for the mission.⁹

In the following year, 1756, Gist served in his father's company in ranging for the protection of the frontiers of Virginia against the marauding French Indians unleashed and made bloodthirsty by their defeat of Braddock's army.

The estimate of so just a man as Colonel Adam Stephen of the Gist-Pearis broil before the Cherokee is preserved in a letter to Colonel Washington, of date November 7, 1755: "Pearis' pretensions to bring in 200 Cherokees appears to me by advice from a rational person to be only a trick to procure forgiveness and recover the governor's countenance, after so many charges have been lodged against him by Mr. Gist. By a particular and intimate acquaintance of Pearis' it has been acknowledged that he was the principal cause of our not having the Cherokees last spring."¹⁰

In the sketch of Christopher Gist in *Dictionary of American Biography* the statement is made that "in 1756, he went to the Cherokee country in East Tennessee in the vain effort to enlist Indians for service, and for a time he was an Indian agent in that locality."

The journey of the son is here attributed to the father. That the father remained at the north during the period of the son's stay among the Overhill Cherokee is clearly traceable in the *Dinwiddie Papers* and in the *Letters to Washington*. Christopher Gist was kept busy in collecting supplies for the projected expedition of Braddock. No record has been found by the writer of the presence of the elder Gist in East Tennessee. It is also manifest that Nathaniel Gist was not in the decade of 1754-1764 an Indian agent among the Cherokee. That tribe was under South Carolina's management until Indian affairs passed to direct British control—first to Edmund Atkin as chief agent at the south. In 1757 the younger Gist was, for meritorious services, given by the governor of Virginia the pay and title of captain—the same title being the father's, and that fact doubtless has led to the confusion and erroneous statements.¹¹

⁹ *Dinwiddie Papers*, II, 26, 76.

¹⁰ *Letters to Washington*, I, 123. Pearis was instrumental in bringing in 82 Cherokee warriors to Major Andrew Lewis' abortive campaign against the Shawnese, 1756; and Lewis had more confidence in him. Writing to Washington, Oct. 28, 1756, Lewis said: "The Warrior proposed sending a runner to the nation with one of ye guns, and likewise to acquaint them what is provided for them; he makes no doubt of a great number coming in. Wrote to Capt. Pearis to dress the runner as well as possible and send a white man with him, which is the Warrior's desire." *Ibid.*, 339.

¹¹ *Dinwiddie Papers*, II, 669, 671.

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ibid., 339.

Nathaniel Gist was delegated assistant under Atkin to take
care of two hundred Cherokee then in Virginia to aid that colony
in the recovery of ground and prestige lost in 1755. No doubt
this designation of Gist was due to his acquaintance with these In-
dians, but the service was not rendered by him in East Tennessee.
He is said to have led those Indian auxiliaries in the successful cam-
paign of General Forbes in 1758.

It is interesting to see the estimate placed by Colonel Washington
on the value of Cherokee auxiliaries from the Tennessee country.
In September, 1756, he wrote Governor Dinwiddie: "Those Indians
who are coming should be shown all possible respect and the great-
est care taken of them. It is a critical time, they are very humor-
some, and their assistance very necessary. One false step might
lose us all that, and even turn them against us."

And in June, 1758, when preparations were in progress for Gener-
al Forbes' expedition against Fort Duquesne, Washington wrote Gen-
eral Forbes: "Indians I conceive to be the best if not only troops
fit to cope with the Indians [of the French] in such grounds. . . .
They are to us of the utmost importance. I suggest the idea of
sending a proper person immediately to the Cherokee nation, who
may not only heal the differences which now subsists, but get a
body of them to join the army in their march, and no person who
has the interest of our important cause at heart would hesitate a
moment to engage in such a service, on the event of which our all,
in a manner, depends."

Two days before, Forbes had written to the great English states-
man, William Pitt, of the Cherokee, then with him and his regulars:
"If they leave us we shall lose the best part of our strength as all
northern Indians, mostly our enemies, were kept in awe by the
presence of so many Cherokees."¹²

Summers, in his *History of Southwest Virginia*, gives a glimpse
of Nathaniel Gist and Daniel Boone in 1760: "About the same time
Daniel Boone, accompanied by several hunters, visited the Holston
and camped the first night in what is now known as Taylor's valley.
On the succeeding day they hunted down the South Fork of Hol-
ston and traveled thence to what was thereafter known as Wolf
Hill (Abingdon). Boone and his companion. . . .disagreed and
separated, Boone taking the Indian trail to the Long Island, and
Nathaniel Gist, his companion, following the Indian trail to Cum-
berland Gap."

¹² June 17, 1758, Gertrude S. Kimball (ed.), *Correspondence of William Pitt*
(New York, 1906), II, 279.

Relying, in part, upon this datum, Albert V. Goodpasture, a thorough investigator and most competent historian, in his "Paternity of Sequoyah", advances the contention that, after this hunting trip, Gist went to the Cherokee towns on the Little Tennessee River and there formed a temporary alliance with a Cherokee maiden in 1760-61, the result of which was the birth of the great Sequoyah.¹³

Goodpasture reinforces the argument by citing the facts that in Gist's petition to the legislature of Virginia asking confirmation of his title to Long Island of the Holston from the Cherokee he represented that he had obtained it in 1761, thus evidencing his presence among the Indians in that year. It is difficult to follow this thesis. There was flagrant and hotly waged war between the Cherokee and the whites of Virginia and the Carolinas in 1760-61, leading up to and including the massacre of the garrison of Fort Loudoun on the Little Tennessee. In all the communications and publicity incident to those fateful happenings the presence of Gist is nowhere indicated. In point of fact, he was in active service with the Byrd-Stephen regiment of Virginians, as one of its captains, and that regiment was marching against those Indians.¹⁴ The regiment under Colonel Stephen built Fort Robinson opposite the Long Island, and did not proceed further, peace having been made.

If Gist obtained from the Indians a cession of Long Island it must have been when they came in to treat for peace at Fort Robinson, and not in their country below. Henry Timberlake and Thomas Sumter, of the command, did volunteer to venture there, Colonel Stephen not being willing to command such a dangerous service; but nowhere from records does it appear, and it is altogether unlikely, that Gist went to the Overhill towns under the conditions prevailing.

While dissenting from the proposition that Sequoyah was begotten or born in 1760-61, this writer is in accord with Goodpasture in the belief that Captain Gist was the father of that greatest of red Tennesseans. The probabilities point to the period of the early 1770's as being the time of Sequoyah's birth.

A valuable document is a biographical sketch of Sequoyah dictated to the poet, John Howard Payne, while the latter was, for quite a time, in 1835, among the Cherokee.¹⁵ The dictation was by Major

¹³ *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, I, 121.

¹⁴ The fact is well documented. Order of march towards the Cherokee Country, at Stalnaker's, Sept. 20, 1761, Draper MSS., 3ZZ. 49; Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish in Virginia*, II, 169; *Va. Mag. of History*, IX, 416. See Samuel C. Williams, "Fort Robinson on the Holston", in *East Tenn. Hist. Soc., Publications*, No. 4 (1932), 22-32.

¹⁵ Payne Papers, Ayres Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.

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Lowry, a mixed-blood cousin of Sequoyah, Mike Waters, a brother-in-law, and The Bark, the last named a warrior who was a close associate of Sequoyah in his youth. This manuscript sketch is entitled, "The Life of George Gist"—not Guess or Guest. In Payne's language it states: "I was informed that in 1835, the year I made the inquiry, Gist's age was about 60. He left the nation with the Arkansas emigrants from it about eleven years ago." This would place the date of Sequoyah's birth, approximately, in 1775. Another intelligent observer who saw Sequoyah before his removal to the west is in practical accord.¹⁵

Sequoyah's syllabary was completed in 1821, and his age then reckoned to have been "about 40". His oldest child, Teesey, was born in 1789. Sequoyah died in the town of San Fernando, Tamaulipas, Mexico, in August, 1843, after a long and trying journey westward in quest of a lost band of his countrymen. It is difficult to conceive of such a task being undertaken by a man eighty-three years of age, who had from childhood been a cripple from "white swelling" of the knee joint.

That Nathaniel Gist was the father of Sequoyah is consonant with all of many probabilities; that a wandering German peddler from Georgia was such, in 1770, as is claimed and stated by Foster in his *Sequoyah*, is unbelievable. It may be that, to shield Gist, that story was advanced, even by his mother and her family. Guess, the peddler, has not been traced in the archives of Georgia or South Carolina. It would be a remarkable coincidence had there been two men by the name of Gist or Guest among the Overhill Cherokees in the same half decade, when very few white men were to be found there.

John Mason Brown, of the Louisville bar, one of the greatest lawyers of Kentucky in his day, was a descendant of Nathaniel Gist, and in a letter preserved in the Bureau of Ethnology, at Washington, he stated that Sequoyah had visited the Gist family in Kentucky and was recognized by the descendants as a natural son of Gist.¹⁷ Mrs. Mary Cary (Gratz) Morton, a granddaughter of the Gist still living, states that the family tradition is that

¹³ Emmet Starr, the Cherokee historian, says that Sequoyah died at the age of seventy-five. *History of the Cherokees* (Oklahoma City, 1921), 45. A boyhood friend of Sequoyah, Charles Hicks, one-time chief of the nation, was born 1767—not 1760.

¹⁷ James Mooney, in his "Myths of the Cherokee", in Bureau of Am. Ethnology, Nineteenth Annual Report, 109-11, points out as a weakness in this statement of Brown the fact that he called Sequoyah a Baptist preacher, whereas he was not even a Christian. There were Baptist ministers among the Cherokee and it may be that one of these accompanied the delegation, and that the family tradition became confused on this non-essential point.

Sequoyah once visited Lexington looking up his Gist relatives.¹⁸ This visit may have been in 1828, as Sequoyah was going to or returning from Washington as one of the Cherokee delegation to treat with the authorities in the capital city.

The mother of Sequoyah, Wut-teh of the Paint clan, was a member of one of the leading Cherokee families, and not, therefore, likely to consort with a strolling peddler. The "Life" in the Payne manuscripts states:

"The family of Gist, on the Indian side (the mother's), was of high rank in the nation. The famous John Watts was one of them.¹⁹ Two of his uncles were men of great distinction; one of the two was named Tahlonteeske (the overthrewer)²⁰ and the other Kahn-yah-tah-hee (the first to kill). Kahn-yah-tah-hee was the principal chief of old Echota (Chota as known to the English), the ancient town of refuge over which he presided. He was called the Beloved Chief of All the People. It was his exclusive duty and delight to be a peace-preserver."²¹

¹⁸ Letters of Judge S. M. Wilson of Lexington, Ky., the Kentucky historian, to the writer respecting an interview with Mrs. Morton.

¹⁹ His father, John Watts, Sr., is said to have been of the garrison at Fort Loudoun, but this statement is believed to be erroneous. The father was among the Overhill Cherokee before that fort was constructed, and, no doubt, as a trader. He was skilled enough in the use of the Cherokee language to act as an interpreter in the making of the treaty of Augusta, Ga., in 1763. *N. C. Col. Rec.*, XI, 179; *Calendar of the Tennessee and King's Mountain Papers of the Draper Collection of Manuscripts* (Madison, Wis.), 81.

²⁰ The name appears variantly in the records: Talohtuski, in the Treaty of the Holston, 1791; Taluntiski, in Mooney, *op. cit.*, 533; Tollunteskee in *ibid.*, 85, 136. In the Cherokee treaty of 1805, he received secretly a grant of two tracts of land, a square mile each, probably including the site of the present town of Rockwood, Tenn., where he resided until his removal to Arkansas at the head of a large band of his countrymen, including seventy warriors, in 1809. He became principal chief of the Western Cherokee, and at his death he was succeeded by his brother John Jolly (Ahuluaegi) the adopted father of the celebrated Sam Houston. Jolly lived on Jolly's Island in Tennessee River at the mouth of the Hiwassee. Young Houston lived there as a member of his family for about three years. In 1818 Jolly moved to Arkansas. Houston on his self-exile from Tennessee visited his "Indian Father" in the West. Jolly wrote to President Jackson, Dec. 23, 1829: "My son, the Raven [Houston], came to me last spring. . . . My heart embraced him when he arrived at my wigwam. He rested with me as my own son". The first capital of the Cherokee in Indian Territory bore the name of "Talonteeskee" in honor of the uncle of Sequoyah.

²¹ Commonly called by the English and white settlers "The Tassel". The name appears as Kay-eta-eh in the treaty of 1777 at the Long Island of the Holston. He seems to have succeeded The Standing Turkey in the position of ruling chief, Oconostota being the Head Warrior. The Tassel was put forward by the latter to be the principal speaker for the Cherokee at that treaty of 1777. He visited Philadelphia in 1787 to make a charge of trespass by the whites on the lands of his people, and there met and made a favorable impression on Benjamin Franklin. For a farther account of this chief, see Samuel C. Williams, *William Tatham, Wataugan* (Nashville, 1923), 23.

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"During some public assembly there was an onset of the whites—
notwithstanding it was a time of profound peace—and all the In-
dians fled excepting Kahn-yah-tah-hee and another chief of whom
there was some distrust in the nation.²² They were both in the
square where the ceremonial had been gone through, Kahn-yah-tah-
hee arose from his seat, and with a white flag waving, met the
marauders as they broke into the square. Both chiefs were mur-
dered brutally on the spot."²³

A number of white men among the Overhill Cherokee as traders
were at Sycamore Shoals of Watauga in March, 1775, when Rich-
ard Henderson and associates purchased of the Cherokee large por-
tions of Kentucky and Tennessee. Nathaniel Gist was present.

From the Cherokee country Gist in 1775 made a visit to West
Florida, returning from the Mobile region when the Revolution in
the south was passing into the active stage. He journeyed north-
ward in company with Henry Stuart, deputy agent under the Brit-
ish, the better known Colonel John Stuart being his brother and
a superintendent of Indian affairs for the Southern Indian tribes.
On reaching the Tennessee river the party took water carriage to-
wards the site of Chattanooga. Dragging Canoe had been south to
confer with the Stuarts and, having returned, was now patiently
awaiting the arrival of Henry Stuart at the Tennessee. Stuart wrote
his brother John that the party "met at the Tenassy some white peo-
ple who had come down the river in order to settle on the Missis-
sippi"—evidently in the Natchez district. He wrote of Captain Gist
that he was "well acquainted with the new settlements" on the
Watauga and Nolachucky rivers and had informed young Stuart
that "the settlers were very numerous".

On reaching the Cherokee towns the part played by Captain Gist
was, to say the least, equivocal and it led to deep resentment on the
part of the Wataugans when they learned of it.²⁴ He was, indeed,

²² Chief Old Abram is here referred to. The distrust grew out of his
participation in the treaty of Dumplin Creek, negotiated by the state of Frank-
lin, May 21, 1785. Samuel C. Williams, *The Lost State of Franklin* (Johnson
City, 1924), 75-77.

²³ The Tassel and Old Abram were cruelly murdered in May, 1788. John
Haywood, *Hist. of Tenn.* (Nashville, 1891), 181; Williams, *The Lost State of
Franklin*, 207.

²⁴ For comments of the astute Willie Jones, of North Carolina, on Gist at
this time, see his letter to Gov. Caswell, June 2, 1776, after the return of
Jones from Augusta, Ga.: "Henry Stuart was accompanied by Nat Gist and
[James] Colbert, two men who are equally unprincipled and formidable. They
are deep in the mystery of bush fighting, conversant in the manners and cus-
toms of the Indians and quite familiar with the frontiers of North Carolina
and Virginia. Upon the whole, I am of opinion that the Overhill Cherokee
either have already commenced or will soon commence hostilities". *N. C. State
Rec.*, XXII, 743.

in close quarters. As a trader he must have had money owing to him from the Indians and he must have felt that his claim to the fertile Long Island should be conserved, if at all practicable. Gist knew of the plan of the younger warriors under the influence of Dragging Canoe to attack the white settlers on the Holston, Watauga and Nolachucky.

There was a group of Tories in the Brown settlement on the Nolachucky. Captain Gist, as Henry Stuart narrates, "offered to undertake to give them notice if he could get four white men that knew the woods and some Indians" to accompany him. One of these white traders was Jarret Williams. "The very night before they were to set out the four that were chosen to go ran away; they were all Virginians, which was likely to prove fatal to the white people who remained. All the white people in the nation thought that the only security they could now have for their safety was to go with the Indians."

Jarret Williams, a Wataugan from Virginia, when he reached the Watauga settlement, gave information "that Alexander Cameron informed that he had concluded to send Captain Nathaniel Guest, Williams Faulin, Isaac Williams and himself with the Indians till they came to the Nolachucky; that they were to stop and Guest and the other white men, above mentioned, were to go to see if there were any king's men among the inhabitants and, if they found any, they were to take them off to the Indians or have a white signal in their hands or otherwise to distinguish them. When this was done they were to fall on the inhabitants and kill or drive away all they possibly could".²⁵

Henry Stuart had endeavored to persuade or compel the settlers in what is now upper East Tennessee to move off of their lands to West Florida, promising that the Cherokee would permit their safe passage down the rivers. In one of his written messages to the settlers he thus referred to Captain Gist: "Captain Guest has been all over West Florida and from what we know of that country we venture to recommend it to you as a very fit country for your poor people."²⁶

Dr. P. M. Hamer states that Gist was at the time in the pay of Cameron, assistant British agent to the Cherokee, and that "for the purpose of protecting loyalists and women and children he accom-

²⁵ Deposition of Jarret Williams, in James G. M. Ramsey, *Annals of Tennessee* (Philadelphia, 1853), 149.

²⁶ Philip M. Hamer (ed.), "Correspondence of Henry Stuart and Alexander Cameron with the Wataugans," in *Miss. Valley Hist. Rev.*, XVII (1930), 457.

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panied the Indians in their attack upon the Wataugans".²⁷ Gist,
 at least, did not leave the Indians for his home in Virginia. But
 his later claim or explanation was, no doubt, that the projected
 plan to leave the redmen and go to the Tories on the Nolachucky
 was in order to get away to Virginia, and that the plan failed when
 the white traders escaped from the Indian towns, and that his only
 safety was to go forward with the warriors. As we shall see, his
 explanation was satisfactory to such a patriot as Major Evan Shelby
 and he was supported by a white trader to the Cherokee, Isaac
 Thomas. Too, as we shall later see, in the following year Gist
 wrote to the Cherokee reminding them that he had on this occasion,
 in 1776, warned them, before they went to war against the whites,
 against the step.

When, after the attacks on the upper country settlers at Island
 Flats, at Watauga, and in Carter's Valley, in the latter part of the
 same year, Colonel William Christian began his retaliatory cam-
 paign against the Cherokee, his instructions from Governor Pat-
 rick Henry were to insist upon the Indians "giving up to justice all
 persons amongst them who had been concerned in bringing on the
 present war, particularly Stewart, Cameron and Gist".

When Christian, on the march towards the Cherokee towns, reach-
 ed the French Broad river, Gist came in from the Indian side under
 a flag of truce to the camp of the colonel. He reported that one
 thousand of the Cherokee from the Carolina side of the mountains
 had joined the Overhills, who would not give battle until the
 troops crossed the Little Tennessee. Christian wrote to Governor
 Henry (October 15, 1776): "I judge the flag was only an excuse
 for him to get with me. I believe he is sorry for what he has
 done. I did intend to put him in irons, but the manner of his
 coming I believe will prevent me. The officers tell me that the
 camp is in great confusion about him; some think that there are
 many favorable circumstances attending him; many are for killing
 him—of the last the greatest part. I spoke but little to him and
 don't know whether he wants to go back or not."

Two of the soldiers under Colonel Christian left accounts of this
 incident. Benjamin Sharp stated that the bordermen "were so ex-
 asperated at him that almost every one that mentioned his name
 would threaten his life, yet Christian conveyed him through the
 settlements unmolested, and he went to the headquarters of Wash-
 ington, where I presume the former friendship was renewed. He

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18. See also Philip M. Hamer, "The Wataugans and the Cherokee
 Indians in 1776", in *East Tenn. Hist. Soc., Publications*, No. 3 (1931), 126.

became a zealous whig". John Redd stated that "when Gist first came in to Christian he was viewed in a very suspicious light; he was thought to be a spy. But the prejudice against him soon wore off and he became very popular".

Gist went to Virginia and promptly laid a memorial before the governor and the council of state. The order entered by the council December 17, 1776, was as follows:

"Captain Nathaniel Gist having presented a memorial to the governor lamenting the suspicions which he fell under with several of his countrymen, as having acted an inimical part against America by aiding and abetting the Cherokees in their late hostile conduct and desiring his excellency and the council would make inquiry into the same, as a preparatory step either to his acquittal or condign punishment, the board accordingly considered the several depositions transmitted by Colonel Christian to the governor and which had been laid before the general assembly, and moreover examined Colonel William Russell, Major Evan Shelby and Isaac Thomas, upon oath; and, upon the whole matter are of opinion that Captain Gist is a friend of his country and was acting in that character most effectually when he was suspected of encouraging the Indian hostilities."²⁸

It no doubt gratified General Washington to have the record of an old friend thus cleared; and on January 11, 1777, Gist was appointed colonel of a regiment in the continental line. The newly made colonel was sent south by Washington to use his influence in bringing the Cherokee into the promised treaty at Fort Patrick Henry, Long Island. Arriving at the island on March 28, Gist sent by an Indian messenger a talk to the chiefs, a copy of which is to be found in the manuscript division of the Library of Congress.

A number of the friendlier chiefs, in accordance with a promise to Colonel Christian, came to the island to treat in April, but Dragging Canoe sullenly held back.²⁹ Gist then went to Chota with some of the chiefs who did attend, and returned with them to Fort Patrick Henry on the date to which adjournment had been taken, arriving on June 28. At the request of the commissioners of Virginia and North Carolina he sent a second message to Drag-

²⁸ H. R. McIlwaine (ed.), *Official Letters of the Governors of the State of Virginia* (Richmond, 1926-), I, 78, 184, 186.

²⁹ Between the date of the attempted treaty in April, 1777, and that of the resumption of negotiations in June, Oconostota and a party of Cherokee accompanied Col. William Christian to Williamsburg to visit Gov. Henry. The Indians returned to Long Island with Col. Christian well pleased with the treatment accorded them at the capital of Virginia. This, no doubt, aided in the procurement of the treaty.

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ging Canoe urging him to come in, but without success. The treaty
proceeded, Gist sitting in council "on business from General Wash-
ington". He was influential in bringing the results desired by Vir-
ginia and North Carolina. Colonel Christian as one of Virginia's
commissioners in an address to the Indians said:

"At our last meeting in April at this place, a letter from our great
warrior, General Washington, was delivered to his brother, Ocono-
stota, by one of his war captains and our friend, Colonel Gist. By
this letter you were invited to send some of your young men to
our general's camp. You know the pains and trouble he (Gist) has
been at and how careful he has been to you in bringing about a
happy peace; and he has long been a friend to your nation."

The Tassel (Kahn-yah-tah-hee), uncle of the Indian consort of
Gist, replied:

"Here is my friend and brother (pointing to Colonel Gist) whom
I look upon as one of my own people. He is going to leave me
and travel into a far country, but I hope he'll return. Here is one
of my people, the Pidgeon, that will accompany him, but I do not
know of many more that will. He was once over the great water³⁰
where he could not see which way he was going; but this journey
will be all by land and he will think nothing of the fatigue."

At the end of the treaty negotiated at Fort Patrick Henry in
1777, above the signatures, appears this "memorandum before sign-
ing":

"The Tassel yesterday objected against giving up the Great (Long)
Island opposite to Fort Henry to any person or country whatever
except Colonel Gist, for whom and themselves it was reserved by
the Cherokees. The Raven did the same this day in behalf of the
Indians and desired that Colonel Gist sit down upon it when he
pleased, as it belongs to him, and them, to hold good talks on."

Colonel Gist aided while on the treaty ground in celebrating the
first July 4 anniversary ever held in Tennessee. An entry on the
journal shows:

"July 4, the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was
observed. The soldiers belonging to the garrison were paraded and
fired two rounds, each in six platoons, and for the 13th one general
volley. The great guns were also fired. . . . The young warriors
then closed the entertainment with a dance."

Colonel Gist took with him to Virginia seventeen Cherokee war-
riors who were embodied in his command, the regiment being as-

³⁰ With Henry Timberlake in 1761. Samuel C. Williams, *Memoirs of Lieut. Henry Timberlake* (Johnson City, 1927), *passim*.

signed to its first duty on the east shore of that state. Gist, in 1778, was an advocate of a fuller use of Indians in the American army.

The career of Gist in the Revolutionary War was a creditable one. For a time he was in command of Red Stone fort in Pennsylvania; he campaigned in South Carolina. When Charleston was captured by the British, he was made a prisoner of war. He was retired January 1, 1781.

In 1793 he removed from Virginia to Kentucky, where for services rendered as a soldier he had received a grant of seven thousand acres of the finest blue grass land.

A valuable sidelight is thrown upon the problem dealt with in this paper by the narration of General James Taylor, of Kentucky, found in the Draper collection:

"When I was moving out to Kentucky in the spring of '93 I left my company some distance before we reached Redstone (now Brownsville). I understood Colonel Gist had arrived with a large number of slaves and was encamped about a half mile above the creek from which the old fort had taken its name. I called on Colonel Gist at his encampment. I found him sitting under his markee which, no doubt, had protected him and his brother officers from the storms of many a cold and dreary night. He was a venerable looking man, I should think near 60 years of age; stout-framed and about six feet high and of a dark complexion. It was the first time I had seen him, but, on making myself known to him, he informed me he was well acquainted with my father and had served, I think, in the Virginia legislature or in the state convention together, and perhaps in both.

"While I was with him a good looking youth, who appeared to me about 16 or 17 years of age, came to the markee and was invited in. He was dressed in home-spun clothes, quite neat and was a fine, tall, well-looking youth. He appeared to wish to say something to the colonel. At length he inquired if he had any business with him or wanted to say anything to him; and the colonel inquired his name. 'My name is Gist, sir', said the young lad. 'Aye', said the colonel, 'and who is your father?' 'Why, sir', says he, 'I am told you are my father'. 'Ah, indeed', says the colonel, 'and who is your mother? Betsy—Oh, very likely it may be so then; I was well acquainted with a girl of that name some years ago when I commanded Redstone fort'. The young man appeared somewhat embarrassed and the colonel appeared somewhat stumped, and I con-

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conference alone on that delicate subject.

"I met the Honorable John Breckenridge moving out with his fam-
ily. He was well acquainted with Colonel Gist, and said he was a
great gallant in his younger days. I should not have mentioned
Colonel G's name in this narration, but a few years ago I named
it to one of Colonel G's family and inquired of the person if they
had any knowledge of the young man. They said they had; that
he had moved to the West and had become wealthy; that the whole
family had recognized him as a near relative and that he had render-
ed the family many important services."

On his Kentucky grant Colonel Gist established his home, "Cane-
wood", which was to become noted for the beauty of its embellish-
ment and for its hospitality. He died there about the close of the
War of 1812.

After the close of the Revolution, 1783, he married Judith Cary
Bell, a grandniece of Archibald Cary, mover of the bill of rights
in the Virginia House of Burgesses. The daughters of the couple
married distinguished men. Sarah Howard Gist married Jesse Bled-
soe, a United States senator from Kentucky, characterized by Henry
Clay as the most formidable man he ever met at the bar in Ken-
tucky; Anne Cary Gist married Dr. Joseph Boswell; Eliza Gist
married Francis Preston Blair, and they were parents of Montgomery
Blair, a member of Lincoln's cabinet, and Francis Preston Blair, Jr.,
who was a United States senator from Missouri and a brigadier-
general in the Civil War; and Maria C. Gist married Benjamin
Gratz, a wealthy citizen of Lexington.

Francis P. Blair, Jr., was the Democratic candidate for the vice-
presidency on the ticket with Seymour in 1868; and B. Gratz Brown
was the Democratic candidate for the same office, running with
Horace Greeley in 1872.

Missouri has placed in Statuary Hall, in the capitol at Washington,
the statue of F. P. Blair, Jr.; Oklahoma has placed in the same
place the statue of Sequoyah. So that if Sequoyah was the son of
Nathaniel Gist, the latter is without serious doubt the only man to
have two descendants named by sovereign States as representatives in
the Hall of Fame.

That the family of Gist produced virile and able men is further
shown by the facts that Mordecai Gist, a cousin of Nathaniel, was
a general in the Revolutionary War; and William H. Gist was
Civil War governor of South Carolina. Joseph Gist represented
South Carolina in Congress.

The Tennessee Gists were from the neighborhood of the Moravian town of Salem, North Carolina, and evidently descendants of William Gist, brother of Christopher Gist, who for a time lived on the nearby Yadkin River. Benjamin Gist was one of the first justices of Washington county, 1777, and it was, perhaps, through visits to him that Nathaniel Gist became acquainted with the Watauga settlers. Joshua Gist, son of Benjamin, was a member of the constitutional convention of the State of Franklin and one of the two assistant judges of that lost state. Benjamin, and almost certainly Joshua, was under Sevier in the Battle of King's Mountain. These Gists were early settlers of Sevier county.³¹

Where, it may well be asked, are there descendants of the mythical Guess of Georgia? If there was such a person, where can there be found in his line, any, not to say such, evidences of transmitted force and ability?

³¹ There was a William Gist in the Tennessee country who petitioned in 1788 for the recognition of the state of Franklin. He was probably a son of Captain Benjamin Gist and named for his grandfather. The elder William removed from the Dan River region of North Carolina in the early part of 1766. Adelaide L. Fries (ed.), *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1922-), I, 162. Born in 1711, he married Violetta Howard, sister of Sarah Howard who became the wife of Christopher Gist; so that, Benjamin Gist and our subject were double cousins. The names of four Gists appear in the tax list of Greene county for the year 1783.