THORNS IN THE SIDE OF PATRIOTISM:
TORY ACTIVITY IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA, 1776-1782

by

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PREFACE

My interest in southwest Virginia Tories began as a result of my fascination with genealogy. A distant cousin, desiring to join the Daughters of the American Revolution, sent me information regarding our ancestor, David Price, and his service record in the Revolution. A year later, I read something that denounced David's father, John Michael Price, as a ringleader of the local Tories.

My interest was piqued; I tried to reconcile that the son was "patriotic" and the father was not. To deal with the apparent contradiction, I decided to research the local Tories to answer two questions: Was John Michael Price a Tory and if so, why did David join the Continental Army? I doubted that his service was from a particularly patriotic bent, since he did not enlist until late in 1780.

The deeper I delved into the research, the more I realized that here was a story that had not been told. The bits and pieces convinced me that a study of local Tories was a subject I might pursue as a thesis topic.

As a result of my research, I learned that another forbearer of mine, Samuel Pepper, was probably a Tory. David Price probably joined the Continental Army so that his father would not be jailed for treasonous activities. There is strong evidence to suggest that John Michael Price, whether avowed Tory or not, was in league with British agents.

In any project of this magnitude, the writer receives a great deal of assistance from other people. Special thanks are due my director, Dr. George Green Shackelford, who patiently waded through the mire of my prose, making corrections and suggestions that helped to polish the work. Moreover, he obtained for me an internship in Richmond which allowed me to gain work experience and conduct research simultaneously. I sincerely appreciate all that he has done on my behalf.

I also thank the other members of my committee, Dr. A. Roger Ekirch and Dr. William E. Mackie, for their encouragement and assistance.

In Richmond, Ms. Daphne Gentry at the Virginia State Library and Mr. Howson Cole at the Virginia Historical Society helped me to locate necessary materials when I became stymied. They gave unfailingly of their time and knowledge.

Heartfelt gratitude goes to my two typists, Miss Debbie Atkins and Mrs. Alisa Alls, who enthusiastically stepped into the breach when my typist needed surgery. I greatly appreciate their patience and unerring eye for detail; they really went beyond the call of duty.

So many other people voiced interest and encouraged me in my work that I could not possibly list them all. Among their ranks I wish to thank Mrs. Dorthy McCombs, Mrs. Patricia Givens Johnson, Mrs. Jane Johnston, Mr. Wendy Weisend, Professor William B. Rogers and my fellow graduate students.

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Particular acknowledgement is due the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia which honored me with its Cincinnati Prize in May of 1983.

Finally, I express thanks to my family who endured without complaint, the clutter of my research on the kitchen table. My brother Joe gave of his time when I needed extra hands for carrying library books, and exhibited great patience whenever I discussed my research. My parents' support and encouragement have known no bounds; I could not have completed this work without it. It is to them that I dedicate this work.

PROLOGUE: A DISCUSSION OF LOYALISM

I verily believe the British troops will overcome by the greatness of their power and the justice of their course.

- a New Hampshire Tory, published in Wallace Brown, The King's Friends: The Composition and Motives of the American Loyalist Claimants (Providence: Brown University Press, 1965), 14.

A Tory is a thing whose head is in England and its body in America, and its neck ought to be stretched.

- Whig propaganda, published in Wallace Brown, The Good Americans: The Loyalists in the American Revolution (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1969), 226.

In any emotionally charged conflict unanimity rarely prevails. Wars, the most volatile of all conflicts usually fail to receive the whole-hearted support of the citizenry. The American Revolution was no exception to this rule. Especially in its early days the War for Independence was by no means the overpoweringly popular uprising that many Americans have been led to believe. When the thirteen colonies of British North America declared their independence from Great Britain, not all colonists were pleased. Dissent did exist and its dimensions were sufficient to make the war more lengthy. Throughout the colonies a segment of the population was "disaffected" from the cause of independence and desired to uphold the King's authority to rule as he and his ministers saw fit.

Various terms were applied to these people but the most common appellations were Tory and Loyalist. The King's friends preferred to

be known as Loyalists. According to various estimates long after the fact, the Tory contingent comprised between one-fifth and one-fourth of the colonies' population - about a half a million individuals - and posed a "continual threat to the Revolution." Around eighty thousand to one hundred thousand of that half a million left the colonies. Many of those loyal subjects who remained, around forty thousand individuals, served the Crown in a military capacity. Of those who chose to stand their ground in the colonies', only 2,908 petitioned Parliament for restitution of their losses at war's end.[1]

To begin with many people expressed neutrality, but as the war dragged on, adherents of revolution lost patience with such professions of impartiality. Invoking Thomas Paine's famous dictum, "These are the times that try men's souls," they declared there could be no compromise between those "with" or "agin" them. The revolutionaries who considered themselves patriots, dubbed those who exhibited little or no enthusiasm for the Revolution, Tories. Likewise, Patriots viewed themselves as Whigs. The two sides borrowed the appellations of Tory and Whig from England where the principal political factions were called Whig and Tory. Tories more often than not supported the King's authority when it was challenged or questioned by the Whigs.[2]

What kinds of people in the American colonies remained loyal to the King? Most saw their fidelity as a matter of conscience. A civil war or revolution automatically entails a violation of laws and disturbance of the established social order that goes against the grain

of conservative property owners and those who have sworn oaths to uphold the existing regime. Such an upheaval often means a cleaving of family and national bonds, "a wounding of sentiments which ages of historical association have fostered." It means the spilling of blood and inestimable moral and physical torment. Some who had been Whigs before 1774 became Loyalists because they concluded that the risk of losing their possessions and limited rights was not worth rebelling in the quest for unlimited prerogatives. Not only did they decide too much was at stake to risk, but they also believed that they were in the right. The King's proclamation which ordered all faithful subjects to help put down the Revolution, gave them a legal and moral foundation on which to rest. In this light they concluded that "Not to oppose [the Rebels] and their measures were criminal."[3]

Tories represented nearly every type of character in the human spectrum with motives ranging from the highest to the lowest. The eminient historian of the mid-19th century, Lyman C. Draper, grouped them into six classifications. People who because of religious convictions refused to bear arms comprised the initial group. They were the conscientious objectors of the period. The group included Dunkards, Mennonites, Pietists, and Quakers. People who knew next to nothing about the principles and questions at stake made up the second group. Since members of this group understood little about the rationale for the conflict, glib partisans of the British promising money and property were able to sway them. Believing British rule too good to

risk the uncertainty of self-rule, another group of people saw no reason to alter the status quo. Confidence in the invincibility of the British army and fleet motivated others in Draper's fourth group of Tories. These people fully expected the rebellious colonies to be punished, as a parent disciplines a recalcitrant, unruly child. They believed that it would happen because England had soundly defeated the formidable French forces during the Seven Years War. These adherents assumed that rebellion would lead to defeat and total ruin for all those involved. Members of the fifth group were distinguished by their cupidity. They remained loyal because of the belief that they would enjoy rewards thereby. Draper vilified the latter group by stating, "if they had a spark of patriotism or love for their King, it could only be kindled by fuel from the Government coffers." In the last class of Tories, one finds a "pack of rogues" who saw in troubled times an opportunity to obtain wealth by looting. On the eve of and during the course of the war, outlaws and brigands sometimes found that, by proclaiming their fidelity, they could pursue their avocation under the aegis of the law.[4]

More recent historiography on Loyalism such as the work of William Nelson in his book, The American Tory concludes that Tories cannot be characterized by distinct groups such as those suggested by Draper. To do so allows the student to fall into the quicksand of generalizations. The Tory contingent was a very diverse group and Nelson notes two

important trends. The ranks of the Loyalists were very diverse and they "represented conscious minorities," people who felt threatened by their lack of numbers and influence. They found little comfort in the idea of a government based simply on rule by a majority.[5]

Then as now, Americans disagreed over who should be labeled Tories. Were people Tories who merely remained in their homes, instead of fleeing when the Redcoats arrived? In order to protect loved ones and property, some certainly took the King's oath of allegiance. For the same reasons many reversed themselves and pledged support to the Whigs' cause once the Crown's troops departed. Some colonists remained passive, providing supplies and services to both sides. What should be done about these people who, while they did not abet the enemy, did not assist the revolutionaries either? Colonists wrestled with these questions and the usual result of their efforts was to require a loyalty oath. But as they soon discovered, the oath was an imperfect solution because residents swore oaths with abandon, depending on which side's army was nearby.[6]

Whatever the motivation for Toryism, they did not have a monopoly on the bad lot of men who professed allegiance to their camp. Men of the same ilk also pledged their support to the rebels' cause. As it turned out, most in Virginia subscribed to the principles of the Revolution such as consent of the governed, legal equality, representative government, and the right to own property. Likewise, most "have-not" Virginians fought side-by-side with their social betters to achieve

independence from the shackles of English authority. Whigs came from a broad segment of the populace as did adherents of the King. Native-born residents tended to favor freedom from royal control, while newer arrivals often entertained sympathy for the King. Of the 2,908 Loyalists who requested restitution for losses sustained during the war, about two-thirds had not been born on colonial soil. Yet being a native did not preclude some of the region's most influential men from becoming enamoured with the royal cause. Profession did not determine allegiance either, except possibly in the case of merchants, and even then the majority of native-born businessmen, such as Thomas Nelson and John Norton, were Patriots. English and Scots, agents of mercantile houses provided the greatest source for Tory advocacy. In urban areas the merchants whose livelihood depended on continued good economic relations with the parent nation, frequently took the King's side in the conflict.[7]

The diversity of professions among post-war Loyalists attests to an absence of clear-cut occupational ties. Nonetheless, Alexander Flick in his study of Loyalism in New York, has provided six categories which are useful in identifying their social and economic status in a social pyramid divided into six unequal sections. At the summit lording it over the others were a multitude of royal officials - governors, councilors, judges, military, naval and customs officers and other agents of British rule. Large landed proprietors whose fortunes originated as a result of a royal patronage and depended on

its continuance, fell into this group. Next on the descent down the pryamid were many of the learned professions: doctors, lawyers, teachers and ministers. Because military conflict means a disruption of trade and is bad for business, merchants and otner members of the business community constituted the next level. Beneath them were the farmers, conservative by their nature and disliking change. At the bottom were the servants, gunsmiths, cobblers, coopers, saddlers, hatters, milliners, constables, blacksmiths and millers. In almost all respects, with the exception of the royal officials and foreign-born merchants, the Tory pyramid was replicated by a Patriotic pyramid.[8]

Whigs contended that most of the Anglican clergy preached the rewards of fidelity to the King. In New England and the Middle Colonies, membership in the Church of England made a person a Tory suspect. Throughout the region, many Anglican ministers and their congregations remained true to the crown. Although this was generally true also in the Carolinas and Georgia, in this aspect as in other aspects of Loyalist behavior, Virginia's circumstances and experience differed substantially from the other states. Where one lived in the colonies often helped to determine his sentiment. In most colonies, many of the residents of the frontier and backcountry tended to favor independence from the royal yoke, but not in Virginia. In the towns and cities of Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and South Carolina, where the long arm of British sovereignty had been a common sight, inhabitants sometimes thought it prudent to continue as faithful

citizens of the Crown. Just as there were pockets of Whig thought and activity in Tory towns, cells of Tories conspired within patriotic bastions. In each, the potential of the minority to cause disruption was a deep-rooted fear among the leaders of the majority.[9]

To the Patriots, a Tory was anyone who failed to give complete and enthusiastic approval to the ideals of the Revolution. Disagreement with any Patriot measure, no matter how insignificant, made a citizen suspect of royalist proclivities. It was not merely obvious gestures, such as toasting the King's health, that invited condemnation as a Tory. A few lines of dialogue from Robert Munford's *"The Patriots"* (circa 1779) illustrated the Whigs' perception of the King's friends. A suspected Loyalist, Trueman asked his interrogators who were members of the local committee of safety to explain what they mean by calling him a Tory:

> Colonel Simple: Tory! Why everybody knows what a Tory is --- a Tory is --- pray gentlemen, explain to him what a Tory is.
>
> Colonel Strut: A Tory, sir, is anyone who disapproves of men and measures.
>
> Brazen: All suspected persons are called Tories.
>
> Trueman: If suspicion makes a Tory, I may be one; if a disapprobation of men and measures constitutes a Tory, I am one; but if a real attachment to the true interests of my country stamps me her friend, then I detest the oppobrious epiphet of Tory as much as I do the inflammatory distinction of Whig.[10]

Since the Tories were considered enemies of the country, some Whigs felt that they could justify almost any punishment. In most

cases, however, a verbal threat or a menacing gesture provided sufficient warning to the King's friends whose tongue became too loose to suit more patriotic Americans. A person seeing his likeness hung in effigy might think twice about where his allegiance should lie. A Tory merchant might find the windows of his shop broken, or as a more dramatic insult, find his establishment smeared with the offal from privies. Then, too, people who ignored the persuasion tactics employed by the Whigs, sometimes found themselves victims of one of the most feared punishments of all, being tarred and feathered. To prolong the agony the tormentors usually used pine tar since it was a stickier substance than most tars. The victim could be stripped to the waist or completely naked. To pour the warm tar the torturer used a long-handled ladle. He poured the pitch over the victim's back, chest, and shoulders. A malicious person might pour the sticky substance upon the prey's pate which sometimes led to blindness. If the victim was to be dropped in a ditch or culvert, the tormentors might forego the feathers usually associated with the punishment. But if the complete ritual was adhered to, the victim had to endure the agony of being placed on a wooden rail while the carriers jounced it vigorously. The spectacle was not complete without the adornment of feathers which the crowd greatly enjoyed. Removing the tar was an extremely uncomfortable undertaking because the skin would slough off with the tar. But removing the tar was only undertaken if the victim survived; some did not.[11]

Whippings and hangings without legal sanction were no less terrible for their victims than being tarred and feathered. The trio of punishments could result in death for their unfortunate martyrs. Although these punishments were rare, the threat was always present. Not only did friends of the King have to fear physical persecution; legal measures aimed at them made them fear economic harassment as well. All of the states passed statutes taxing or confiscating suspected Tories' property. Local officials who usually handled the sales sold seized Loyalist property at fire sale prices; normally the asking price was a fraction of the property's worth. Emotions ran high and inflammatory placards such as this one in 1779 fanned them to a fever pitch:

> APPEAL to the Inhabitants of the Philadelphia The Tories, the Tories will be the ruin of you... They are now busy engaged in undermining your liberties...who prevailed on the savages of the wilderness to join the standard of the enemy? The Tories! ...Who advised and...assisted in burning your town, ravaging your country and violating the chastity of your women? The Tories!...In short, who wish to see us conquered, to see us slaves, to see us hewers of wood and drawers of water? The Tories![12]

The number and percentage of those who espoused Tory proclivities varied considerably from colony to colony. The numbers also fluctuated according to the success and proximity of the British army. Wherever the British and their cohorts were pervasive enough - "along the seacoast, in the Hudson, Mohawk, and lower Delaware valleys, in Georgia, the Carolinas, and the transappalachian West - there

Toryism flourished." In areas where a significant amount of self-government had been allowed and had taken root, loyalty to the Crown seemed unattractive. By 1780 many who had earlier professed devout patriotism were becoming so discouraged that they, like Benedict Arnold, defected to the service of the King. This provoked great alarm among the Whigs' civil and military authorities who were extremely vocal in their denunciation of those traitors who "deserted the defenders of the cause." Between thirty thousand and fifty thousand Tories fought for the Crown in the regular army alone. Many thousands more served in the Tory militia and assorted guerilla bands. Others provided auxiliary support by counterfeiting, guiding, scouting, spying, policing, privateering, and pamphleteering. In general they did all they could to disrupt the continuity of Whig control.[13]

In New Hampshire Loyalism was never a potent force. One historian theorizes that the strong New England traditions of religious and political self-rule coalesced with self-interest to retard the Loyalist movement there as they did for much of the region. On the other hand, Massachusetts, where there were so many outspoken advocates of independence, contained a significant Tory population. The significance lay not in its size but in its quality. Most Massachusetts Loyalists who applied for compensation after the war had served in a military capacity or a like official function. Compared to other colonies the King's firends in Massachusetts felt the sting of anger earlier and more strongly. As early as 1774 two

men received the painful indignity of being tarred and feathered. Whigs also torched the Tories' homes. In the neighboring colony of Rhode Island, the Loyalist contingent appears to have been concentrated around the commercial nucleus of Newport. Almost to a man, they were wealthy merchants; but as in New Hampshire their numbers were relatively small. Legal retribution against Connecticut Tories appears to have been milder than in other parts of New England which suggests the Tory population posed little or no threat to the Whig leadership. Perhaps the presence of infamous Newgate Prison, the dreaded Simsbury Mines in Connecticut, deterred many with royalist inclinations. Originally created as a workhouse for run-of-the-mill offenders, Newgate earned dubious renown during the war as a repository for Tories. Its reputation originated from the fact that the inhabitants "were kept virtually entombed in the mine some sixty feet underground - a grave for the living." After the war Connecticut Tories were quickly reabsorbed into the political mainstream which also suggests they were no menace. But some of the impromptu persecution that occurred was callous. At least four Loyalists died at the hands of a mob.[14]

Whether New York City and Westchester County were innately Tory, the fact that they were occupied by British troops from 1776 to 1783 forced, misled, or persuaded many to support the royal cause. In many counties the numbers of royalists exceeded their opponents and at least one-third of the residents along the Hudson and Mohawk rivers

favored the King. One estimate places the number of Loyalist sympathizers as high as half the population of the state. Out of a population of one hundred and eight-five thousand, ninety thousand wanted to maintain George the III's authority. Of all the colonies, New York enacted the harshest statutes against the Tories which speaks stridently about the danger they represented. That the sizable, powerful Tory contingent was a threat to Whig control, there can be no doubt. The usual tarring and featherings, and the burning and defacing of property, occurred along with more inhumane punishments. A housekeeper to a British officer endured the affront of being stripped of all her clothing and confined to a frigid room during the winter months. She believed that her employer's encouragement of the Indians, coupled with the bribe she refused to poison him, resulted in her cruel ordeal. No matter how powerful Loyalist feeling was in New York, their adherents never gained the upper hand. This situation was also maintained in many other colonies.[15]

Tory sympathy in the adjacent colony of New Jersey was hampered by the depredations committed by the royal forces. In Delaware the few who harbored royalist inclinations offered no real threat to Whig domination. The colony founded by the Calverts, Maryland, disappointed royal supporters from other areas. In a traditionally conservative bastion as Maryland, sentiment in favor of the Crown should have been pervasive - but this sympathy failed to materialize. Proprietary patronage had not created as much fidelity as expected

and the middle and western portions of the state were strongly opposed to the established social order on the eastern coast of the state. The eastern shore royalists constituted little more than a minor irritant to Whig domination, somewhat like a small boil upon a person's skin.[16]

In the adjoining middle colony of Pennsylvania, the lukewarm loyalism did not bode well for the monarchy. Most Pennsylvanians tried to remain neutral, not wishing to commit to either side. Many subsequent Loyalists hoped a solution could be reached in order to avert bloodshed. After the war commenced they supported the King's attempt to subdue the rebels; but many simply retreated to the shadows and refrained from verbally expressing their fidelity. Most of the tepid Loyalists lived in the east. The west, with the exception of Fort Pitt early in the war, remained ardently committed to independence. Like most frontiersmen these western Pennsylvanians feared the established order in the east; they distrusted their well-to-do "betters" who lived there, and were suspicious of any cause their eastern neighbors embraced. Hence the strong strain of support for independence that surfaced in the west.[17]

James Oglethorpe's colony of Georgia contained a large number of royal supporters. Most historians concede that Georgia probably had the largest amount of King's friends, proportionate to the population, when compared with the other twelve colonies. In the Carolinas, the British and their agents believed they had a multitude of allies and

friends. Their altered military strategy in 1778 hinged solidly on this assumption. This belief proved to be a fatal miscalculation. The British officials and observers were prone to overestimate the intensity of royal sympathy and they usually confused the relationship between attitudes and expected behavior. As a consequence, they often perceived Loyalist attitudes under very good circumstances as a promise of undying devotion under very bad circumstances.[18]

After they captured Charleston in May of 1780 they discovered to their dismay, that calculations of the well-affected to their purpose erred tremendously. Apparently they discounted or ignored the result of the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge near Wilmington, North Carolina in February 1776, in which the royal adherents sustained a devastating blow. In South Carolina, the 1779 engagement at Kettle Creek frustrated the British and their allies. Many residents of the Carolinas did not welcome the invaders with out-flung arms; indeed, they resisted the hated Redcoats at almost every turn. During Cornwallis' Southern campaign, the Carolinas' inhabitants made obtaining food and supplies difficult by attacking the foraging parties. On the eve of King's Mountain, Major Patrick Ferguson appealed for recruits by issuing a proclamation designed to kindle fear and hatred in a desperate attempt to muster support that had not materialized in the strength he expected.[19]

In the western section of North Carolina, support for the royal cause existed in such numbers that it caused worry for patriot

officials. That sympathy could and did cause problems for North Carolina officials and their neighbors in Virginia. The counties of Surry and Wilkes figured prominently in the activity of southwest Virginia Tories as will be shown later.

Notes - Prologue

[1]Wallace Brown, "The 'Loyal' Americans: The Tories in the Revolution," American History Illustrated VII (August 1972); hereinafter cited as Brown, "'Loyal' Americans," AHI, 36. In 1783 the Reverend Ezra Stiles estimated the number of Tories to be less than 20,000, probably an overly conservative figure. Robert Allen Rutland, The Birth of the Bill of Rights 1776-1791 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 85; Brown, King's Friends, 250, 249, vi; Brown, Good Americans, 227. It is difficult to get an accurate fix on the exact number of Loyalist claims filed. An article focusing on Loyalist women states that 3,225 Loyalists petitioned the British government for compensation. See Mary Beth Norton, "Eighteenth Century Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists," William and Mary Quarterly 3rd series XXXIII (July, 1976); hereinafter cited as WMQ, 388.

[2]William Nelson, The American Tory (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964; hereinafter cited as Nelson, American Tory), 118; Robert Allen Rutland, The Birth of the Bill of Rights 1776-1791 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 86; hereinafter cited as Rutland, Bill of Rights. The original British meaning of Whig referred to a country bumpkin; later on it acquired a more sinister meaning, "a Scottish raider, or irregular thief, a Whiggamore." Tory comes from the anglicization of the Gaelic toraidhe, which meant a pursued man, an outlaw. The origins of both terms used by rival political factions in England indicates their contempt for the Scots and the Irish. Donald B. Chidsey, The Loyalists: The Story of Those Americans Who Fought Against Independence (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1973), 3.

[3]George E. Howard, Preliminaries of Revolution 1763-1775, The American Nation series, ed. by Albert Bushnell Hart, 27 vols., (New York: Harper and Bros., Publishers, 1905; hereinafter cited as Howard, Preliminaries), VIII, 315; Carl Van Doren, Secret History of the American Revolution (New York: The Viking Press, 1941), 11; Norman K. Risjord, Forging the American Republic, 1760-1815 (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1973; hereinafter cited as Risjord, Forging the American Republic), 128.

[4]Lyman C. Draper, King's Mountain and Its Heroes: History of the Battle of King's Mountain October 7, 1780 and the Events Which Led to It (Cincinnati: Peter G. Thomson, Publisher, 1881; hereinafter cited as Draper, King's Mountain), 239-241; Howard, Preliminaries, 318, 319; M. F. Treacy, Prelude to Yorktown: The Southern Campaign

of Nathanael Greene 1780-1781 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 4-5.

[5]Nelson, American Tory, 91.

[6]Jackson Turner Main, Political Parties Before the Constitution (University of North Carolina Press: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1973; hereinafter cited as Main, Political Parties), 44-45.

[7]Frances Norton Mason, ed., John Norton and Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia: Being the Papers from their Counting House for the Years 1750 to 1795 (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1937), 393, 399; Emory G. Evans, Thomas Nelson of Yorktown: Revolutionary Virginian Williamsburg in America series (The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1975), X, 1-3.

[8]Alexander C. Flick, Loyalism in New York During the American Revolution (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969; hereinafter cited as Flick, Loyalism in New York), 32-35.

[9]Brown, King's Friends, 27; Risjord, Forging the American Republic, 130.

[10]Rodney M. Blaine, Robert Munford: America's First Comic Dramatist (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967; hereinafter cited as Baine, Munford), 88; Courtlandt Canby, ed., "Robert Munford's The Patriots," WMQ VI (July 1949, hereinafter cited as Canby, "The Patriots", WMQ), 484.

[11]Chidsey, Loyalists, 35, 37, 38; Brown, Good Americans, 135, 127, 128. The earliest recorded instance of a tar and feathering occurred during the reign of Richard the Lion-Hearted in 1191, when he decreed that a thief's locks should be shorn and 'boyling pitch poured upon his head, and feathers or downe' strewed upon the same.

[12]Francis G. Walett, Patriots, Loyalists and Printers: Bicentennial Articles on the American Revolution (Worcester, Massachusetts: American Antiquarian Society, 1976), 175.

[13]John Shy, A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976; hereinafter cited as Shy, People Numerous and Armed), 178; Charles Royster, A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character 1775-1783 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, published for The Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1979), 295. For the effect of

Benedict Arnold's treason on patriotic Americans, see Charles Royster, "The Nature of Treason: Revolutionary Virtue and American Reactions to Benedict Arnold," WMQ, (April, 1979), 163-193; Brown, Good Americans, 227; Chidsey, Loyalists, 169; Brown, "'Loyal' Americans," AHI, 36.

[14]Brown, King's Friends, 15, 24, 25, 45, 63; Otis G. Hammond, Tories of New Hampshire in the War of the Revolution The American Revolutionary series (Boston: Gregg Press, 1972, ix, x; Robert McCluer Calhoon, The Loyalists in Revolutionary America 1760-1781 The Founding of the American Republic series (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1965), 326, 283; hereinafter cited as Calhoon, Loyalists; Alexander Kulcsar, "This Woeful Mansion: Connecticut's Old Newgate Prison," AHI, XVIII (November, 1983), 29; Main, Political Parties, 306-306.

[15]Flick, Loyalism in New York, 180-182; Brown, King's Friends, 78, 117, 112, 157, 159, 167; Harold B. Hancock, The Loyalists of Revolutionary Delaware (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1977), 5: Calhoon, Loyalists, 467-469.

[16]Brown, King's Friends, 111, 112, 167, 168.

[17]Brown, King's Friends, 131; Wilbur H. Siebert, The Loyalists of Pennsylvania The American Revolutionary series (Boston: Gregg Press, 1972), IX, X, 9.

[18]Shy, People Numerous and Armed, 215; Calhoon, Loyalists, 440, 441; Paul H. Smith, Loyalists and Redcoats: A Study in British Revolutionary Policy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, published for The Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1964; hereinafter cited as Smith, Redcoats), 87-89.

[19]Robert O. DeMond, The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution (Hampden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1964), 129, 131; hereinafter cited as DeMond, North Carolina Loyalists; Calhoon, Loyalists, 494; Carole Watterson Troxler, The Loyalist Experience in North Carolina The North Carolina Bicentennial Pamphlet series (North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1976), 5, 23. Ferguson's proclamation (abridged) reads - "Gentlemen: Unless you wish to be lost in an inundation of barbarians who have begun by murdering an unarmed son before the aged father, and afterwards lopped off his arms, and who by their shocking cruelties and irregularities, give the best part of their cowardice and want of discipline: I say if you wish to be pinioned, robbed, murdered, and see your wives and daughters in four days abused by the dregs of mankind, in short if you wish or deserve to live, and have the name of men, grasp your arms in a moment and run to camp ... If you chose

[sic] to be degraded forever and ever by a set of mongrels, say so at once and let your women turn their backs on you, and look out for real men to protect them..." DeMond, North Carolina Loyalists, 131.

Chapter I

SETTING THE STAGE: THE KING'S FRIENDS IN VIRGINIA

> Then there is no possibility of establishing order in any rebellious province on this continent without the hearty assistance of numerous friends. These, My Lord, are not, I think, to be found in Virginia.
>
> General Clinton to Lord Cornwallis June 11, 1781, John A. George, "Virginia Loyalists, 1775-1783," Richmond College Historical Papers I (June 1916), 174.

Virginia presents a paradox. On the one hand, so many Virginians passionately believed in the Revolution that most historians would have us believe that little disloyalty stained the Commonwealth. After all, Virginia was the land of Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. On the other hand, historians admit a Tory faction existed in the eastern section of the colony, along the seacoast. The bold truth is that the "disaffected" (a common Virginia term for royal sympathizers) were so numerous that they would have been a formidable force if their geographical distribution had been more concentrated and their leadership even minimally competent. Their activity on the King's behalf created considerable trepidation among state officials. That the Tory contingent failed to organize themselves to subvert the Patriots' was due more to the vigilance of the well-affected than to insufficient numbers.[1]

Lest the wrong impression be given, Virginia contained one of the smallest Loyalist populations per capita in all the colonies. The

Old Dominion was "one of the most firmly committed [of colonies] in opposition to Great Britain." Even British officials who longed ardently for Tory support, conceded the dearth of a foundation in Virginia. Governor Dunmore surmised with a heavy heart that "the enemies of the government are so numerous and so vigilant" that practically all faithful subjects have been so frightened that "they have entirely shrunk away." Perhaps one reason Loyalism lacked popularity among members of the planter elite lay in their enormous debts to British merchants. On the eve of the conflict, Virginia planters - the "haves" - found themselves deeply in arrears to British creditors. Their enthusiasm for the Revolution's ideals might have been grounded on the selfish desire to renege on those debts, instead of a zealous belief in the cause for freedom. On the other hand, their ardor for Revolution was aided by the belief, if the King's rule was overturned, then the hated system of mercantilism might fall in conjunction with royal authority. The extent by which the debts owed by Virginians to British businessmen influenced their decision to uphold the Revolution is open to debate; however the Virginians financial circumstances certainly did not hinder planter support. When word came that the Treaty of Paris contained provisions allowing British creditors to recover debts incurred prior to the war, George Mason told Patrick Henry that he heard a disgruntled person exclaim: "If we now have to pay the debts due to British merchants, what have we been fighting for all this while?"[2]

Virginia's resistance to English control began almost from the colony's conception. Certainly the establishment in the days of the London Company of the House of Burgesses had given the colony a representative body whose continued existence rested on reluctant permission from the monarch. The tension between royal control and this representative body became more deeply rooted during the period of Salutary Neglect, when the English government unwittingly allowed a large measure of colonial self-government to evolve. By the 1750s some aspects of Virginia's unwritten constitution had achieved stability through Acts of Parliament, cabinet minutes and court decisions, but the state document was uncertain as a whole concerning the demarcation of imperial and colonial power. Virginians were quick to claim protection under English common law assured them since 1607, but their belief in an inherent right of self-government was less substantiated. Much of Virginia history, like that of other colonies, witnessed a struggle for power between the royal governor and his ally, the council, and the popularly elected House of Burgesses. In the battle for independence, colonists viewed themselves as sentinels safeguarding liberty, which the evil and corrupt English government was attempting to abolish. As long as British enforcement of established laws was lax or non-existent, the colonists were content to exist under a semblance of English supervision while in reality ruling themselves.[3]

In 1763 the British Lord Treasurer, Sir George Grenville, addressed the problem of how to manage the mammoth national debt,

now swollen by the French and Indian War in the colonies and the global Seven Years War. Not unreasonably, Grenville concluded that King George III's American subjects should bear a portion of the war debt incurred by sending British redcoats and supplies to protect the colonists. Once Grenville dusted off some long-forgotten statutes concerning commerce and trade, the die was cast. He ordered that the Molasses Act of 1733 be enforced as well as trial for smugglers before the court-appointed admiralty panels. The Sugar Act's stated purpose, which drew colonial ire, was to help alleviate expenses England would incur in defending its American holdings. Nonetheless, Grenville's announcement of a possible stamp tax on the colonies caused the resentment and rage that would eventually lead to rebellion. Grenville had precedent on his side when he proposed the stamp tax; Englishmen had been taxed since the days of King William's reign. The Lord Treasurer, however, failed to anticipate how the colonists would perceive these measures. To them the legislation appeared to be a blatant attempt to deny them their inherent rights as Englishmen. They perceived the Stamp Act as "taxation without representation," believing in the principle of direct representation rather than the English idea of "virtual representation."[4]

During the period of English neglect in the governing of the thirteen colonies, economic and intellectual changes were occurring that provided Virginia with the leadership to oppose the Crown. Most of the ancestors of the colony's leaders emigrated to Virginia

in order to make a better living. They acquired land upon which they planted tobacco, a plant well-suited to the climate and soil. The great demand for tobacco in Europe provided Virginians with a money crop. Renewed agricultural unrest, enclosure of common lands, dispossession and impoverishment of manorial laborers, civil wars and religious strife had sent to Virginia an abundance of energetic settlers between 1640 and 1676. The transformation of this colony from one of small free-holders and their hired or indentured hands to one of large landowners and their slaves may have created among the Virginia squirearchy a spirit of independence, a sense of being the equal of the English upper class. Like the English gentlemen they sought to emulate, Virginians engaged in gaming, sports and other social pursuits.[5]

Nevertheless, some well-to-do Virginians decided frivolous activities offered them little enjoyment; they preferred to challenge and exercise the mind. The learned planters read James Harrington, John Locke, John Wilkes and other important figures of the Enlightenment. The concept behind the Enlightenment was the triumph of reason over emotion; reason could explain all the workings of man's environment. Locke was the great potentate whose writings fell upon receptive Virginia ears. His belief in a social contract between man and government, and the idea of inalienable natural rights - life, liberty and property - became central in justifying the Revolution among Virginia patriots. Any government that failed to adhere to the bargain

deserved to be overthrown. On the eve of the conflict the planter-philosophes of the Old Dominion and the other colonies had adopted and further developed Locke's ideas. Almost without realizing it, they had matured to the point where their legislative assemblies were the masters of their own homes. The idealogy upon which a rebellion could be based was set firmly in place, when the legal struggle for supremacy developed into a full-blown Revolution.[6]

As a result of these deeply ingrained beliefs, support for the royal cause among the well-established families of Virginia was quickly eroded. However small the numbers of Loyalists, they were by no means insignificant. Their constituency included some powerful allies - not all members of Virginia's finest families desired independence from the parent nation. As a result of their birthright, many were wealthy influential individuals who were dedicated to maintaining the King's authority. Their combined talents and means could have greatly aided the Patriots, had they chosen to do so. By 1777 those who were most industrious on the King's behalf had emigrated, partly because of Lord Dunmore's ineptitude and lack of support. The Loyalists' flight benefitted the patriot faction, since their absence was one less worry.[7]

Nevertheless, not all of the King's friends fled. Virginia differed from other colonies in what kinds of people became Loyalists. What demarcated the Old Dominion from the others was its "relatively stable social order." As stated earlier, most of the ruling elite

whole-heartedly supported the aims and ideals of the Revolution, a devastating blow to any Tory recruiters who hoped to mobilize a strong challenge to Patriot control. The planter elite was notably proud of its intellectual prowess, political sophistication, and governing finesse. There was little in Tory thought to attract these men who prided themselves on protecting their rights as true Englishmen.[8]

This pattern of the elite's support included the religious realm as well, thereby calling into question the claim that Anglican clerics throughout the colonies tended to sustain the King. Willingly or coerced by the fear of physical retribution, Anglican ministers in the Commonwealth deserted the Crown in droves. In fact many parsons endorsed the Revolution by forsaking their pulpits and galloping off to battle in the company of their parishioners. Of the approximately 122 Anglican clergymen residing in Virginia during the war, no more than twenty-five were blatantly sympathetic to the Crown. The majority of them lived in the Tidewater region of Virginia. Of course some may have emigrated once they saw the conflict erupt into full-fledged war.[9]

During the period 1776-1783, there were only three parishes of the Established Church west of the Blue Ridge Mountains which were actually or technically functional (Fincastle, Staunton, and Winchester) and these were very ecumenical or crypto-Presbyterian in character. As a consequence there was no real chance for transappalachian Toryism to develop based on religion. In the Piedmont and Tidewater, the ministers most frequently adopted the views of their vestries. Non-Anglican

clergymen for obvious reasons tended to favor the Whigs. These denominations would have been cutting their own throats if they upheld the royal cause. Because of the official policy of an established church and persecution of all dissenters, it was in their self-interest to support the rebels and hope they prevailed. The most influential of the dissident factions were the Presbyterians. The allure of Presbyterianism proved potent to settlers on the frontier, where a heavy concentration of Scotch-Irish settled. At the beginning of the war the Presbyterians claimed the "religious allegiance of a large majority of the settlers beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains" and controlled that region's socio-political life. Rapidly approaching the Presbyterians in political influence and numbers were the Baptists (the Separatists) who were making their presence felt. From 1770 to 1774, the number of Baptist churches mushroomed from a mere six churches to fifty-four representing 4,000 members. The Baptists, for the most part were patriotic, although a number of them voiced qualms about serving in the militia.[10]

The upper echelon of society was not alone in providing assistance to the Revolution. Many whom one might categorize as "have-nots" (no wealth and clout) favored independence from the English yoke. There were others of a more middle-class background - people of middling income and status - who were somewhere between the well-to-do and the indigent, who approved of the Revolution. These people were neither humble nor deferential to the better sort who had dominated colonial

society and were to control society during the Revolution and the early national period.

Whether a Virginian was a frontiersman, a Tidewater or Piedmont planter, or a town-dweller, helped to influence his sentiment regarding the Revolution. Residents of the backcountry depended on their self-reliance; they did not relish knuckling under to any authority save their own. Independent frontier folk considered their exploiters to be the Tidewater nabobs, the Williamsburg and Richmond legislators, and large landowners of the transmontane region rather than George III and his ministers. They rarely came in contact with the machinery of British control so the Crown had little impact on their day-to-day lives.[11]

Perhaps the frontiersmen's resentment of the Eastern junto stemmed from the land speculation that was rife in the trans-appalachian area. The well-heeled speculators purchased large chunks of land, usually the most fertile and best located tracts. Most rarely deigned to visit their holdings. Absentee landlords tend to engender animosity in the minds of less fortunate land-owning neighbors; and there is no evidence to suggest it was any different in the Virginia backcountry. The speculators of the frontier had influential friends in Williamsburg which led some of the frontier folk to see all Easterners as a single entity. The conflict between the warring factions in Tidewater and the West provided a rich potential for subversive activities in support of the British. The question was: could the British agents take advantage of the obvious opportunity to cultivate serious dissent.[12]

As in other colonies, those who espoused Tory feelings seem to have been concentrated on the seaboard, specifically in the proximity of Norfolk. They were merchants, factors, and cosmopolitan men of means who stood to lose much if the crown failed to subdue the unruly colonies. Their livelihood depended on uninterrupted commerce with the parent nation. Fortunately, Norfolk was small in population (compared to New York and Philadelphia) or the concentration of Tories could have been a more acute danger. After the torching of Norfolk which was unfairly blamed on Lord Dunmore, many of the die-hard Tories felt it prudent to emigrate within the year. But another group of Loyalists would not desert their homes and remained, assisting the British whenever they happened to be present. Some of the King's friends furnished intelligence and accouterments while others being opportunists, plundered and intimidated well-affected residents. Most of the Norfolk area Loyalists who stayed "would be reconciled with their neighbors and resumed their places in the community before the war ended."[13]

In Norfolk many of the King's allies were of Scottish descent. Many had landed on Virginia's shores in order to take advantage of the extremely profitable colonial trade. They had several strikes against them at the outset of the war. Patriots perceived them as canny, avaricious individuals who were representative of all Scotchmen. Since they were keen in business, they accummulated wealth. This propensity for making money engendered resentment among those who lacked

the Scots' seemingly midas touch. To make matters worse, Virginians perceived them as "more foreign than the English." Even marrying into well-established Virginia families failed to change most Virginians' minds about Scotchmen. Being a well-to-do Scotsman was bad enough, but those attributes coupled with allegiance to the Crown was just too much for many Patriots to stomach.[14]

Throughout the South, the Scots population displayed an alarming penchant for loyalty in the Whigs' opinion. Certainly in the Commonwealth Scots constituted some of the most ardent Tories. This did not set well with Whigs and Scotchmen could all but be convicted of Toryism simply because they happened to be Scottish. A scene from Robert Munford's play *"The Patriots"* clearly exemplifies this attitude. At a meeting of the local committee of safety suspected Tories are questioned by Colonel Strut and Gentleman Brazen:

> M'Flint: What is our offence pray?
>
> Col. Strut: The nature of their offence, gentlemen, is, that they are Scotchmen; every Scotchman being an enemy, and these men being Scotchmen, they come under the ordinance which directs an oath to be tendered to all those against whom there is just cause to suspect they are enemies.
>
> Brazen: As these men are Scotchmen, I think there is just cause to suspect they are our enemies. Let it be put to the committee, Mr. President, whether all Scotchmen are not enemies.
>
> Col. Strut: A good notion, Mr. Brazen, I second it with all my heart.
>
> M'Squeeze: I wish the country very well, I never did it any harm, gentlemen.

M'Gripe: I've gi'en nae cause to suspect that I am an enemy. The ordinance says, ye must hae just cause. Bring your proof gentlemen.

Brazen: Proof, sir! We have proof enough. We suspect any Scotchman: suspicion is proof, sir. I move for the question, Mr. President.

Col. Simple: Is all Scotchmen enemies, gentlemen?

All: Ay, ay.[15]

Though the Tories seemed to be concentrated in the vicinity of Norfolk and the Eastern Shore, by no means did all the disaffected live in that region. Tory sympathy, contrary to long-held belief, pervaded all sections of the Old Dominion. Most historical studies concede the minute presence of Tory feeling in the western part of the state, but that is the extent of their development. The John Connolly plot in 1776 could have been more detrimental and dangerous to the Patriots' control than most of the other conspiracies. Dr. John Connolly, Governor Dunmore's agent at Fort Pitt (claimed by Virginia) conceived a grandiose plan that might have succeeded. Countenanced by Dunmore and General Thomas Gage, Connolly proposed enlisting friends of the King from settlers and Indians around the fort. In conjunction with Captain Hugh Lord, commander of two companies of Royal Irish, Connolly planned to march to Alexandria, where he anticipated meeting Dunmore's forces. Their object was to split the colonies and weaken each section's resolve. To his dismay, Connolly was too well-known to journey to Alexandria unnoticed. Vigilant Patriots apprehended Connolly along with his three companions, near

Hagerstown, Maryland. A search of their luggage elicited a grimy manuscript outlining their general strategy.[16]

The Alexander McKee affair further alarmed frontier leaders. McKee, a confederate of Connolly's, possessed great influence with the Delaware and Shawnee nations. In February 1776 correspondence from a British agent appeared to incriminate him. The letter invited McKee to attend a council meeting at Niagara. To secure his parole, he reluctantly signed a pledge affirming that he would not transact any business with the Indians on the Crown's behalf. But his freedom became curtailed when Governor Dunmore secretly forwarded him a commission as lieutenant colonel of a battalion to be enlisted in the area of Fort Pitt. In 1778, McKee, along with several companions, including the infamous Simon Girty, escaped and headed for the enemy's country. They had not traveled far when twenty-one deserting soldiers joined them. Patriots feared McKee would incite an Indian uprising, but his escape did not trigger such a happening.[17]

The John Claypole conspiracy in Hampshire County in 1781 caused considerable alarm among Patriot leaders as this letter to Governor Jefferson indicates: ". . . I am sorry to inform your Excellency that a dangerous insurrection has lately arrisen [sic] in the County, . . . and although every measure . . . has been taken to suppress the Rioters, yet it has proved ineffectual by reason of their having a superior force." The leader, John Claypole, acquired "Liquor and Drank King George the thirds [sic] health and Damnation to Congress." Hearing the

conspirators planned to join the British as soon as possible, Daniel Morgan with 400 militiamen met the Claypole challenge and crushed the plot. Morgan's force apprehended the leaders and punished some of the participants. They branded a man named John Payne "on the posteriors [sic] with a red hot spade."[18]

The Claypole, Connolly and McKee plots show evidence of Tory sentiment in backcountry Virginia. In other counties too, disaffection was obvious. The court records of the following counties - Augusta, Bedford, Campbell, Halifax, Henry, and Rockingham - indicate the presence of dissidence. Other counties probably had incidents of people brought before the court on charges of disloyalty or Toryism, but the records fail to indicate this. Either the justices failed to document these hearings or that later, perhaps someone obliterated all traces of these records on purpose. However, nowhere was disaffection as vexing as it was in the three counties of Southwest Virginia: Botetourt, Montgomery, and Washington. There the Tory threat took on an added significance because its specific goal - control or destruction of the lead mines was so important to the Revolution's success. This study is an analysis of the potential and the reality of Tory and Patriot deeds and participants in Southwest Virginia. The Whig officials who met the Tory challenge have languished as forgotten heroes for their role in helping insure the ultimate victory of freedom. Had their efforts not achieved fruition, the Revolution might not have turned out so favorably for the fledgling thirteen states.[19]

Notes - Chapter I

[1]John A. George, "Virginia Loyalists, 1775-1783," Richmond College Historical Papers I (June 1916; hereinafter cited as George, "Loyalists," Richmond Historical Papers), 175.

[2]George M. Waller, The American Revolution in the West (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, Inc., Publishers, 1976; hereinafter cited as Waller, Revolution in the West), 8; Calhoon, Loyalists, 462; Lawrence H. Gipson, "Virginia Planter Debts Before the Revolution," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography LXIX (July 1961; hereinafter cited as Gipson, "Planter Debts," VMHB), 276; Peter M. Mitchell, "Loyalist Property and the Revolution in Virginia," Ph.D. thesis, University of Colorado, 1965, 1,2. In the mid-1780's, Thomas Jefferson surmised the debt to be at least "two millions sterling."

[3]H. J. Eckenrode, The Revolution in Virginia (Hampden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1964; hereinafter cited as Eckenrode, Revolution), 2,3. See also John D. Burk, Skelton Jones, and Louis Girardin, The History of Virginia, From its First Settlement to the Present Day, 4 vols. (Petersburg, Virginia: for the authors, 1804-1816).

[4]Cedric B. Cowing, The Great Awakening and the American Revolution: Colonial Thought in the 18th Century, Rand McNally Series on the History of American Thought and Culture (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1971), 170-174; Jack M. Sosin, Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 128, 129, 131.

[5]Eckenrode, Revolution, 5, 6; Carl Bridenbaugh, Seat of Empire: The Political Role of Eighteenth Century Williamsburg, Williamsburg in America Series (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., 1950; hereinafter cited as Bridenbaugh, Williamsburg), 72-74; See also Cecelia J. Kenyon, "Republicanism and Radicalism in the American Revolution," WMQ XIX (April 1962), 153-182.

[6]Calhoon, Loyalists, 197-205. For a more detailed interpretation of the idealogy upon which the colonists based their Revolution, see Bernard Bailyn, The Idealogical Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

[7]Adele Hast, Loyalism in Revolutionary Virginia: The Norfolk Area and the Eastern Shore (Ann Arbor: U. M. I. Research Press, 1979; hereinafter cited as Hast, Loyalism), 48; Isaac S. Harrell, Loyalism in Virginia: Chapters in the Economic History of the Revolution (Durham: Duke University Press, 1926; hereinafter cited as Harrell,

Loyalism), 49. The following members of first families maintained their loyalty: William Byrd, Garvin Corbin, Richard Corbin, the Goodriches, John Randolph, Archibald Ritchie, Ralph Wormeley.

[8]Marc Egnal, "The Origins of the Revolution in Virginia: A Reinterpretation," WMQ XXXVII (July 1980), 428; Calhoon, Loyalists, 458.

[9]George M. Brydon, "New Light Upon the History of the Church in Colonial Virginia," reprinted from Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church (June 1941), 28; George M. Brydon, "The Clergy of the Established Church in Virginia and the Revolution," VMHB LX (January, April, July, October, 1933), 11-13. Known Tories were: John Agnew; John Brunskill; John Camm; Alexander Cruden; John Dixon; William Douglas; Alexander Gordon; Thomas Gwatkin; John Hamilton; Samuel Henley; Emmanuel Jones, Jr.; John Lyon; Christopher McRae. Four were tried for treason: William Andrews, John Bruce, William Harrison, Thomas Price, Ibid., 307. One historian says "at least one fifth of the clergy either left Virginia or retired from the active ministry after the definitive break with England." Thomas E. Buckley, Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776-1787 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977; hereinafter cited as Buckley, Church and State), 43.

[10]Buckley, Church and State, 12, 13; Harrell, Loyalism, 64, 65. Sandra Rennie, "The Role of the Preacher: Index to the Consolidation of the Baptist Movement in Virginia from 1760 to 1790," VMHB LXXXVIII (October 1980), 430.

[11]Waller, Revolution in the West, 96.

[12]Thomas P. Abernethy, Three Virginia Frontiers (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1940; hereinafter cited as Abernethy, Three Frontiers), 49; Thomas P. Abernethy, Western Lands and the American Revolution (New York: University of Virginia Institute for Research in the Social Sciences, 1937; hereinafter cited as Abernethy, Western Lands), 99, 100.

[13]Hast, Loyalism, 58, 59. Governor Dunmore has been unfairly blamed for burning Norfolk. His aim was to destroy the waterfront buildings. Instead of attempting to control the fires, American soldiers traversed from building to building, setting new fires. According to a House of Delegates report, on two occasions, the Governor destroyed around fifty-one buildings; the day he allegedly burned Norfolk only nineteen buildings were torched. Comparatively, the Americans burned 863 buildings, many of them homes, that same month.

[14]Darrett B. Rutman, ed., The Old Dominion: Essays for Thomas Perkins Abernethy (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1964), 110, 111.

[15]Canby, "The Patriots," WMQ, 461.

[16]Harrell, Loyalism, 37; Reuben G. Thwaites and Louise P. Kellogg, eds., The Revolution on the Upper Ohio, 1775-1777 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1908; hereinafter cited as Thwaites and Kellogg, Revolution), 139; Letter dated Georgetown, Maryland, November 26, 1775, published in Pennsylvania Packet, Draper Manuscript Newspaper Extracts, 2JJ, book E, 30-33; Ibid., December 4, 1775, 2JJ34-35.

[17]Walter R. Hoberg, "Early History of Colonel Alexander McKee," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography LVIII (1934), 31, 33, 36. See also Hoberg, "A Tory in the Northwest," Ibid., LIX (1935), 32-41.

[18]Julian P. Boyd, ed., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, 20 vols. to date (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951 ---; hereinafter cited as Boyd, Jefferson Papers), V, 405, 409, 410; Richard O. Curry, "Loyalism in Western Virginia During the American Revolution," West Virginia History XIV (April 1953), 272, 273.

[19]"Loyal to the King," Rockingham Recorder II (May 1958), 15-19; Alfred Percy, Virginia's Unsung Victory in the Revolution (Madison Heights, Virginia: Percy Press, 1965; hereinafter cited as Percy, Unsung Victory), 18, 19; Waller, Revolution in the West, 90-99; Frances H. Hurt, An Intimate History of the American Revolution in Pittsylvania County, Virginia (Danville, Virginia: County Board of Supervisers and Frances H. Hurt, 1976; hereinafter cited as Hurt, Pittsylvania), 4, 98, 97-110; "Enemies to the Commonwealth of Virginia, Revolutionary War-Henry County," Virginia Appalachian Notes VIII (February 1984), 16-19.

Chapter II

THE STAGE MOVES WEST: PIONEERS OF THE SOUTHWEST

In the mountains there is freedom!
Johann Christoph Friedrich Von Schiller, *The Bride of Messina,* IV, sc. 7.

From 1745 transmontane Virginia was one exceedingly large county known as Augusta which the General Assembly divided in 1769. In that year the legislature created the county of Botetourt in honor of the newly established governor of the Old Dominion, Norborne Berkeley, Lord Botetourt. The new county included the least inhabited portions of Augusta beginning about thirty miles southwest of the former county seat of Staunton. The newly created county claimed the waters of the Mississippi as its western boundary. When in 1773 some Botetourt residents complained of their remoteness from the courthouse, the General Assembly granted their request for a new partition, by creating Fincastle County as a tribute to Viscount Fincastle, the eldest son of Virginia's new governor, Lord Dunmore. On December 31, 1776, the legislature of the newly independent Commonwealth of Virginia divided Fincastle into three counties, eliminating Fincastle as an entity. Kentucky County took its name from the Kentucky River. The other two counties received their names from two individuals; one living and one deceased. The legislature named Washington County in honor of Virginia's native son. Montgomery took its name from a fallen hero,

Richard Montgomery, who perished at Quebec December 31, 1775, attempting to wrest the fortress from British control.[1]

The counties of Botetourt, Montgomery and Washington constitute the region known as southwest Virginia. The importance of this trio lies in the serious Tory conspiracies that occurred within their boundaries. The plotting appears to have been sufficiently dispersed in these counties to prompt frontier leaders into joining together to suppress the uprisings. The conspirators' main object was the lead deposits located in then Montgomery County. British agents and Tories from other colonies encouraged the destruction of this essential ammunition source. The Montgomery mines' output was integral to success in the drive for independence: if the Americans lacked material for shot, they could not wage war against the British. At the dawn of the Revolution, the Montgomery mines were the only facility in North America capable of production on even a moderate scale. During the Revolution the mines' output greatly aided the fight for independence.[2]

Characteristics of some of the people who settled in southwest Virginia go far in showing which elements were receptive to supporting King and Country against absentee landlords from the Tidewater and Piedmont sections in the economic and constitutional argument of 1775-1776. It was difficult for many frontier folk to know who would best advance their interests. Life itself was at such a premium that its preservation by gathering food, providing shelter and clothing and avoiding or defeating dangers, left little time for more intellectual

pursuits. Pioneers had to be endowed "with extraordinary courage and powers of endurance" to take on and meet the task of making homes and a livelihood in the forbidding wilderness. Thus, it was remarkable that fifteen frontiersmen joined the Reverend Charles Cummings in signing the Fincastle Resolutions on January 10, 1776.[3]

Unquestionably most members of ethnic groups of southwest Virginia yearned for a better life which meant owning land. In Europe calamitous crop failures from 1769 through the period just prior to the American Revolution, plus the high cost of living accelerated by increases in land rents, enclosures and unemployment, drove many to seek greener economic pastures. Scotland underwent a "disruption of the clan system and a shift from feudal to capitalist tenure in agriculture." Likewise in Ireland a devastating slump occurred within the all-important linen industry. Due to constant religious discord, Germans and Swiss had emigrated before the troubles that beset the British Isles. Englishmen, residents of Virginia since 1607 sent word back to the mother country that the colonies were indeed, the land of endless opportunity. They waxed eloquent about America's charms, prompting a flood of immigrants in the decades prior to the War for Independence.[4]

Pressure of a burgeoning population coupled with primitive agricultural technology created a constant and increasing demand for a new land not exhausted by tobacco or other labor intensive crops. Natural increase was an equal cause for the spurt in colonial population between 1763 and 1776. All classes of Americans married early and

contributed to the colonies' exceptionally high birth rate. The transmontane section of Virginia enjoyed the most dramatic increase, both numerical and relative.[5]

Immigrants after 1763 rarely settled in Tidewater where old residents had acquired the best land long before and were unwilling to sell, even when many of them were hard-pressed to avoid bankruptcy. Although good land was available to new settlers in Piedmont, it was at exorbitant prices. Other newcomers came by land from Philadelphia and made their way southward in the Great Valley between the Blue Ridge and the Allegheny Mountains. They too, found the first lands that they saw in the Old Dominion to be occupied and available only at high prices. This left for the immigrants to Virginia in the third quarter of the 18th century the fourth and fifth sections of the state, the northwest and the southwest. Virginia claimed the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers as its northern and western limits.[6]

The practice of speculation in land facilitated settlement in the frontier areas because the system worked to the advantage of both parties: the grantor and the grantee. The grantor received a higher than market value price which increased profits. The grantee received title to his acreage without a long journey to the county courthouse where delays might occur. By purchasing from a speculator's agent the grantee could be clearing his land while someone who bought land in the conventional manner might still be waiting for his deed to be recorded at the courthouse. Seeking fertile farmland, Germans and

Scotch-Irish journeyed down the Great Wagon Road southwest from Staunton and the Peaks of Otter to the New River, where some stopped and others went on to what is now West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. Gradually, as settlements multiplied, the restless nature of the people with the brogues and burrs, caused many families to move further into the heart of the frontier where they joined the thrifty, industrious Germans who had created a good life for themselves.[7]

These pioneers fell into three groups: Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, German Lutherans, and English of mixed religious background. The Germans who settled within the present boundaries of Montgomery County found that topographical features of the terrain all but dictated that settlers establish their homes along the rivers "that dissected and penetrated the mountain barrier." The early inhabitants were not dissatisfied with this circumstance since the choicest farm land lay in the "bottom" lands on either side of the meandering rivers and their tributaries. Once a group of German families established themselves in a location, others of the same ethnic stock, also recent arrivals, gravitated toward them. Bound together tightly by custom and language, the Germans tended to cluster together. In a like fashion, though not to the extent of the Germans, immigrants from other ethnic groups, especially the Ulster Scots tended to settle near others from the homeland. But the yearning for fertile land led many individuals, willing to forego the comfort of having neighbors from the homeland, to brave the unknown.[8]

While the Germans helped pave the route for the others who followed, they participated little in the day-to-day affairs of their community. Isolated by language, law and religion, they were content to follow the minimum rules imposed by the local Irish and Scots leadership. Oddly enough, there were so few Englishmen who dared to meet frontier challenges that the duties of government fell to those who were acquainted with the English way of life. To the Germans one of the most alluring charms of the backcountry was the absence of a government that permeated every aspect of their lives. With a modicum of effort, a settler could become a naturalized citizen without being required to "abandon his language, his religious faith, or his folkways." From the outset Germans conceded Scotch-Irish dominance in government affairs; their familiarity with the nuances of English common law, their habit of preserving records and their economic status made them logical frontier leaders. The Germans set up a self-contained community isolating them further from their English-speaking environment. This tendency led to few business contacts and decidedly averse trips to the courthouse. These characteristics branded the Germans as definitely different from their English-speaking neighbors who thoroughly enjoyed the communal experience of court day and other social functions of colonial life. Most German bread-winners were so concerned with their family's welfare and religious salvation that their neighbors viewed them as a "lover of home, a true conservative and a stickler for the status quo." Many displayed an obvious reluctance to utilize all the

advantages offered by the freedom of colonial rule. These traits go a long way toward explaining many Germans' disinterest in independence.[9]

One step removed from being German peasants, the teutonic settlers of southwest Virginia grumbled about the lords of the land and of political life, but they willingly accorded to them the lordship of the sword. It was not so much that they were uninterested or disinterested or non-partisan as it was that the typical Johan Preisch was accustomed to cultivating his crops and leaving politics and fighting to the lords. In the Virginia backcountry during colonial times, frontier leaders tended to be Irish, Scots or Welsh. The prominence of such families as the Campbells, the Lewises, the Pattons, the Prestons and the McGavocks attests to this. Mostly Presbyterian by faith, they engaged in land speculation, politics, community affairs and fighting the Indians. They were enterprising and adventurous individuals, so confident of their ability and authority they became easily "habituated to arms and Indian warfare." Their dominance was as powerful in their respective domains as was that of the Tidewater and Piedmont aristocracy. Their leadership may have been less dignified but their energy and vigor more than made up for that. Since the same law that applied to all regions of Virginia had an aristocratic tone, the control exerted by these frontier magnates was also somewhat aristocratic.[10]

In transmontane Virginia, as in other parts of the Old Dominion, the politics of deference prevailed without real question. Being a gentlemen conferred a status unattainable to ordinary citizens.

Therefore, those not of the gentry usually deferred politically and socially to the men who became frontier barons. Criteria for county office included economic influence and family stature. Intermarriage as practiced in Tidewater and Piedmont between dominant families maintained a near-monopoly on civil and military authority. The most important office in county government was the position of justice of the peace. Justices received their appointment from the governor. More often than not they came from a gentry background and were regarded as lords of the manor.[11]

In addition to their duties as gentlemen justices, these men usually enjoyed the power and prestige of being a militia officer. The western pioneers had inherited their British forbears' fears of a standing army. Yet the need for defense against the Indians and other foes dictated some type of military body. The need led to the formation of the militia. Whenever the situation arose, the citizenry could call out the militia. The system depended on popular election of officers; the ranks elected the captain and his subalterns. The county justices recommended a candidate for the post of officer and if the governor agreed with their choice; he issued a commission through the county court. The governor also appointed a county lieutenant who commanded the entire county's militia. The county lieutenant held the rank of colonel and communicated directly with the chief executive. In this period plural office-holding became the rule rather than the exception.[12]

Therefore it was not extraordinary that William Preston, nephew of land magnate James Patton, held several offices simultaneously; that of justice, surveyor, escheator, and sheriff. His career in public service began under the tutelage of Patton, a powerful man on the frontier. Patton, having no male heir, groomed his young nephew to assume his place on the frontier. After Patton's untimely demise in the 1755 Draper's Meadows Massacre, Preston stepped into his uncle's sizable shoes. By the beginning of the War for Independence he had also served as an explorer, a guide for George Washington, and a Burgess in the General Assembly. As an influential figure and an educated man of importance in backwoods Virginia, he recorded pertinent information about all aspects of the frontier; his letters and observations provide an important glimpse of the events and people of his time.[13]

As the colonial period concluded, Preston was probably the most influential man on the southwest Virginia frontier. To provide a suitable setting for a man of his importance he constructed in 1773, a fortified house whose beauty and elegance belied its ability to ward off Indian attack. Its palisade provided evidence that this was no genteel Tidewater mansion. Although Smithfield was not a grand Tidewater edifice, it was a gentleman's seat worthy of a Burgess from that section. For southwest Virginia it became the standard by which her influential citizens judged their own homes. Named in honor of his wife, the former Susanna Smith of Hanover County, Smithfield also provided a meeting

place where county patriots could confer in confidence. Smithfield appears to have "become an unofficial headquarters for the defence of the southwest."[14]

People who settled in southwest Virginia discovered in addition to fertile farmland, the region boasted of some especially valuable mineral deposits. First and foremost were the lead deposits present in the western end of Montgomery County. Colonel John Chiswell developed the ore deposits because being the son of Charles Chiswell, he realized full well the importance of lead. On a journey to the New River Valley in 1756, he discovered exposed outcroppings of lead ore. Thomas Jefferson in his Notes on the State of Virginia described the mines:

> The metal is mixed, sometimes with earth, and sometimes with rock, which requires the force of gunpowder to open it; and is accompanied with a portion of silver too small to be worth separation under any process hithertoo attempted there. The proportion yielded is from fifty to eighty pounds of pure metal from one hundred pounds of washed ore. The most common is that of sixty to hundred pounds. The veins are sometimes most flattering, at other they disappear suddenly and totally. They enter the side of a hill and proceed horizontally. Two of them are wrought at present by the public, the best of which is one hundred yards under the hill.[15]

To insure that his discovery would be developed in haste, he proposed a partnership with three individuals who possessed the clout to guarantee the land title and the capital for the venture. The trio who joined him were all influential Virginians: William Byrd III, Francis Fauquier and John Robinson. Byrd's inherited wealth provided immediate capital;

Fauquier later became governor of Virginia; and Robinson, Chiswell's son-in-law, held the influential post of Treasurer of the colony.[16]

The lack of lead on the frontier, where demand was great, convinced Chiswell to begin working the deposits before he possessed clear title to the land. Initially, his optimism about turning a quick profit proved to be unfounded, but between 1760 and 1766 production increased to the point that the operation was deemed a success. In 1766 the scandalous Robinson Affair clouded the mines' future. The Treasurer's misappropriation of funds to make sweetheart loans to his cronies came to light following Robinson's death. Shortly afterwards, Chiswell also died. Although Chiswell's heirs inherited his title to the Mines, this was heavily encumbered.[17]

Without the careful supervision of Chiswell and Robinson, mismanagement occurred and output at the mines declined. In 1772, the lead mines received new importance as the first county seat of Fincastle County. The newly appointed justices of Fincastle assembled there on January 5, 1773. Later that same month, fifteen leading citizens of the frontier signed there on January 20, 1775, the noted document known as the Fincastle Resolutions which declared their determination "never to surrender" their "liberties and properties as British subjects."[18]

When the legislature dissolved Fincastle County December 31, 1776, the Lead Mines became the county seat of the newly formed county of Montgomery. During a decade under Byrd's management, the mining venture

all but foundered before his suicide on January 1, 1777. Late in 1776 the state placed the lead works under state supervision for the duration of the war. The scarcity of lead became so acute during the early years of the Revolution that General George Washington suggested "that soldiers always fire their muskets in such a way that the bullets would hit banks of earth from which the lead could be recovered" for use again. During the preliminary stages of the war, Virginia's representatives in the Continental Congress urged that the Congress consider the southwest Virginia mines as the major source of supply for the Continental Army and the states. In correspondence with Governor Patrick Henry, they wrote that the mines were "... an object of vast importance... considered as perhaps the sole means of supporting the American cause they are inestimable."[19]

General supervision of the mines was the responsibility of Henry Innes who supervised all the mines and mills for the state from 1776-1777. Late in 1776 the state appointed James Callaway, of Bedford County to superintend the New River Mines. In late 1777 the government replaced Callaway with another Bedford resident, Charles Lynch. The new superintendent's background in gunpowder manufacturing made him ably prepared to assume the awesome responsibility for supervising the invaluable lead operation. Lynch increased production from 50,000 pounds in 1774 to 64,970 pounds in 1779. In 1780 the year of the Tory scare, production declined to 33,084. However, output reached new heights by 1782 when the workers manufactured 68,000 pounds of lead.[20]

Lead was not the only mineral found in abundance within the region. The ingredients for gunpowder, also a necessary article for war, were also present. When the War for Independence began, the Continental Army and militia of the states had only 80,000 pounds of powder in their magazines. By January of 1776, they had almost exhausted this small supply. Of course troops seized British stores of powder and lead whenever possible and the government tried to import enough to satisfy the demand. However, importation on a large scale proved unreliable because of the ever vigilant British Navy. The colonial leaders turned to the states who were encouraged to produce gunpowder as well as develop possible lead deposits.[21]

The quick-witted and versatile Paul Revere recalled a French pamphlet that provided directions for making gunpowder. The essential ingredient was saltpeter and this article could be secured "from the droppings in hen coops and ... pigeon lofts." Fortunately, saltpeter existed in its natural state in the wilds of southwest Virginia. Jefferson in his Notes on the State of Virginia also provided a description of these deposits:

> In the lime-stone country are many caves, the earthy floors of which are impregnated with nitre. On Rich creek, a branch of the Great Kanhaway, about sixty miles below the lead mines, is a very large one, about twenty yards wide, and entering a hill a quarter or half a mile. The vault is of rock, from nine to fifteen feet above the floor. A Mr. Lynch, who gives me this account, undertook to extract the nitre. Besides a coat of the salt which had formed on the vault and floor, he found the earth highly impregnated

> to the depth of seven feet in some places, and generally of three, every bushel yielding on an average three pounds of nitre...At least fifty of these caves are worked on the Greenbrier.[22]

The Alsups, Brumfields, Snidows and Trolingers worked the saltpeter caves along the New River. Of these families the Trolingers developed their cave to the greatest extent. Henry Trolinger, Sr. began making gunpowder with the assistance of his son Henry, Jr. in 1776. Production continued smoothly until the younger Trolinger was called into militia service in 1779. Receipts show that Joseph McDonald made gunpowder early in the 1800's but family tradition indicates his earlier involvement in gunpowder production. He probably began the manufacture of gunpowder before the Revolution when he settled in the Tom's Creek area in the mid-1760's. The saltpeter deposits and numerous sulphur springs in the region enabled the residents to produce gunpowder easily, composed of twelve parts saltpeter to one and a half parts sulphur to two and a half parts charcoal. The Fincastle Committee of Safety furnished Andrew Hatfield with twenty pounds of sulphur to allow him to manufacture 100 pounds of needed gunpowder. Salt licks located in what is now Smyth County were a boon to the settlers who could not only produce their own salt but sell or barter salt for Tidewater and Piedmont goods. These scarce resources made the area attractive for British-instigated unrest.[23]

Although the frontier counties of Botetourt, Montgomery and Washington were removed intially from the direct fight for independence,

by no means were they oblivious to the idealogical struggle for the hearts and minds of their countrymen. Traits common to all settlers and special characteristics of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds made some susceptible to Tory blandishments and others to persuasion by the Patriots. Frontier life was hard, and to many, the immediate benefits to be gained was reason enough to be a Tory or to conspire with known advocates of the King.

Notes - Chapter II

[1]Robert D. Stoner, A Seed-Bed of the Republic: A Study of the Pioneers in the Upper (Southern) Valley of Virginia (Radford, Virginia: Commonwealth Press, Inc., 1962; hereinafter cited as Stoner, Seed-Bed), 95; William Waller Hening, ed., The Statutes at Large Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the first Session of the Legislature in 1619, 13 vols. (Richmond: 1819-1823; hereinafter cited as Hening, Statutes), VIII, 395, 396, 600, IX, 258; Lula P. Givens, Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Virginia, in the Heart of the Alleghenies (Pulaski, Virginia: Edmonds Printing, Inc., 1981; hereinafter cited as Givens, Christiansburg), 5.

[2]Donald E. Reynolds, "Ammunition Supply in Revolutionary Virginia," VMHB LXXII (January 1965; hereinafter cited as Reynolds, "Ammunition Supply," VMHB), 65; Arthur Hecht, "Lead Production in Virginia During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," West Virginia History XXV (April, 1964; hereinafter cited as Hecht, "Lead Production", West Virginia History), 178.

[3]William C. Pendleton, Political History of Appalachian Virginia, 1776-1927 (Dayton, Virginia: The Shenandoah Press, 1927), 613; Jack M. Sosin, The Revolutionary Frontier, 1763-1783 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967; hereinafter cited as Sosin, Frontier), 21, 22; Douglas S. Brown, "Charles Cummings: The Fighting Parson of Southwest Virginia," Virginia Cavalcade (Winter 1979), 140.

[4]Sosin, Frontier, 24.

[5]Sosin, Frontier, 23; Ray A. Billington, Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier (New York, 1949), 90.

[6]Abernethy, Three Frontiers, 60, 61; Parke Rouse, Jr., The Great Wagon Road From Philadelphia to the South (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1973; hereinafter cited as Rouse, Wagon Road), 24.

[7]Abernethy, Three Frontiers, 54, 55; Sosin, Frontier, 21, Rouse, Wagon Road, 24, 34, 66.

[8]Mary B. Kegley, Early Adventurers on the Western Waters: The New River of Virginia in Pioneer Days, 1745-1800, 2 vols. (Orange, Virginia: Green Publishers, Inc., 1982; hereinafter cited as Kegley, Western Waters), II, xvii; Rouse, Wagon Road, 33; Klaus Wust, The Virginia Germans (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969; hereinafter cited as Wust, Virginia Germans), 38.

[9]Wust, Virginia Germans, 109, 111; Harvey L. Price, "Drapers Meadows and Smithfield," Special Collections, Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; hereinafter cited as Price, "Drapers Meadows"; Stoner, Seed-Bed, 32.

[10]Abernethy, Three Frontiers, 59; Sally A. Eads, "Government by Families in Botetourt County," Journal of the Roanoke Valley Historical Society IX (1975; hereinafter cited as Eads, "Government in Botetourt," JRVHS), 6; Kentucky Papers, Draper Manuscript, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. Microfilm copy in Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; hereinafter cited as Kentucky Papers, Draper Manuscript, 11CC233.

[11]Eads, "Government in Botetourt," JRVHS, 8; Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1964; hereinafter cited as Jefferson, Notes), 86, 87.

[12]John D. Kirby, "The Militia of Southwest Virginia, 1784-1794" (unpublished master's thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1976), 28, 29.

[13]William C. Pendleton, History of Tazewell County and Southwest Virginia, 1748-1920 (Richmond: W. C. Hill Printing Co., 1920; hereinafter cited as Pendleton, Tazewell), 549; Patricia G. Johnson, William Preston and the Allegheny Patriots (Pulaski, Virginia: B. D. Smith and Bros., Printers, Inc., 1976; hereinafter cited as Johnson, William Preston), 189; Robert B. Marston, "William Preston," John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College IV (June, 1915; hereinafter cited as Marston, "William Preston," Randolph-Macon Papers), 264-266.

[14]Bruce D. Tuttle, "Colonel William Preston, 1729-1783" (unpublished master's thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1973; hereinafter cited as Tuttle, "Preston"), 34, 61; Johnson, William Preston, 117; Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. Microfilm copy in Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; hereinafter cited as Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 1QQ; R. D. Michael, "Smithfield Folder," Special Collections, Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia.

[15]Vera L. Austin, "The Southwest Virginia Lead Works, 1756-1802", (unpublished master's thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1977; hereinafter cited as Austin, "Lead Works"), 8; Jefferson, Notes, 23. During the 1730s the elder Chiswell managed an iron furnace near Fredericksburg.

[16]Austin, "Lead Works," 9-12. Fauquier withdrew his interest in the mines before mining actually began.

[17]Ibid., 11-14, 21, 22-26. Chiswell allegedly killed a man and while awaiting trial, committed suicide.

[18]Ibid., 27, 29; Richard B. Harwell, ed., The Committees of Safety of Westmoreland and Fincastle, 1774-1776 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1956; hereinafter cited as Harwell, Fincastle Committee of Safety), 20, 63-64.

[19]Austin, "Lead Works," 26, 27, 31; Boyd, Jefferson Papers, I, 460.

[20]Austin, "Lead Works," 35, 36; Boyd, Jefferson Papers, IV, fn, 408; Jefferson, Notes, 23.

[21]Reynolds, "Ammunition Supply," VMHB, 65; Silvio Bendini, "The Practical Sciences in the American Revolution," Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine CX (July 1976), 769.

[22]Gertrude A. MacPeek, "New England in 1776," Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine CX (July 1976), 764; Jefferson, Notes, 30.

[23]Kegley, Western Waters, II, 2, 343, 344, I, 239; Johnson, William Preston, 183; Harwell, Fincastle Committee of Safety, 92; Larry Bowman, "The Virginia County Committees of Safety, 1774-1776," VMHB LXXIX (July 1971), 334; Jefferson, Notes, 31.

Chapter III

THE CURTAIN RISES: INDIAN AND TORY APPREHENSIONS ON THE FRONTIER, 1776-1778

The cloud which has threatened to break over this part of the country has now dispersed. The Six Nations, Delawares, Shawnee, Munsee, and Mahican...have...promised inviolable peace with the United States, and neutrality during the War with Great Britain.

Summary of a letter from Colonel George Morgan to the President of Congress November 8, 1776, published in The Revolution on the Upper Ohio, 1775-1777, eds., Reuben G. Thwaites and Louise P. Kellogg (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1970), 216, 217.

The late barbarous, inhuman and impolitic murder committed at the Point on the Cornstalk and his Party, by a number of rash inconsiderate Villains, I am fully convinced will be followed by the most direful consequences to the long extended frontier. As it cannot be supposed that the Shawnees, a war-like, blood thirsty, and revengful Nation of Savages will suffer the Injury done them in the Murder of their leaders and Beloved men to pass unrevenged.

William Preston to Governor Patrick Henry January 16, 1778, Preston Papers, Archives, Virginia State Library.

By 1776 the continuing approach of settlers upon Indian land snapped the Cherokees' patience. They feared their land being completely overrun by the Long Knives or Virginians as they named the encroaching settlers. In a message to the residents of Nolichucky and Watauga the Cherokee demanded they withdraw within the short space of twenty days. A letter to the Committee of Safety of Fincastle County convinced authorities on the frontier and in the east that the Cherokee posed an immediate and serious threat. Not knowing the letter

had been altered, the authorities cited it as unassailable proof that the British were inciting the Cherokee. Believing that war with the British was imminient, the settlers could strengthen their request for assistance if they could convince the authorities at Williamsburg that British intrigue was inciting the Indians. The altered letter revealed "a plan in which the Indians and Loyalists would attack the frontier [so detailed that], the houses of the King's friends [were] conspicuously marked so as to give them immunity." This explosive piece of propaganda accomplished the purpose for which it was intended. The Fincastle Committee of Safety endorsed its veracity and accused British agents of causing the unrest. In a letter to the Cherokee, the Committeemen replied: "We are sorry to say this unprovoked Conduct so Contrary to your former Behaviour plainly shows that your Hearts are not good, and that you want some pretence to break off all Connection with your former Friends and allies."[1]

Shortly after the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed, Governor Patrick Henry received information concerning a possible Cherokee plot to interfere with production at the Lead Mines. His informant, the Honorable Cornelius Harnett, President of the Council of Safety of North Carolina, warned that the Cherokee nation entertained "a Design of cutting off the Persons employed at the Lead Mines." He claimed that some unidentified white men were responsible for inciting the Indians against the lead mines. At the same time he also requested five tons of Virginia lead since North Carolina had no other means to

obtain shot. While Harnett did not openly accuse British agents with responsibility, both men probably believed the plot to be their handiwork. Events soon proved that the Cherokee were on the warpath when news reached southwest Virginia that Dragging Canoe, a Cherokee chieftain, had led an assault on the Long Island of the Holston, the present site of Kingsport, Tennessee.[2]

To counter the threat to the Mines, Governor Henry instructed the county lieutenant of Fincastle County, Colonel William Preston, to build a stockade at the mines and staff it with twenty-five men. Contrary to popular opinion, this fortified structure was not the same as Fort Chiswell, constructed in 1760-1761 about ten miles away, in accordance with Colonel William Byrd III's specifications. Preston moved with dispatch to protect the lead works, but another important colonial leader moved with more speed. Colonel William Russell, a more westernly member of the Fincastle Committee, took the initiative by ordering a lieutenant and thirty troops to safeguard the ore. Russell acted upon intelligence from traders and tinkers who had recently visited in the Indian strongholds plus his own observation of approaching "Savages in large Bodies." Contemporaneously, a company of Bedford militia needing lead had already arrived. Having learned of this, the Indians did not attack.[3]

General Charles Lee formally advised the Virginia Convention that the British had a long-standing plan "to lay waste the Provinces, burn the habitations, and mix men, women, and children, in one common

carnage by the hands of the Indians..." At the same time, the Continental Congress expressed its appreciation of the Mines' importance as a source of shot, in a resolution on June 7, 1776: "The article of lead is so essentially necessary to us at this juncture, and is withal so scarce that no pains should be spared to procure it." The situation was so acute that New Yorkers had no qualms about toppling over a leaden statue of the King for conversion into shot. The Continental Congress had lost no time in calling upon Virginia to help supply its Army. John Hancock, President of the Congress sent the following message to Governor Henry less than two weeks after the Declaration of Independence:

> A much greater quantity [of lead] is still wanted for the Army in New Jersey, and every method should be taken to procure it; I...therefore request you will send by the return wagons, which are now on their way to your Colony with powder, as much lead as you can spare, and that you will order fifteen or twenty tons more of lead from the mines to this city as soon as possible.

From Williamsburg on July 27th, John Page answered Hancock's request saying that the Convention had ordered the hiring of additional employees to help meet the demand incurred by the Indian war. Expressing the hope that Virginia soon could supply the twenty tons requested by the Continental Congress, he explained the delay: "At present we have had demands for lead from North Carolina and our frontiers that it is impossible to procure any for you till more can be extracted from the ore."[4]

Publicly there was greater optimism. A printed circular probably from the Virginia Gazette declared: "From undoubted authority we can assure the publick that fifteen thousand weight of pure lead have been got from our mines in the backcountry, which, after being cast into bullets, we hope will be unerringly directed against our enemies." The writer appeared optimistic that the combination of Indians and British would be dissolved. By October Governor Henry informed Congress that ten tons of lead ready for immediate use by the Continental Army was en route. He hoped more could be spared by Christmas if not sooner if the frontier's difficulties eased. After the lead situation became acute, the Virginia Convention passed legislation empowering the state to take over the mines' operation. The Convention directed the governor to hire as many laborers as he thought necessary to operate the mines at full capacity. He could hire any manager and extract monies from state coffers to carry on operations. The legislation decreed that the Commonwealth sell all lead that could be spared, first to the Continental Congress and then to the other states. Because of a greater demand from the Continental Congress for still more lead, the Virginia Council of State in March of 1778 urged Charles Lynch, manager of the mines to encourage more production "with the utmost Exertion."[5]

Meanwhile on the frontier, William Preston had concerns other than the Cherokee. Even before independence was declared, the morale of his German neighbors so worried Preston that he requested help from

John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, the influential German minister who became a noted Patriot. Muhlenberg, sensing that an uneasiness prevailed in the backcountry wrote that he had intended to visit that area but his busy duties prevented the journey. Most likely he composed a missive urging his fellow Germans to support independence. Since the letter does not survive, one can only assume that he wrote something to that effect when he requested that Preston keep him up-to-date on further developments. Early on, the master of Smithfield recognized the dangerous potential of Tory sentiment in Southwest Virginia, but he believed that if it coalesced, its thrust would be to incite the Indians just as General Charles Lee suspected. Preston wrote, "It is confidently reported here that one Roberts with a Gang of forty Tories were on Elk Creek about 30 miles from Fort Chiswell three days ago, [and] That his intention was to Engage men to join the Cherokees."[6]

Colonel Preston revealed his innermost qualms about the Tories to Edmund Pendleton, head of the Virginia Committee of Safety: "There is much reason to believe that a number of Germans and others in this County are unfriendly to the Cause." As county lieutenant and a member of the Fincastle Committee of Safety, he requested instructions on how to deal with these people. While he believed they posed no danger at that time, their propensity to render assistance of any kind, " and the Freedom with which they frequently express themselves, deserves notice, especially at a time when there is reason to fear an invasion of our Frontiers by the savages." In the waning months of 1776, the

Cherokees appeared beaten after a decisive defeat July 20th at the Long Island on the Holston. Persistent attacks, however angered the distressed residents. Frontiersmen perceived the none too subtle hand of the British guiding the Cherokee nation in their outrages. "The poor savages," railed Colonel Thomas Lewis, "are innocent compared with ye Diabolical train of villains ranging from the Son of a Hessian whore to ye meanest reptile that have been employed to bring this Horrid business about."[7]

As the Cherokee conflict wound down, Colonel Preston's attention turned to legislation passed by the Virginia Convention requiring all males sixteen years old and beyond to take the Oath of Allegiance. As a justice of the county court Preston shouldered much of the responsibility for giving the oath. The Convention decreed that the county court keep a roster of those who took the oath and those who refused to swear allegiance. Unwillingness to swear allegiance cost an inhabitant an immediate suspension of his ordinary rights under common law: the right to bear arms, to vote or run for public office, to sit on juries, and to purchase land. The penalties for not adhering to the law severely impaired these recusants' rights as citizens of the Commonwealth. However, as the Loyalist problem failed to disappear penalties became stiffer: confiscation of property and even burial without the rites of the church. The more serious crime of treason required proof of a defendant's having waged war against American troops or having aided and abetted the enemy. Anyone who by word or

deed defended "the authority, jurisdiction, or power, of the King or parliament of Great Britain..." was guilty of treason. Fines were not to exceed £20,000, a most formidable sum while prison sentences could not total more than five years. As provided under common law, a local jury of peers determined the question of guilt and the local justices meted out punishment.[8]

The deadline for complying with the law came and passed without everyone in the county submitting. Preston's earlier worries seemed justified when some neighbors and even some militiamen refused to affirm their loyalty. However, the task of convincing obstinate friends to swear allegiance paled in comparison to what was brewing on the outskirts of the frontier. A grave tragedy sparked fear in the hearts of the backcountry's residents. In November 1777, foolhardy members of a militia company murdered without cause the Shawnee chief Cornstalk, his son, Ellimipsico, and two other Shawnee chiefs, Redhawk and Old Yie. From Smithfield the Montgomery colonel wrote his counterpart, Colonel William Fleming of Botetourt of his disquietude after learning of Cornstalk's untimely death "in cold Blood." As county lieutenants of their respective counties, they merited the title of colonel and corresponded frequently about backcountry happenings. The Montgomery leader made no secret of his fears. "I am apprehensive this conduct will be followed by very bad consequences to the Frontier, by engaging us in a war with that Revengful and War-like Nation and their allies." This outrage occurred a scant two months after Governor Henry had

written General Washington of peace with the Cherokees. Now war with the retaliation-minded Shawnee loomed on the horizon.[9]

As 1777 drew to a close, Preston feared the Shawnee nation, en masse, would wreak vengeance in the backcountry. He also worried about his friends who refused to swear fealty to the Commonwealth. He made his frustrations regarding those who foreswore taking the oath very plain to Colonel Fleming:

> Captain [Thomas] Burk and his whole company except four or five and near forty of my neighbors have refused to take the Oath. I have laboured with them until I am wearied out and to no Purpose; and next week I intend to order them disarmed, having given them this week to come in and take the oath, and I have the greatest reason to believe it will be attended to with much trouble and perhaps Resistance. The Ringleaders, such as [John Michael] Price, [James] Bane, [Jacob] Shull and the Heavins [John and Thomas] don't realize [how serious] the Punishment [is] as the Law now stands; and I am convinced that They, and all such will stand out until [they realize that] their Prosperity and Persons can be more affected than what the Law subjects them to.

Preston evidently believed the law needed more teeth to be effective where these recusants were concerned. He derided the existing penalty for non-compliance as being only a diversion to his strong-minded and independent neighbors who had disdained adhering to the law. "They bring no suits, they never Elect, they don't attend Court, they can dispose of their Arms and they don't want to purchase Land; by these means they entirely evade the force of the Law..." The frontier magnate declared that he hoped the legislature would take steps to remedy these loopholes through amended legislation. Until that body

did so, dangerous Tories would be free - speaking and acting with abandon. In short they could do as they pleased.[10]

According to court records from the tri-county area, Botetourt was the first to initiate action against suspected Tories before members of the respective committees of safety, who were usually the gentlemen justices. Most suspected of harboring sympathy for the King were charged simply as being an enemy of the Commonwealth and the United States of America. Exactly what prompted suspicion of these individuals is difficult to discern because the court records do not suggest a specific offense. One could be tried for something as insignificant as toasting the King to a more serious transgression such as counterfeiting currency. Often the court records of the three counties do not cite a specific offense. Usually however, the Court judged the alleged Tory on the basis of being unfriendly to the liberties of the nation, or in the parlance of the day, "inimical to the liberties of America."

On February 11, 1777, the Botetourt justices examined John Robinson who acknowledged "the authority of the King of Great Britain over the United States." They determined reason existed for suspicion and ordered him to appear at the next session of court. They released him on his own recognizance after ordering that he put up £50 and his two securities come up with a combined £100 as bond for his future court appearance. At the next court on March 11th, the gentlemen justices dismissed the charge for lack of evidence. The same day the

Court also acquitted John Van Bebber. The justices believed that they had justifiable grounds to suspect the loyalty of William Davies. Not only had he "larnt the art of making gunpowder," but he planned to return to the Indians with whom he had lived twenty years. The Court ordered that he post £1,000 as security for his good behavior and that his two securities post £500 each. Furthermore, the defendant could not travel beyond the state's boundaries for a year. Until his securities posted the necessary bond, the sheriff, George Skillern, retained custody of Davies. The following day, March 12th, after a change of heart the justices revoked their order for two securities on the condition that Davies appear in court the following March and that "he do not curry or correspond with the Indians or other enemies of this State..." No further prosecution of suspected Tories in Botetourt occurred until March of 1778.[11]

The first prosecutions in Washington County began in the winter of 1777 shortly after the deadline passed for taking the oath of allegiance. The justices tried William Huston and Jeremiah Slaughter for "having in [their] conduct and conversation evidenced a disposition inimical to the Cause of America." Because the Court records list no fines, punishments, bonds or conditions concerning these men, it is fair to conclude that the charges were dismissed with no more than a warning.[12]

The Montgomery justices took their first step in dealing with disloyalty when they examined a miller named Jacob Kettering, on

January 6, 1778. The judges suspected him of being an enemy of the state "and of refusing the paper currency." The jury found Kettering guilty and sentenced him to serve a year in prison and to pay a fine of £250. The same day, Lawrence Buckholder was tried for "expressing many words as an enemy." The jury fined him £10 and bound him to his good behavior for one year provided he could convince two securities to post £100 each. Until his securities posted their £200 bond, the jury remanded him to the sheriff's custody. Because Montgomery County then had no jail, the gentlemen justices sent Kettering to Staunton for incarceration in the Augusta gaol.[13]

In February 1778, Captain Thomas Burk reported he had called the members of his militia company together as his commander Colonel Preston had ordered. Many still refused to obey the statute requiring the oath. Asserting that in good conscience he could not comply with the oath, Burk resigned his commission. Attempting to explain his actions Burk said: "...I never flew in the face of authority, neither shall I,..I must be under the law of men and am not against anything in Reason and Stand in Reasonable fear of my fellowmen. But [I]... must think that I have a God to fear...him who is able to Destroy both soul and body in Hell. I think it Requisit at all time to take Sum thought of an Eternal State...[As for] rebelling against the Country I never thought of any such thing."[14]

A month earlier Colonel Preston had informed Governor Henry that over one hundred people in Montgomery County alone had adamantly

refused to swear allegiance to the state and that he had disarmed most of these recalcitrant individuals according to the law. Their reluctance baffled the Montgomery leader who declared that while these people remained obstinate, they forfeited their right to protection from Indians, murderers or wild beasts. Asserting that he as county lieutenant could not shoulder the entire responsibility for safeguarding the backcountry, he urged Governor Henry and the Council to assume their responsibility by making speedy plans for its defense. Preston declared that long frontier experience made him and his close associates extremely pessimistic about southwest Virginia escaping the Indians' wrath unscathed. "I am fully convinced,...that this Country or a great Part of it will be depopulated by May next, and the Enemy, like Blood-Hounds, will pursue, untill they overtake their Prey; even to the South Side of the blue Ridge, as they did many years ago," Preston related. He went on to discuss somewhat mundane matters. The scarcity of salt limited people from preserving their normal quantites of pork. Indian corn could be purchased but the cost was "dear". The harvest of wheat and other grains must have been extremely bad since Montgomery and its neighboring counties could not provision troops for defense. He concluded with, "The want of Lead is a most discouraging Circumstance to the Inhabitants in the Time of Danger. They offer any Price but their Money Cannot Purchase it."[15]

With fears about his neighbors and friends fresh in his mind, Preston must have felt bedeviled from two sides. On the one hand, the

loyalty of some of his neighbors and comrades did not parallel his own. On the other face of the coin, he felt certain that everybody on the unstable frontier, including his stubborn friends and neighbors would suffer greatly at the hands of the Shawnees. Pro-British proclivities concerned him less than did the Indian threat. Governor Henry's sentiments paralleled Preston's own. The Shawnee menace stirred his blood more than frontier residents who were unwilling to swear a loyalty oath. No doubt existed in his mind that Cornstalk's murder would bring heartache to the backcountry. He suggested that every gun be put in working order in preparation for the coming attack. In an angry diatribe he blamed the Tories for agitating the Indians:

> ...where is this wretched Business to end? The Cherokees, the Delawares, and every other Tribe may be set on [us] in this manner, this Spring for what I know. Is this not the work of Torys? No man but an Enemy to American Independence will do it, and thus oblige our people to be hunting after Indians in the woods, instead of facing General Howe in the field. Search into the matter, and depend upon it the Murderers are Torys... they are Traitors I suspect, & agents for the Enemy, who have taken this method to find employment for the brave backwoodsmen at home, and prevent their joining General Washington to strike a decisive stroke for Independency at this Critical Time.

Other correspondence indicates that opinion had certainly hardened against the mother country and that there could be no turning back the clock. Edmund Pendleton made no secret of his sentiments. "... in plain English our absolute slavery is their aim, out of which you must drive them by bullet and bayonet reasoning..."[16]

In the meantime the Montgomery magnate began issuing warrants for the arrest of suspected Loyalists. He sent Bryan McDonald to arrest Thomas Heavin who, while in the performance of his militia duties, had prevented the disarming of his friends. That was not the only incident that caused patriotic residents to suspect his loyalties. On many occasions he had expressed himself against independence, and even more damning in patriotic eyes, he had publicly toasted the health of King George. The most serious charge lodged against Heavin was that he had threatened the life of a fellow militia officer. These alleged crimes left no doubt as where his loyalties lay. Heavin appears to have been the first arrest from among Preston's circle of friends. The warrant implies that James Bane, Jr., Philip Barger, Bryan McDonald, Lieutenant William McMullen, Robert Richey and John Smythe were to appear as witnesses against Heavin who was to be tried before a justice of the county court.[17]

In May, feeling that Preston's home and family needed protection, Governor Henry asked him to station a sergeant and twelve militiamen at Smithfield. He wished to convince the master of Smithfield as well as other frontier leaders by Preston's example, to remain at their homes. Governor Henry ordered Botetourt men to aid Montgomery militiamen in defending their country. If the Montgomery men failed to report for militia service, the governor ordered Preston to punish them severely. During times of Indian troubles, the Montgomery residents were loath to quit their homes and enlist to defend people

in other areas. Botetourt men probably felt the same. Because of the Indian menace hanging over the frontier Preston worried about the disaffection that seemed to plague his militia force.[18]

With warm weather approaching, the Indians would soon resume their attacks upon settlements west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Soon enough, Indian sightings began to occur with an alarming frequency. Reports of Indian war parties close to home frightened residents so, that they lost no time evacuating their homes and property. Residents below Walker's Creek and the Horseshoe Bottom in present-day Giles County abandoned their belongings in order to save their lives. "I would willingly prevent it if in my Power, but I am afraid it is not." Preston begged Fleming to advise him on his course of action. He wondered if Fleming could raise a company to help him. "Those in Distress are crying out against me for not sending them assistance." All in all, he considered it a "Very Disagreeable situation." Preston was so alarmed about the situation that he evacuated his own family, sending them to Greenfield, one of his holdings in Botetourt County.[19]

Reports filtered back that around 300 Indians had attacked Fort Donnally on the Greenbrier. Such strength in numbers alarmed Preston further. "I tremble for the Greenbrier people,..." he informed Fleming. On Sunday June 6, 1778, Charles Lucas awakened Preston at the ungodly hour of 2 a.m. with the news that Indians had been sighted closer to Smithfield. Witnesses sighted five or six Indians lurking near Paulser

Lybrook's on Sinking Creek. Furthermore Martin Harless heard several shots fired. The master of Smithfield sent out the call for volunteers to assemble at Charles Lucas' on Sinking Creek. By taking a stand at Lucas' abode, he hoped to impede the Indians' progress across Gap and Brush Mountains to keep them from reaching the settlements. Thwarted near the Drapers Meadows settlement, they turned their attention elsewhere along the frontier. The Shawnees crossed the mountains and were reported along the Roanoke River at Dyerly's, Jameson's, Absolam Looney's and James Neely's. Upon their return journey over Potts and Peters Mountains, they also attacked the settlers at the Sweet Springs.[20]

The Indians, enticed by British blandishments persisted in their sporadic attacks against white settlements. As late as 1778 some British officials, among them General Carleton, General Haldimand, and Lieutenant Governor Abbott of Vincennes wanted to limit the use of their Indian allies. These officials feared that once the Indians received encouragement to attack white settlers, they would run amuck with the British losing all semblance of control over them. Lord George Germain expressed such no qualms about using the Indians for purposes of the empire, and since he formulated the policy his word was law. Despite Germain's policy, Abbott voiced grave misgivings about using the Indians to plague the settlers. He worrried that those who otherwise might have remained loyal to His Majesty, would in anger, join the upstart revolutionaries. The policy might hinder

support of the King's loyal subjects. The people who suffered the Indian raids were "the poor inoffensive families" who wanted no part of the conflict. Many had fled to the frontier to leave the problems of society, including war, behind. In the Virginia backwoods, Abbott's reasoning probably proved to be true. By their nature, backwoodsmen resented others trying to control or influence their lives. They would be ornery just to be difficult except when the safety of their loved ones was imperiled. They theorized that the "red-bellies" and their brokers caused the danger to their families and property they now faced. Most of these men failed to see any difference between an "Indian who would scalp his wife and children and a man who would lend his influence to a government that would offer any inducement to the Indian to murder and plunder." These British-incited attacks angered the frontiersmen so much that the British unwittingly drove them into the ready arms of the rebels.[21]

Meanwhile the struggle for independence continued in the East. With the fighting, demand for lead increased and the supply of ammunition was on everyone's minds. Virginia officials continued to supply the needs of all who requested the metal. Preparations were underway when Governor Henry explained that an expedition of accouterments for the Continental army was imminent. The state was providing tightly closed, well-seasoned casks for carrying gunpowder, 5000 pack saddles, and the animal power for transporting 30,000 pounds of lead newly arrived from the Mines. Patrick Lockhart of Botetourt County took

the liberty of forwarding 16,000 pounds of lead to Fort Cumberland where the supply sorely needed replenishing. Governor Henry heartily approved of Colonel Fleming's request to establish a small magazine at his home in Botetourt, since no place could be as well-guarded.[22]

The remainder of the summer passed without Indian attacks on southwest Virginia settlements. Preston's worries turned to the militia who had failed to report for duty against the Indians. He felt that "it will be impossible to raise that Number [200] of Troops on this Occaison." The occasion was a request from General McIntosh in October 1778. As reasons for his skepticism, he explained that men drafted for service in the Continental Army "deserted." Furthermore, upon instructions from the lieutenant governor to send reinforcements to garrison Fort Randolph, his efforts to make them enlist had proven futile. Not only did they fail to enlist, Preston had heard that many had deserted to South Carolina and deeper into the mountains. The biggest culprits were young men without property or family. Good reasons however, accounted for some of this disaffection. Due to an "almost continued War with the Savages, for four or five years last past" residents had been unable to cultivate their crops. Preston alluded to a worry that might have been linked to Tory sentiment. He feared a number of evils, one of which was "a general Mutiny and defiance of the Law...in this and one of the neighboring Counties." Should this mutiny occur, the number of men involved "would be too formidable to Quell with the remainder of the Militia..."[23]

Obviously Preston suspected that opposition to the Revolution might be manifested in a military power play. More Tory prosecutions by year's end probably reinforced his suspicions of trouble in the future from that quarter. Philip Hanson, Isaac Lebo, and Peter Reazor in Washington County appear to have been tried for Tory sentiment. The Court ordered Hanson to post bond of £200 and his securities £100 each. Reazor, obviously more of a threat was remanded to custody of the sheriff until the next court session. Reazor acknowledged his recognizance in the sum of £250 and promised not to depart from Montgomery or Washington Counties for two and a half years. Unwittingly the Court provided Reazor with the base from which he conspired during the next two years. The justices ordered that Isaac Lebo post £200 and not do anything prejudicial to the people of America and not depart the boundaries of Washington County for 366 days. The Court also ordered that two people be found who would provide security for his good behavior in the amount of £500 bond. The Washington justices also remanded Hopkins to the Sheriff's custody. In Botetourt County, the Court examined Timothy Keith on a counterfeiting charge and acquitted him. Enough evidence existed against George Levner for a "breach of the peace" to fine him £20 and order his good behavior. Furthermore, two securities had to post bond of £10 each. Obviously by the end of the year frontier leaders were becoming watchful of any suspicious behavior, and alleged Tories had to answer for their actions or words. Preston suspected the problem might escalate during

the coming year when he alluded to the rampant "disaffection" among the militia. But even he probably had no inkling of the magnitude of events that were to develop.[24]

Notes - Chapter III

[1]Henry Stuart and Alexander Cameron to the Wataugans May 7, 1776, Colonial Records Office 5/77, 143; Henry Stuart and Alexander Cameron to John Carter and the Inhabitants of Watauga May 23, 1776, Colonial Records Office 5/77, 153; Talk from the Committee of Fincastle to the Cherokee Indians, n.d. [1776] Colonial Records Office 5/77, 193, cited in James H. O'Donnell III, Southern Indians in the American Revolution (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973), 38, 39. After the French and Indian War, the Cherokees numbered approximately 13,500; of that 2,750 were warriors, according to Indian agent John Stuart. Louis DeVorsey, Jr., The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies 1763-1775, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 19. Watauga was located near present-day Elizabethan, Tennessee. The establishment of committees of safety grew out of the Continental Congress' decree to establish a commercial boycott. Each county, city, and town was ordered to choose a committee of individuals who were to observe whether the populace adhered to the boycott. In time the local committees' duties changed, especially those in the central and western sections of Virginia, where commercial activity was not as great as in the east. Any expressions of displeasure with the Committee or its function could lead to being interrogated by the Committee members. The county committees also aided the central government in acquiring military stores and raising soldiers. In 1776 the county committee's authority was superseded by the new Virginia constitution; its duties fell to the county court. For more information on the Committees of Safety in the Commonwealth, see Larry Bowman, "The Virginia County Committees of Safety, 1774-1776," VMHB LXXIX (July 1971), 322-337.

[2]Cornelius Harnett to Governor Patrick Henry July 21, 1776, H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Official Letters of the Governors of the State of Virginia: The Letters of Patrick Henry, 5 vols. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1926-1929; hereinafter cited as Official Letters), I, 15; Peter Force, ed., American Archives: Consisting of a Collection of Authentic Records, State Papers, Debates, and Letters and Other Notices of Publick Affairs, the Whole Forming a Documentary History of the Origin and Progress of the North American Colonies; of the Causes and Accomplishments of the American Revolution; and of the Constitution of the Government for the United States, to the Final Ratification thereof, 5th series, 3 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1837-1853; hereinafter cited as Force, American Archives), I, 613. Dragging Canoe and his partisans retreated to Chickamauga Creek where they created a new tribe known as the Chickamaugas. Sosin, Frontier, 91.

[3]Mary Kegley, "The Big Fort," JRVHS (1978), 12; William Preston to William Pendleton, President of Committee of Safety August 2, 1776, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 4QQ64; Thwaites and Kellogg, Revolution, 173. Several sources contradict the date of Fort Chiswell's construction. In his Western Lands, Thomas P. Abernethy states that Byrd built the fort in 1758. Paula Hathaway Anderson-Green, in a 1978 article in VMHB quotes Abernethy and the venerable southwest Virginia historian, Lewis Preston Summers as giving the 1758 date.

[4]General Charles Lee to Virginia Convention July 7, 1776, Force, American Archives, 612; Reynolds, "Ammunition Supply," VMHB, 64; John Hancock to Virginia Council of Safety July 16, 1776, Force, American Archives, 366; John Page to John Hancock July 26, 1776, Official Letters, 18, 19.

[5]Unidentified document dated August 16, 1776, Force, American Archives, 973, 974; Governor Patrick Henry to Continental Congress October 10, 1776, Force, American Archives, II, 986; William W. Henry, ed., Patrick Henry, Life, Correspondence, Speeches, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891; hereinafter cited as Henry, Henry), III, 19; Reynolds, "Ammunition Supply," VMHB, 66, 67; Hecht, "Lead Production," West Virginia History, 177; Boyd, Jefferson Papers, II, 388.

[6]Rev. Peter Muhlenberg to William Preston March 24, 1776, Preston Papers, Library of Congress. Microfilm copy in Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; hereinafter cited as Preston Papers, Library of Congress, Folder 924; Rev. Peter Muhlenberg to William Preston March 24, 1776, Preston Davie Collection, originals at Virginia Historical Society; hereinafter cited as Preston Davie Papers. For more about Rev. Muhlenberg see Henry A. Muhlenberg, The Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg (Philadelphia, 1849) and Paul A. Wallace, The Muhlenbergs of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950). The aforementioned Roberts reportedly held a colonel's commission in the British forces. J. D. Bailey, Commanders of King's Mountain (Greenville, North Carolina: A Press, Inc., 1980).

[7]William Preston to Edmund Pendleton June 16, 1776, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 4QQ50; Thomas Lewis to William Preston August 18, 1776, Preston Papers, Library of Congress, Folder 940; Johnson, William Preston, 183, 185, 189. For more information on the Cherokee War during the early years of the Revolution, see O'Donnell, Southern Indians in the American Revolution, and Louis DeVorsey, The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies. Members of the Fincastle Committee of Safety were: Arthur Campbell; William Campbell; William Christian; Walter Crockett; Rev. Charles Cummings; William Edmondson; William Ingles; Thomas Madison; James McGavock; John Montgomery; William Preston; William

Russell; Evan Shelby; Daniel Smith; and Stephen Trigg. Harwell, Fincastle Committee of Safety, 10. The present site of Kingsport, Tennessee is the location of the Long Island on the Holston.

[8]Hening, Statutes, IX, 281-283. See oath in Appendix.

[9]Waller, Revolution in the West, 39, 40; William Preston to William Fleming December 2, 1777, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. Microfilm copy in Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; hereinafter cited as Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, 2ZZ43; Louise P. Kellogg and Reuben G. Thwaites, eds., Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio, 1777-1778 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1912; hereinafter cited as Kellogg, Frontier Defense), 169; Henry, Henry, III, 92; Edmund P. Goodwin, Colonel William Fleming of Botetourt, 1728-1795 (Roanoke, Virginia: Progress Press, 1976; hereinafter cited as Goodwin, William Fleming), 32. Cornstalk, a friendly Shawnee chief traveled to Fort Randolph as a gesture of peace even though his tribe was yielding to British pressure. Captain Arbuckle, the fort's commander, detained Cornstalk and his three companions. An early morning in November 1777 altered Cornstalk's fate when two Botetourt militiamen serving at Point Pleasant crossed the Kanawha River to hunt. Renegade Indians shot and scalped one of the men. The other escaped spreading the alarm. Led by Captain James Hall they entered Cornstalk's cabin and shot him as he attempted to rise. The militiamen pumped his son full of bullets. Redhawk attempting to climb up the chimney to escape the murderers was pulled down and shot. The angry militiamen chopped Old Yie to pieces. Preston and Fleming later determined that Hugh Galbreath, James Hall, and William Roane of Rockbridge, William Barnes of Greenbrier, and Malcolm McCown of Augusta were the guilty parties. The murders marked a turning point in Shawnee-colonist relations; from 1778 on the Shawnee violently opposed the colonists which worked to the British's advantage. Waller, Revolution in the West, 39, 40; Johnson, William Preston, 206.

[10]William Preston to William Fleming December 2, 1777, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, 2ZZ43; Kellogg, Frontier Defense, 169, 170; Johnson, William Preston, 201. See also Hening, Statutes, IX, 281-282 for all the penalties.

[11]Lewis Preston Summers, comp., Annals of Southwest Virginia, 1769-1800 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1970; reprint ed., Abingdon, Virginia, 1929; hereinafter cited as Summers, Annals), 259, 261. Summers compiled court records of Botetourt, Montgomery and Washington counties. My study of Montgomery order books shows that his transcription from manuscript to printed form is almost letter perfect and may be relied upon. The Botetourt justices first appointed in

1770 were: John Bowyer; Robert Breckenridge; Israel Christian; Benjamin Estell; William Fleming; Benjamin Hawkins; Andrew Lewis; John Maxwell; William Preston; David Robinson; George Skillern; James Trimble; and Richard Woods. Justices who presided over the three court sessions in 1777 were: Bowyer; Estell; Fleming; Richard May; William McClanahan; and Adam Smyth.

[12]Ibid., 975. The Washington justices first appointed in 1777 were: George Blackburn; Alexander Buchanan; Arthur Campbell; John Campbell; William Campbell; John Coulter; James Dysart; William Edmondson; John Kinkead; Thomas Mastin; Joseph Martin; James Montgomery; Evan Shelby; Daniel Smith; and John Snoddy. Justices who presided over this session of court in 1778 were: Arthur Campbell; Coulter; Robert Craig; John Duncan; Kinkead and Montgomery.

[13]Ibid., 684-686 Order Book II, Montgomery County, Montgomery County Records, Christiansburg, Virginia; hereinafter cited as Montgomery Order Book II, 160- 162. The Montgomery justices were the same as Fincastle until the county was divided into three new counties. The first Fincastle justices were: Anthony Bledsoe; Arthur Campbell; William Christian; Samuel Crockett; Walter Crockett; Robert Doak; Benjamin Estell; William Ingles; James McGavock; Alexander McKee; John Montgomery; William Preston; William Russell; James Thompson; and Stephen Trigg. Justices who presided over Buckholder and Kettering's trials were: James McCorkle; McGavock; Preston; James Robertson; and Stephen Trigg.

[14]Thomas Burk to William Preston February 18, 1778, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 4QQ58; Johnson, William Preston, 203. Thomas Burk(e) settled along Sinking Creek near the present town of Pembroke in Giles County. He was recommissioned a captain in 1782 following the Revolutionary War. Summers, Annals, 766.

[15]William Preston to Governor Patrick Henry January 16, 1778, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Marston, "William Preston," Randolph-Macon Papers, 291-294.

[16]Governor Patrick Henry to William Preston February 19, 1778, Patrick Henry Papers, Virginia Historical Society. Microfilm copy in Virginia Historical Society; Henry, Henry, III, 144-147; David J. Mays, ed., Letters and Papers of Edmund Pendleton, 2 vols. (Charlottesville, Virginia: The Virginia Historical Society, 1967; hereinafter cited as Mays, Pendleton Papers), I, 256.

[17]Warrant to Bryan McDonald for Arrest of Thomas Heavin February 23, 1777, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 4QQ160. McDonald was constable for the Walker's Creek neighborhood having been appointed January 7, 1777. Summers, Annals, 677.

[18]Governor Patrick Henry to William Preston May 12, 1778, Official Letters, 270; Governor Patrick Henry to William Preston May 12, 1778, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 4QQ168; Johnson, William Preston, 208.

[19]Johnson, William Preston, 208, 209; William Preston to William Fleming May 17, 1778, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, 3ZZ15.

[20]William Preston to William Fleming May 20, 1778, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, 3ZZ16; William Preston to William Robinson June 6, 1778, Frontier Wars Papers, Draper Manuscript, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. Microfilm copy in Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; hereinafter cited as Frontier Wars Papers, Draper Manuscript, 2U23; General Andrew Lewis to William Preston June 8, 1778, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 4QQ173; James Robertson to William Preston June 9, 1778, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 4QQ175. Charles Lucas held the position of constable for the Sinking Creek neighborhood, having been appointed January 8, 1777. The unnamed Dyerly was Peter Dyerly who was the grantee of forty-three acres on the north and south sides of the Roanoke River. The unnamed Jameson might be William Jamison who received 180 acres of land drained by the Greenbrier. Absalam Looney settled on land near the headwaters of Craig, Potts, and Sinking Creeks. The Sweet Springs are in Monroe County, then Botetourt. Summers, Annals, 677, 932; Botetourt Tithe list of 1770-1777, published by Charles T. Burton, n.d.

[21]Waller, Revolution in the West, 30; Lewis P. Summers, History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1966; reprint ed., Richmond, Virginia, 1903; hereinafter cited as Summers, Washington County), 275.

[22]Governor Patrick Henry to Henry Laurens July 8, 1778, Henry, Henry, III, 181; Patrick Lockhart to Governor Patrick Henry July 3, 1778, Ibid.; Governor Patrick Henry to William Fleming July 22, 1778, Official Letters, I, 301; Governor Patrick Henry to William Fleming July 27, 1778, Henry, Henry, III, 187.

[23]William Preston to Governor Patrick Henry November 25, 1778, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Marston, "William Preston," Randolph-Macon Papers, 296-299.

[24]Summers, Annals, 983, 986-988, 267, 272, 273.

Chapter IV

THE DRAMA UNFOLDS: "DEVILAGE DESIGNS" BY TORIES, 1779

> We are alarmed with Tories two Men on Oath have informed, that their Plan is ripe for Execution. They are immediately to Proceed in Parties to Disarm the friends of the Country, some they are to Kill & Destroy, & Proceed to Destroy the Lead Mines.
>
> Walter Crockett to William Preston
> April 7, 1779 Preston Papers, Archives,
> Virginia State Library

As 1778 evolved into 1779, the Indian threat appeared to have abated until renewed attacks made the Western settlers realize the red men remained a menace to their well-being. In March the Clover Bottom of the Bluestone River was the site of several murders as the savages attacked the families of James Bane and Mitchell Clay. Captain John Floyd sent a messenger to relate the bad tidings to Preston. William Hale had been the target of Indian fire while attempting to reach Munsey's Fort on Walker's Creek, some eighteen miles from Smithfield. Although bleeding profusely and trailed by four braves, Hale managed to reach Thomas Shannon's at the mouth of Walker's Creek. Preston reacted quickly, ordering a posse to search for the perpetrators. Only half of the men needed for such an expedition came forward, probably because their foremost concern was the safety and well-being of their families. Residents along Sinking Creek removed themselves to George Pearis' Fort located in present-day Pearisburg. Inhabitants on Walker's Creek where the attacks had occurred, gathered at Munsey's stronghold for their protection.[1]

Preston feared for the lives of those who fled. As far as he could determine it was a no-win situation. "Should the people move it will ruin them," but on the other hand, "...to stay is dangerous." He felt completely indecisive about his course of action. He agonized his predicament was so disheartening that his greatest enemy "even on [the] Holston," could not fail to sympathize with him. Those who had retreated to the forts were "crying out for assistance" which he did not have the power to grant. Simultaneously, Preston's concerns about disaffected Montgomery residents began to worry him more. "My only trouble does not arise from the savages [,] Enemies of a different complexion are like[ly] to attack, I mean Tories," he related to his friend Colonel Fleming. The previous fall he had suspected that a general uprising in Montgomery and a bordering county which he did not name, might occur; but his fears had proven groundless.[2]

In April 1779 Colonel Preston's concerns became a reality, but the situation was probably worse than he had anticipated. The frontier faced a dual threat: Indians and Tories. In further correspondence with Colonel Fleming Preston related the unhappy news that the Indians had murdered eight people. About the same time, a Tory plot began to materialize. Early in the spring of 1779, the King's allies who lived near the head of the Yadkin River in North Carolina and on the branches of the New River, "began to form into a body with the intention of destroying the lead mines ..., robbing loyal citizens [not Tories] and afterwards joining Cornwallis."[3]

In 1778 after having failed to subdue the rebels in the Northern colonies, the British high command shifted its attention to the Southern colonies. Buoyed by the strong support for the Crown there, British officials decided to concentrate their operations in the region. In the aftermath of Saratoga the British ministry began to reexamine the government's position in the war. The British cabinet named Sir Henry Clinton to succeed General William Howe as Supreme Commander in America. The cabinet informed Clinton that "it is the King's intention that an attack should be made upon the Southern Colonies, with a view to the conquest and possession of Georgia and South Carolina." The groundwork was laid when Savannah fell on December 29, 1778. The British toehold was established and unlikely to be dislodged. Southerners worried that this alteration in strategy would bring the war to their backyard.[4]

In early April Colonel Preston received worrisome tidings regarding Tory schemes from his militia colleague Major Walter Crockett Two men under oath swore to Crockett that the murderous plan was "ripe for Execution." The malcontents planned to "Disarm the Friends to the Country, some they are to Kill & Destroy, & Proceed to Destroy the Lead Mines." Nearly twenty conspirators were suspected of complicity in the diabolical plot. Informants quoted the Tory ringleader, Duncan O'Gullion who all but promised to "scalp Preston and [James] McGavock." Then his force would combine with the Indians to destroy property and kill other militia officials in Southwest Virginia. O'Gullion made

his followers all sorts of rosy promises in return for their support. For each adherent he pledged "2/6 Sterling per day & 450 acres of land Clear of Quit rents for twenty one years." In an attempt to nip the conspiracy in the budding stages, Crockett ordered fifty men to help the sheriff bring the insurgents to justice. He hoped this action would discourage others of the same ilk from carrying out the failed plan.[5]

Preston could not profess surprise that the lead works was the target of Tory intentions. From the time the Revolution began Virginia officials and Patriot leaders worried about the possibility of Tories capturing the lead operations. They realized full well that the lead deposits in Montgomery County were an important source of ammunition in the fight for independence. Therefore all possible measures should be taken to safeguard this very valuable resource.

By April 15th, eight days after the Patriots learned of the conspiracy, they had apprehended many of the suspected traitors. James McGavock responding to Preston's letter of April 12th, penned a lengthy letter providing the suspected Tories' names, their militia companies and the measures taken regarding their capture. Crockett's men arrested a total of fourteen suspects. Nathaniel Britain, John Henderson, and Philip Lambert received bail. Daniel Atter, John Atter, Joseph Erwin, Joseph McFarland and John Stephens also received bail. The anxious Crockett also apprehended three Continental soldiers near the mines "under Suspicion of Joining ... in the Conspiracy." Nothing

implicated the three soldiers, William Block, Daniel Liberton, and Philip Myer and they were released. One possessed a "furloe" from Preston and the trio loudly proclaimed their willingness to serve the cause of liberty. Most of the suspects were members of Captain Stephens' company. McGavock ordered the alleged ringleaders Duncan O'Gullion and Nicholas Wyrick placed into irons. The following day O'Gullion and Wyrick confessed that John Griffith who lived on the south fork of the Holston River, had enlisted them in the King's service. Following O'Gullion and Wyrick's disclosure, Crockett's party immediately apprehended Griffith. However without much careful contemplation, they allowed the wily Griffith bail.[6]

When witnesses appeared to testify against Britain, O'Gullion, and Wyrick, they feared bodily harm to themselves and those dear to them. Even though the Patriots discovered no papers in the possession of the conspirators, they persuaded them to reveal their knowledge by fair means or by foul. From their reluctant testimony McGavock concluded that the plot was not limited to his baliwick in the vicinity of Fort Chiswell and the Lead Works, nor on Reed's or Walker's Creeks. Instead the plans embraced nonjurors in Colonel Preston's territory too. The alleged Tory, Britain, defiantly explained that people who lived all around him and in the Carolinas were saying that "the Country is Sold to the French, and that they may as well fight under the King of Great Britain, as to be Subjects to France." Obviously Britain was referring to the Franco-American alliance forged after the Patriots'

victory at Saratoga. The backwoodsmen's aversion to the French went back to the French and Indian War. They remembered the depredations settlers suffered as a result of the French befriending and encouraging the seemingly heartless bloodthirsty Indians. Even longer, the Englishmen's antipathy for the French was rooted in many centuries of conflict between the two nations. Understandably the frontiersmen felt a wariness about French professions of friendship.[7]

McGavock seemed thankful that of all the suspects, only three, Duncan O'Gullion, Daniel Wyrick and Nicholas Wyrick had pledged their allegiance to the Crown. With a degree of self-exculpation and perhaps exaggerating the seriousness of the consipiracy, McGavock claimed that everything that has been done to them (arrest and incarceration) would not "put a Stop to their Horrid and Bloody Designs." Had the plot not been discovered he felt sure by now "they would have Committed Murder." Feeling the need for increased security and surveillance he urged Preston to seek assistance form other counties in order to stop the Tory menace. No doubt worried about the security of his own abode, McGavock asserted that the Patriots seemed to be a mere handful in the middle surrounded by a multitude of Tories. McGavock was correct when he warned Preston that consipirators from around Smithfield were involved. John Griffith had journeyed to the area around Drapers Meadows to administer the King's oath to Preston's willing neighbors. Ten days before O'Gullion's arrest forty disaffected residents had taken the King's oath under Preston's very nose. Some who pledged

support for the cause were Botetourt men who had previously affirmed their allegiance to the Commonwealth. An informer, John Henderson, revealed that the tryst had occurred at Price's, the Price in question was John Michael Price who lived close to Preston.[8]

During the week of February 20-28, Griffith had traveled up and down New River and its branches persuading people to secretly swear their loyalty to the King and Parliament. He probably cajoled some into swearing the oath by telling them of his plans to send a list of their names to the King and Parliament, who would know the names of his loyal subjects. No doubt some who affirmed their fealty felt a swelling of pride in their own importance when Griffith glibly explained his scheme. Like O'Gullion, he promised supporters 2/6 sterling a day and 450 acres with no quit rents for twenty-one years. He visited the residents along Sinking Creek and other branches, who declined to take the pledge because they felt he lacked the authority to administer the oath. Believing success was at hand, that the obstinate residents would capitulate if a genuine British colonel administered the pledge, he promised to return in March with a Colonel Robinson, a British regular. As promised he did return during March but the rest of the bargain was unfulfilled - Colonel Robinson failed to appear. Some residents used Robinson's absence as a valid excuse for refusing to take the oath. When word came that a party of riders was en route to capture Griffith he lost no time fleeing; and his would-be adherents lost interest and removed to their homes.[9]

Preston lacked the names of all who met at Price's on that important night, so when he heard that George Patterson might have been present he quickly questioned him. Patterson, protesting his innocence explained that he had only gone there to purchase some goods (knives and forks) from a pedlar named Byrn who attended the meeting. However the pedlar's goods seemed too expensive so he left Price's and made his way to "Williams's." Preston believed Patterson was innocent of any wrongdoing and just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.[10]

A few days after Griffith and O'Gullion's capture Preston gained an inkling of how widespread the plotting was. Colonel William Campbell of Washington County sent Preston information about some unsuspected Montgomery residents' involvement in the aborted conspiracy. His central piece of evidence for suspecting these allegedly disloyal people was a deposition from Michael Hennigar that revealed all his knowledge of the scheme. Lending credence to Hennigar's accusations was his urgent request that the proper authorities arrest and incarcerate those he named as perpetrators, because he felt uneasy about his safety. In building a case against someone for spying or inciting treason it was desirable to prove a specific act witnessed by others.[11]

Despite careful interrogation Hennigar could not recall the surname of the person whom he watched Griffith administer the oath to, but he did remember the man's trade. Campbell concluded the guilty party was a potter named Frederick More who lived along Reed

Creek. If Preston could arrest and jail these individuals named in Hennigar's deposition, then Campbell promised Hennigar would testify against the accused. Campbell felt Hennigar's testimony would corroborate and shed new light on the plot and those involved. One of the Tories named by Hennigar (Peter Reazor) had already stood trial in Washington County and had promised to behave. Obviously, Campbell thought Reazor's word meant little since he failed to keep it. He suggested that Preston allow Reazor to be brought before the Washington County justices to answer for his actions. Towards the end of the letter Campbell warned Preston to take precautions regarding his personal safety. Preston seemed to him, "a principal object of those Wretches hellish contrivance."[12]

According to Hennigar, while on a march last Spring with other militiamen from Washington County, he met Adam Runner at Helvay's. Runner, whom Hennigar believed lived on Peak Creek, persuaded Hennigar to desert his post. From Helvay's Hennigar traveled to North Carolina and associated with avowed Tories. Upon returning to Virginia, he spent five weeks at Reazor's who convinced him not to join the Continental Army. During his sojourn at Reazor's, he came under the influence of John Griffith who administered the oath to him. Griffith also revealed a secret plot against the Country. The Tories were conspiring to join British regulars and Indians to assist them in destroying the nation. Reazor was also privy to the details of the cabal.[13]

Hennigar reported that he witnessed Griffith give the oath to Joshua Jones, John Lewis, Frederick Slemp, Henry Willis, and Moses Wells. He implicated other people on Griffith's list: Humphrey Best; Andrew Bronstetter; Frederick Bronstetter; Benjamin Jones; Francis Kettering; Peter Kettering, Peter Kinder, Griffith Lewis; Philip Lottenger, David Vaut; Henry Vaut; John Vaut; and "old Vaut who had the mill." Recently at Adam Waggoner's, Hennigar with other recruits met Matthias Crumb who told him 4,000 people had sworn fealty to the King and that Hennigar had seen the paper to substantiate this claim. Crumb boasted that he was to command the force against the country. Furthermore, Crumb assured Hennigar the war would not last much longer. Hennigar disclosed that David McKenzie, Phiiip Morris, Daniel Sebertin, and Isaac Williamson, members of Captain Robert Buchanan, Captain Henry Francis, and Captain Jehu Stephens' companies had decided to join the Redcoats. Their enlistment in militia service was only a subterfuge and a way to obtain money for their expenses.[14]

Preston probably ordered the arrest of those individuals named as avowed Tories in Hennigar's deposition. And since most of the suspects lived in Walter Crockett's bailiwick, he is probably whom Preston empowered to arrest them. Crockett alludes to this in a letter to Colonel Preston on April 24th. Calling them "deluded people" he endeavored to follow Preston's instructions. He theorized the Tories still at large would be more on their guard upon hearing that O'Gullion and Wyrick professed their intention of turning state's

evidence. Nevertheless Crockett felt little stock could be put in their intentions. It was on this agreement to testify against Griffith that O'Gullion was granted bail and his own recognizance. Saying it would be a favor to him personally, Crockett implored Preston to come to the session of court in May when the Tories were to be tried. Admitting that Preston's personal safety and that of his family could be in jeopardy, Crockett felt justice would be better served if Preston attended. The influx of young justices who sat on the county court were "Not Verry well Versed in the Law," and could benefit from a "Good Steedy old Gentleman as Your Self to Seat at their head."[15]

About the same time Preston's life and well-being was being threatened, Colonel William Campbell suffered similar threats. The brash Tory, a man named Francis Hopkins, tried and convicted on charges of counterfeiting, escaped from Cock's Fort on Renfroes Creek where he had been imprisoned. The Tory fled the old fort (a temporary prison until the county gaol, began in 1777 was completed) and "began a series of very bold and daring depredations upon the Whig settlers of the county." He formed a band of Tories whose purpose was to steal horses of the well-affected and harass them as much as possible. A bold fellow, Hopkins was brazen enough to post notices close to Colonel Campbell's home, threatening him with dire consequences if he continued to persecute the loyal adherents of George III. The consequences might be loss of Campbell's property or his life.[16]

McGavock continued to alert Preston of new developments. A resident on Walker's Creek, George Parks, while conversing with a neighbor, John Cox was asked by Cox whether he supported the King or the country. Parks replied his loyalty remained with the Commonwealth. Cox retorted that Parks' failure to support the Crown would result in his "never injoy[ing] a foot of land in America, and what little he had gathered would be taken from him." Cox also bragged the Patriots would never reach Staunton gaol in Augusta County with Nathaniel Britain in custody. Cox obviously knew something: Britain was not imprisoned as a result of his involvement in this plot. McGavock deduced from Parks' seemingly minor disclosure that a great number of Tories lived within the county and that he feared "their Devilage Designs" if not all were apprehended and brought to trial. While the evidence was hearsay, McGavock's willingness to report it to Preston indicates his apprehension about continued Tory collusion.[17]

Shortly after the conspirators were apprehended, the justices began the task of judging the accused. A trial held on April 22nd dealt with Griffith and some unidentified comrades. O'Gullion and Wyrick, witnesses against Griffith, failed to convince the court of his guilt and he was released on bail until a future trial. Several Tories were sent to Staunton. The Montgomery County court session held May 4, 1779, appears to have been devoted almost exclusively to trying suspected Tories. Preston, probably concerned about his family's safety did not attend.[18]

James Ingram and John Raines charged with "raising a false rumour to the terror of the neighborhood," received different judgments. The court acquitted Ingram and ordered Raines to post £2,000 as bond for his good behavior for a year and a day. His securities had to come up with £1,000. Next a jury composed of George Breckinridge; James Campbell; William Campbell; Henry Davies; Robert Davies; Samuel Ewing, Jr.; William Hall; Samuel Montgomery; James Simpson; William Thompson and William Ward heard evidence against Adam Runner; Philip Dutton; Frederick Slemp; Jinkin Williams; John Vaut and David Vaut. Humphrey Best (named in Hennigar's deposition) and George Irvin pledged allegiance to the state. The jury found Runner guilty and fined him £250. They found Dutton innocent of the charges but ordered that he post bond of £1,000 for his good behavior for a year and a day. His two securities bound themselves by £500 each. Just like Dutton, Frederick Slemp was also deemed innocent but had to provide bond for his good behavior. David Vaut, John Vaut, and Jinkin Williams apparently received the same conditions.[19]

Court continued on the following day. Frederick Bronstetter; John O'Gullion; Michael Kettering; Peter Kettering; Peter Kinder; Frederick More, George Vaut; Henry Willis; and Henry Wyrick charged with "certain offences" received no sentence other than each of them posting £10,000 as bond (probably collectively) for their good behavior for a year and a day. Judging from the conditions decreed by the Court, the defendants must have been considered guilty though

the records do not state this explicitly. Furthermore from the dramatic rise in the rates of bond for good behavior, the Court (Andrew Boyd, James Byrn, William Davies, William Doak, James McGavock, and James Newell) probably realized the Tory problem was worse than they might have guessed. Instead of being a troublesome irritant, a small thorn in the side of patriotism, Tory sentiment and activity threatened the very well-being of patriotic local officials.[20]

The jury decided that the confident Matthias Crumb (who could not resist boasting to Hennigar about 4,000 people taking the King's oath), should be bound by £1,000 for upright behavior for the standard amount of time, 366 days. For an unapparent reason the Court set the verdict in Crumb's case aside, not formally passing judgement one way or the other. The jury appointed to hear Duncan O'Gullion's trial on charges of "maintaining the Authority of the King of great Britain and Levying war against the People of this State," found him guilty of treason and ordered him sent to Williamsburg for another trial. A different jury deemed his cohort, Nicholas Wyrick, guilty and sentenced him to eighteen months in prison with a fine of £500. The same jury who tried O'Gullion heard Daniel Etter's trial; they returned a verdict of not guilty and acquitted him. His relative, John Etter, accused of the same offenses as O'Gullion did not fare so well. Tried by the same jury who heard his kinsman's case, Etter was ordered to post £1,000 and each of his securities, £500 for behaving in a legal manner for 366 days. The jury returned the same verdict upon hearing the

evidence against Jacob Darter, Joseph Irvin, Joseph McFarlane and John Stephens. Like Daniel Etter, the Court acquitted Moses Wells. The justices commuted part of John Dowes' sentence (six months), requiring him to serve eighteen months as penance. The Court ordered an investigation into the influx of counterfeit money being circulated within the county, another offense committed by Tories during the Revolution. The final order of business focused on O'Gullion. John Steel, an apparently reluctant witness, acknowledged himself bound by £1000 as security for testifying against O'Gullion at the next General Court.[21]

The justices of Botetourt heard two cases of alleged Tories during May. They found George Patterson guilty and fined him £50 in court costs. They acquitted John Patterson. Two witnesses who failed to appear to testify - Margaret Patterson, wife of Ezekial Patterson, and William Crawford - were fined £20 each for their absence.[22]

Apparently the detection of the plot in April failed to dishearten Loyalist leaders because by June activity to circumvent the Patriots had flared anew. By June they had renewed their campaign of harassment, with a new twist, they moved closer than ever to physically harming those who did not embrace their sentiments. They seemed to have diverted their attention from the lead works, perhaps realizing that more careful planning and stepped-up recruiting were needed to challenge the Patriots' seemingly iron grip on the Mines. It will be recalled that additional troops had been sent during August 1776 to garrison the

lead works. Since no correspondence fails to indicate otherwise, supplemental militia detachments sent to the area probably remained. There was always another day - when the Patriot officials became lax and relaxed their guard. Most assuredly the Tories believed their day would come, but for now they bided their time and continued their agenda of tormenting their adversaries.

The new target of their vexing behavior seemed to be selected members of the Montgomery County Committee of Safety and their hapless neighbors. James Montgomery, a fellow committeemen and justice warned Preston about the change in tactics. According to Montgomery, on the night of June 5th in the vicinity of Fort Chiswell, a band of Loyalists fired four shots into the dwelling of William Phipps - two bullets lanced the door while two were aimed at the terrified people upstairs. Clearly this was no inadvertent attack. They, also perhaps enraged by their lack of success in wounding the building's occupants, attempted to set the house on fire. The inhabitants recognized a few of the brigands; in tow was one of convicted Tory, Nicholas Wyrick's sons and Daniel Etter who had been acquitted of Toryism the previous May. Montgomery conceded that later circumstances convinced him of Etter's innocence. Around the breaking of dawn on June 8th an unidentified person was sighted lurking around McGavock's home. But the culprit, believed to be the convicted Tory, O'Gullion, escaped before his identity could be confirmed. At two in the afternoon McGavock discovered the campsite where the marauders had done their foul deed,

a scant 200 yards from his home. It was then that he ascertained the extent of Tory depredations on his property. They had penned his helpless sheep, slaughtering and butchering four of them, and allowed O'Gullion's dog to kill seven more. At eleven that night four sentries spied two of the offenders who fled before they could inflict any more damage. Montgomery felt absolutely certain that McGavock's life and property was in peril. He told Preston unequivocally, "that they Intend to Kill James McGavock or burn his houses..." Distressed by the recent events, Montgomery perceived things as very alarming, "and without Speedy measures...[,] we shall be in a bad Situation."[23]

If Colonel Preston had retained his equanimity in spite of his distant allies' prophecies of Tory threats to his person and possessions, he was now given occasion for genuine and immediate concern. He got wind of a planned attack on Smithfield, his home and an arsenal for the Patriots. More outraged than distressed by the lack of respect and deference that he expected of those whom he considered his friends and neighbors, Preston decided to confront his neightbors. He called them together at two times, once at Jacob Shull's house at the mouth of Stroubles Creek and the other probably near Smithfield. He told them he knew that a person empowered to administer the King's oath was in the neighborhood. Preston informed his listeners that a "Bloody and Murderous Conspiracy" had been foiled in a different section of the county, and most of the connivers were "...yet in confinement." He expressed indignation and outrage "that my Life

and that my numerous Family have been threatened as the first Objects of their Cruelty and Rage." Professing that he knew some residents in the area were allied with them, Preston chided his neighbors for breaking their agreement at Shull's to report any Tory machinations. Furthermore he said he doubted whether all the reports of his neighbors' Toryism were true, so he invited anyone who believed they could prove their innocence to come to Smithfield. He declared upon his honor, his life, and everything "dear and sacred to an honest man" that they would not be arrested en route or in returning to their homes. In response his neighbors gave him "...the strongest assurances that there was nothing intended ... to disturb the tranquillity ..." of the county.[24]

The month of July was a busy one for Washington County Patriots. On July 3rd the justices heard the trial of Robert Kerr who had been accused of treason by levying war against the country. The Court found him guilty of treason and ordered him transported to Williamsburg for further trial. The witnesses who testified. with reluctance, against Kerr were Henry Hamlin and Wesley White. The Court bound Hamlin and White to appear October 6th in Williamsburg to testify against Kerr. A few weeks later while word of renewed Tory activity had resounded throughout the frontier, James Asby, John Lewis, Griffith Lewis, Thomas Lewis and Peter Reazor were tried by the Washington County Court. No charges are mentioned in the records but the Court's decisions reflected the same conditions imposed on suspected Tories

throughout Southwest Virginia. It will be recalled that Reazor had been tried once before on March 20, 1778. The justices found Thomas Lewis guilty of a misdemeanor and ordered him to pay £10 court costs. All were put on their good behavior, required to find securities, and ordered to not depart the Commonwealth for 366 days. Washington County records contain no more prosecutions of alleged Tories until March of 1780.[25]

Captain John Cox provided the next breakthrough in identifying Loyalists "in the late conspiracy" by making a deposition to Colonel William Campbell at the Mines. From Campbell Preston learned of this sworn testimony which Cox gave despite concern for his life and property if any of his neighbors should discover that he informed on them. He apologized for not coming to the authorities sooner; he claimed he was unable to because of constant Tory surveillance. In Cox's deposition of July 16, 1779, he related the events and the names of the men involved, prior to the aborted insurrection. He contended that twenty-five armed men around the 6th of July seized him in the King's name. They confiscated five rifles and one "Smooth Gun" and demanded all his money in specie. Next they ordered him to give them his stallion in order to transport the corn they commandeered from him. In an attempt to cover their steps, the insurgents kidnapped and confined Cox for four interminable days at a hide-out about eight or ten miles from his home.[26]

Out of about 130 Tories, Cox identified his captors: William Atkins, Joseph Caldwell, Charles Collins, John Hudson, William Ingram

and Samuel Martin alias Samuel Brown. The Tory contingent was led by Marion Doty of Elk Creek who was absent during this meeting. Since Cox refused their entreaty to join them they made him swear "not to lift arms against them ... or disclose any of the Secrets which he had [learned] ..." Obviously, in an effort to protect his life, he aceded to their demands. Atkins boasted that he possessed a "List of Thousands who had joined their party upon the Western Waters." Cox made another revelation: the Tories debated whether to send a missive to Preston to allay his suspicions while they worked to recruit large numbers of adherents to their party. He concluded his testimony by reporting the Tories agreed to rise up and seize major local officials who would not swear fealty to the King, and deliver them to the English army in Georgia. Upon leaving Cox, Martin warned the militia captain he would suffer if Martin heard of Cox repeating what he had been told. To insure Cox's silence, around twenty Tories led by Ingram returned to his home to "persuade" him not to talk.[27]

Word traveled fast among frontier leaders of this recent outbreak of Loyalist intimidation. On July 17th Colonel William Ingles arrived bearing word that 500 Tories planned to attack the Mines. They had captured Captains John Cox, John Henderson and Enoch Osborn, perhaps in retaliation for Cox not keeping his word. The following day McGavock confirmed Ingles' information, saying that "a number of Tories had embodied up the River." Almost simultaneously Colonel Charles Lynch who managed the Mines,arrived in the eastern section of Montgomery

County to assist the Smithfield colonel in rounding up the Tories. Preston welcomed Lynch's aid without commenting then or later on his methods of dealing with Tory sympathizers. Colonel William Christian informed his brother-in-law, Colonel Fleming of the Tory menace, devoting the bulk of his letter to the news. Christian reported Colonel William Campbell heard that a number of North Carolina Tories had marched in an attempt to wrest the Mines from Patriot control. In the vicinity of the lead works avowed Tories from the area had joined their party. Campbell, in tandem with Major Walter Crockett, reacted by marching up the river in search of the enemy. Upon hearing the Patriots approach most of the King's friends fled. The Patriot troops discovered some still in the area which they promptly punished without waiting for the benefit of justices and a jury. "Our People shot one, Hanged one, and whipt several, and next Monday are to have a Sale of the Tories' Estates."[28]

Campbell evidently lost patience with the hanged man; he had deserted twice and was a thief to boot. A jailbreak by Tory William Hopkins several months earlier probably added to Campbell's feeling of frustration. William Hopkins, probably a relative of Francis Hopkins, the convicted counterfeiter, had taken up arms under the British standard. On June 16, 1779 the Court ordered his estate sold. Christian expressed hope that the results of this foray into the Tory ranks would curtail their activities for awhile.[29]

The poor wretch whom Campbell lynched was Francis Hopkins, the convicted counterfeiter from Washington County. Judged guilty on

May 4, 1778, the Court remanded him to the sheriff's custody before incarceration. Soon after being imprisoned Hopkins had excaped Cock's Fort on Renfroes Creek, the temporary gaol in Washington County. Upon his escape he journeyed south until he reached a British outpost. They greeted him warmly and commissioned him as a reward for his efforts to upset the Washington County economy. They gave him messages for the Cherokees which he was close to delivering when Campbell and his party set off in pursuit. The incident took place not far from Ebbing Springs Presbyterian Church where Campbell had been worshipping. Campbell, in identifying the man who had threatened his life, probably lost control and resolved to end the matter once and for all. So he took the law into his own hands. He was joined by friends James Dysart and James Thompson. They caught Hopkins after he plunged into a branch to elude his pursuers. After apprehending the Tory whose attire was rather shabby, Campbell noticed his shoes were not in the same condition. On the contrary they appeared to be in good condition. After searching the man's person, Campbell's eyes lit once more on the shoes. An idea sprouted. Upon examining the shoes which he cut with his knife, he found a letter from a British commander to the Cherokees. The letter, penned on exceedingly thin parchment had been "invelloped in a bladder" to waterproof it. The contents were damning: the Redcoat commander exhorted the Cherokees to harass the whites and in return they would receive renumeration for past wrongs done to them by the white settlers. Hopkins confessed his involvement

as a courier before Campbell and his companions hanged the unfortunate Tory until dead, from the limb of a large sycamore tree.[30]

Further to the east, Colonel Charles Lynch had taken on the task of apprehending all the Bedford County Tories he could locate. As a result of his sense of personal mission, he considered himself imminiently qualified as their judge and jury. He took them to his home, Green Level, tied them to a walnut tree in the yard and lashed them thirty-nine times on their bare flesh. Through this mode of punishment the Tories were "persuaded to proclaim with feeling 'Liberty Forever.'"[31]

Confident because of his successful method of meting out retribution, Lynch brought his expertise to Montgomery and Botetourt Counties. He traveled to the headwaters of Little River where he arrested Tory captains Job Hale and William Terry, after a spirited fight. Emboldened by his success he went to the Tom's and Sinking Creek areas where he disarmed many Tories. Montgomery residents later recalled that Lynch "tried" Tories at Michael Price's dwelling place which was then considered a fort. Lynch subjected seven suspected Tories to a relatively mild form of torture by confining them in a hot room to force them to confess. Members of the Price family related how the Tories were placed in the loft of the house on a sweltering July day while a roaring fire burned in the fireplace below. Naturally heat rises and it caused unbearable conditions for the alleged Tories, but they refused to confess. After hours in the oven, the merciless

Colonel Lynch released the prisoners and allowed them to quench their thirst at Price's cold spring. No doubt weakened by heat prostration they drank the cold spring water and died. It is possible that this inhumane action may have heightened sentiment for the Crown in the neighborhood; not because of avowed Loyalist beliefs but because of a vitriolic hatred of Colonel Lynch and his mode of retribution.[32]

Preston probably did not appreciate Lynch's methods in dealing with Loyalists. Compared to Lynch and his disciples who followed his example, Preston's method of dealing with British sympathizers makes him appear almost saintly. Certainly he followed a more humane course in meting out punishment to the Tories. The fact that more cases of suspected Tories were heard in Montgomery County Court reflects this. Of course there could have been more Loyalists in Montgomery County than Washington which would account for the increased caseload. Sympathy for the King may have been just as prevalent in Washington County but the Campbells' (Arthur and William) *modus operandi* of punishment probably kept activity to a minimum. To be blunt about it, most suspected Loyalists probably did not live to have their cases heard by a legal tribunal.

At a session of Montgomery Court on August 3rd, the docket was completely devoted to trying suspected Tories. William Ingram and John Phillips confessed their involvement "in the late Insurrections." Whereupon the Justices decreed they should take the state oath, behave and appear at the next court. James and John Blevins also implicated

themselves. The Court "viewing them as proper Objects of Mercy" resolved that if they took the oath and behaved themselves, no punishment would be necessary. However they had to provide £200 bond each and each of their two securities £100. The Court imposed the same sentence on Thomas Conway and Robert Fristoe. The Justices also heard the case of John Ward who shot William Chick, a deserter from the Continental Army. The Court absolved Ward of guilt, deciding he had shot Chick in self-defense after Chick had wounded him in the face.[33]

Court resumed the following day, August 4th. John Henderson and Philip Lambert appeared and were bound to their good behavior by £100 each and each of their two securities £50. Captain John Cox testified against James Green, Thomas Rennex, David Smith and Edward Sysmore for their role in the late insurrection. After deliberating, the Court ordered the defendants to take the oath, behave themselves and reappear in court. Proceedings of the Court continued on August 5th. Jeremiah Patrick, accused of holding a commission from the King of Great Britain was acquitted by the Justices. However, they ordered him to post bond of £1,000 and his two securities £500 each for his good behavior. All his goods that had been confiscated were ordered restored to him. From this session, one learns that the wily Duncan O'Gullion escaped from the deputy sheriff and his companion en route to Williamsburg for further trial. However they did convey Lawrence Buckholder to that destination. The Court resolved that O'Gullion's horse be sold and

Thomas Wakely who had taken Buckholder and O'Gullion in the direction of Williamsburg be paid £125 for his trouble.[34]

In the meanwhile the wheels of Botetourt justice were also turning. The tribunal heard evidence against Tories similar to the proceedings in Montgomery. On August 14th the Court examined Joseph Payne on suspicion of passing bad currency. He pleaded not guilty but the Court decided he should be confined in jail until his case came up in General Court. Two days later the Justices found Thomas Loosey, accused of the same offense, guilty, and ordered that he be tried in General Court. The Justices judged James Turman, accused of the same crime not guilty on November 11, 1779. His was the final case heard in Botetourt County before the big Tory Plot of 1780. By the middle of September the Montgomery justices had concluded prosecution of Loyalists for the year. Robert McFarlane testified against Daniel Etter whom the Justices felt merited a trial by jury. They acquitted Jeremiah Clounch, Peter Clove, John Cook, Samuel Cox, David Fulton and Isaac Winfrey. The Court absolved Samuel Sullivan on a charge of passing a counterfeit bill.[35]

With fall came an easing of tensions. Tory machinations appeared to have ended, for now. But this period was merely the eye of the hurricane. However, leaders on the frontier did not know this was the case. Their relief at ducking the Tory bullet probably knew no bounds. Certainly Preston felt a fervent sense of deliverance. By October a sickness had befallen him, leaving him ill-equipped to combat renewed

Tory movements. Governor Jefferson wondered whether the malady plaguing Preston would allow him to attend a meeting to settle western land title disputes. The Commonwealth, pussyfooting around the legalities of Campbell, Crockett, and others' actions in quelling the Tory menace, passed a statute absolving them of future legal retribution. On October 22, 1779, the House of Delegates "Resolved that William Campbell, Walter Crockett, and others, concerned in suppressing a late conspiracy and insurrection on the frontiers of this State, ought to be indemnified for any proceeding therein not warranted by law." Campbell and his confederates now had carte blanche to punish the Tories any way they saw fit.[36]

Notes - Chapter IV

[1]William Preston to William Robinson April 4, 1779, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, 3ZZ17; William Preston to William Fleming April 8, 1779, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, 3ZZ20; Johnson, William Preston, 215. Munsey's Fort was probably named for Francis Munsey who lived near Thomas Shannon on Walker's Creek. In Montgomery County Court records of September 27, 1785, the Court ordered George Pearis and John Chapman to survey the terrain "for a road from the big crossing of Walker's Creek by Thomas Shannons and Francis Munseys .. " Louise P. Kellogg, editor of Frontier Advance on the Upper Ohio 1778-1779 says that Munsey's Fort was the home of Zechariah Munsey. This researcher believes this is an incorrect assumption because there is no Zechariah Munsey in the early records of Botetourt or Montgomery County. Summers, Annals, 797; Research Committee of the Giles County Historical Society, Giles County History-Families, (Pearisburg, Virginia: Giles County Historical Society, 1982), 23.

[2]William Preston to William Fleming April 8, 1779, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, 3ZZ20; Johnson, William Preston, 217. The mention of an enemy "even on Holston" most likely refers to Arthur Campbell who was probably jealous of Preston's position and influence. Actually, Campbell's problems were with Captain John Floyd, Preston's protege who married the Smithfield colonel's ward, Jane Buchanan 2 November 1778. Jane (Buchanan) Floyd was Preston's cousin once removed, being the daughter of the colonel's first cousin, John Buchanan. She became part of the household in 1769 when her father died while visiting Greenfield, Preston's home in Botetourt County. Land disputes with Floyd appears to have been the cause of Campbell, Christian, and Russell's enmity. Campbell had been undermining Preston since September 1775, and after the Revolution began, Campbell had the audacity to question Preston's loyalty. Campbell said Colonel Preston "was full of Doubts and fears that the British troops would over power America ..." John Bowyer and Samuel McDowell, on the basis of this charge, had asked James McGavock if Preston was an "Enemy to his Country." See Johnson, William Preston, 164-165, 172-173, 190; James McGavock to William Preston August 14, 1776, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, 4QQ74; Anna M. Cartlidge, "Colonel John Floyd: Reluctant Adventurer," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society LXVI (October 1968), 336, 346. For more on Arthur Campbell, see James W. Hagy, "Arthur Campbell and the West, 1743-1811," VMHB XC (October 1978), 456-471.

[3]William Preston to William Fleming April 4, 1179, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, 3ZZ18; Louise P. Kellogg, ed., Frontier Advance on the Upper Ohio, 1778-1779 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1916; hereinafter cited as Kellogg, Frontier Advance), 274;

"The Preston Papers Relating to Western Virginia," VMHB XXVI (October 1918;, hereinafter cited as "Preston Papers" VMHB), 372.

[4]Smith, Loyalists and Redcoats,78, 82, 84. See also George A. Billias, ed., George Washington's Opponents: British Generals and Admirals in the American Revolution (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1969).

[5]Walter Crockett to William Preston April 7, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; "Preston Papers," VMHB, 371-372. Walter Crockett, born sometime during the 1730's, served in the French and Indian War in William Christian's militia company. He served as a gentlemen justice in Augusta, Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery counties. Later on when Wythe County was formed, he became clerk of the county court. A signer of the Fincastle Resolutions, he also became a lieutenant colonel in the militia. Following Preston's death in 1783, he became county lieutenant of Montgomery County. Crocketts Cove in Wythe County bears his family name. James McGavock lived near the lead mines and kept a watchful eye out for the Patriots' interests. Preston was a target of Tory wrath for obvious reasons. Mary Kegley, "Who the 15 Signers Were," JRVHS IX (1975, hereinafter cited as Kegley, "Signers," JRVHS), 34; "Signers were Fighters, Gentlemen," The Roanoke Times January 5, 1975; hereinafter cited as "Fighters, Gentlemen." Roanoke Times.

[6]James McGavock to William Preston April 15, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; James McGavock to William Preston April 15, 1779, Branch Papers, 302-304; Kegley, Western Waters, I, 138. Like Crockett, McGavock was one of the gentlemen justices and an officer in the Montgomery County militia. Born in Antrim, Ireland, he operated an ordinary in Fincastle before he removed to the Fort Chiswell area during the 1770's. After moving he operated a mill, an ordinary, and a trading post. During the Revolution he stored lead, powder, and corn at his home and businesses in anticipation of provisioning necessary expeditions. John Griffith, the Tory cited by O'Gullion and Wyrick as their recruiter, was born of parents who settled in the Montgomery-Roanoke area in or prior to 1749. Since he was an important Tory organizer, he was sometimes referred to as a colonel. Mary Kegley, "Signers," JRVHS; "Fighters, Gentlemen", Roanoke Times; Percy, Virginia's Unsung Victory,[15].

[7]Ibid. McGavock was accurate when he said the plotting occurred within the realm of Reed's and Walker's Creeks. Most of the suspected Tories mentioned by McGavock lived on land drained by those creeks. Duncan and John O'Gullion settled their 400 acres on the South fork of Reed Creek in 1773. Nathaniel Britain resided on a 100 acre tract on Mill Creek, the middle branch of Walker's Creek but he did not receive

title to the acreage until October 2, 1782. Daniel Etter owned a 200 acre tract on Reed Creek where he had settled in 1767. Philip Lambert settled in 1773 on a 400 acre tract drained by Walker's Creek. Joseph Erwin settled the year the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed on 400 acres along Reed Creek. Joseph McFarlen [sic] assigned his 300 acres "at the confluence of New River with the Ohio" in 1782 but settled his tract in 1775. According to Botetourt records, John Stephens resided in the vicinity of Reed Creek. Nicholas Wyrick lived on land adjoining Joseph Love who received 400 acres on Mill Creek. John Etter presumably lived near his kinsman, Daniel Etter. Kegley, Western Waters, II, 110, 69, 70, 98, 219, 110, 118, 113, 136; Summers, Annals, 81.

[8]James McGavock to William Preston April 15, 1779, Preston Papers, Library of Congress, folder 1017; James McGavock to William Preston April 15, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Johnson, William Preston, 217-218; Branch Papers, 302-304. Michael Price lived very close to Smithfield on Stroubles Creek. A list of his neighbors, March 1775, from "Michael Price's field to where Greshams path goes into the Catawba road" are as follows: "Philip Barger, Robert Crayson, William McMullen, Robert McGee, Robert Richey, John Criner, Michael Larke, George Fielder, John Ramy, Harmon Cook, Joseph McDonald, Jacob Seilor, James Bane, William Preston, Michael Price and Jacob Smith." Summers, Annals, 640.

[9]Johnson, William Preston, 218. This researcher wonders if this George Patterson is the same as the Patterson brought before the Botetourt County Court later in the year.

[10]George Patterson and John Griffith April 24, 1779, Deposition, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ2.

[11]William Campbell to William Preston April 19, 1779, Preston Papers, Library of Congress, folder 1018; William Campbell to William Preston April 19, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library. Frederick Moore lived on a 100-acre tract on the South fork of Reed Creek. Colonel William Campbell who carried a sword from Scotland called Andreferra, was an influential man in his neck of the woods which was Washington County. While he was not the county lieutenant (that post belonged to his kinsman, Arthur Campbell), he was an important official. He had become a lieutenant colonel in 1777. Born about 1745 in Augusta County, he married Elizabeth Henry, one of Patrick Henry's sisters. His aunt Sarah married Edmund Pendleton who corresponded sporadically with his nephew by marriage. Campbell is the person who should receive the notoriety that follows Colonel Charles Lynch. Campbell, not Lynch, is the person who is responsible for "lynching." Campbell is best known for his exemplary service at

the Battle of King's Mountain. Kegley, Western Waters, II, 37; Summers, Annals, 984, 986, 991; "Fighters, Gentlemen," Roanoke Times; Kegley, "Signers", JRVHS, 34-35.

[12]Ibid. Peter Reazor, along with Philip Hanson was tried for suspicious behavior before the gentlemen justices of Washington County. No charges were made but they decided that Hanson post £200 and each of his securities £100 for his good behavior. Reazor was ordered to remain in the Sheriff's custody "untill next Court when he is to find Security for his good behavior and not to depart out of Washington and Montgomery Counties for two years and a half." At a session of court held May 19, 1778 James Dysart (the sheriff) and Francis Kincannon became securities for Reazor in the amount of £125 each. Reazor had to post bond of £250 and adhere to the earlier order concerning his movements.

[13]Deposition of Michael Hennigar April 18, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 304, 305. Adam Runner lived in Draper's Valley near Peak Creek but he does not seem to have owned the land. Reazor resided on the South Fork of the Holston.

[14]Ibid. Frederick Slemp owned 250 acres adjoining Reazor which he settled in 1773. Andrew Bronstetter settled on 125 acres on Cripple Creek in 1775. Francis Kettering assigned his land on Cripple Creek to James Crawford in 1781. Matthias Crumb, the braggart, settled on a 200-acre tract on Back Creek in 1772. David Vaught settled on 150 acres located on the South Fork of the Holston. Henry Vaught's 572 acres were much closer to the Mines at the headwaters of Cripple Creek. Peter Kinder probably resided in Botetourt County, having received an inheritance from his father Peter. His father's grant included 150 acres near Peters Creek. In 1783 Kinder shows up as a member of a Botetourt company. Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 97, 98, 455. Kegley, Western Waters, II, 106, 107, 113, 114, 119, 388; Summers, Annals, 911, 916.

[15]Walter Crockett to William Preston April 24, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 306.

[16]Summers, Annals, 988, 989, 991, 1000, 1002, 1003, 955, 968; Summers, Washington County, 275, 276.

[17]James McGavock to William Preston April 25, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 306, 307. This John Cox should not be confused with another of the same name who was a Patriot. The patriotic John Cox resided along New River. The Tory John Cox lived in the area of Walker's Creek. Johnson, William Preston, 221.

[18]Walter Crockett to William Preston April 24, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 306; Kellogg, Retreat, 24; Johnson, William Preston, 220; Summers, Annals, 707-709.

[19]Summers, Annals, 707-712; Montgomery County Order Book II, 183, 195.

[20]Summers, Annals, 709-712; Montgomery County Order Book II, 196, 197; Kegley, Western Waters, I, 139.

[21]Ibid., Montgomery Order Book II, 196, 198.

[22]Summers, Annals, 286.

[23]James Montgomery to William Preston June 11, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 307, 308. James Montgomery, son of James and Ann Montgomery of Ireland settled early (1746) on Catawba Creek in Botetourt County. For one reason or another with his younger brother Joseph, he removed to the Peak Creak area of Montgomery, now Pulaski County. In 1762 he requested 400 acres of land on the South side of Peak Creek Mountain on Pine Run adjacent to Robert Montgomery's (presumably another sibling) as a reward for his service during the French and Indian War. He also entered a 150-acre tract adjacent to William Sayers on Big Pine Run. He did not receive the land he requested but did settle in the vicinity of his desired acreage. His land was not deeded until 1782 when he gained title to 400 acres on Happy Creek, north of Peak Mountain. In 1779 he served as a militia captain in Montgomery County. William Phipps, whose home the Tories tried to burn, was deeded 190 acres on Reed Creek in 1782 which he had settled in 1768. Stoner, Seed-Bed, 325; Kegley, Western Waters, II, 391-392, 118.

[24]William Preston Address to Neighbors circa June 1779, Preston Papers, Library of Congress, folder 1024; Johnson, William Preston, 220, 221. Jacob Shull lived near the mouth of Stroubles Creek which is in the area of present day Blacksburg.

[25]Summers, Annals, 1038-1040

[26]William Campbell to William Preston July 16, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; William Campbell to William Preston, Preston Papers, Library of Congress, folder 1026. The insurgents also took a saddle, a bridle, a new coat, breeches, various papers, his Pocket Book and sundry articles of value. The "smooth gun" was a smooth-bore muzzle-loader. Virgil Ney, "Washington's Continental Army," Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine CX (July 1976), 835.

[27]Deposition of John Cox July 16, 1779, "Preston Papers," VMHB, 372-374, Johnson, William Preston, 221.

[28]William Preston to William Fleming July 18, 1779, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3ZZ19; William Preston to Charles Lynch, July 19, 1779, Preston Papers, Library of Congress, folder 1027; William Preston to William Campbell July 19, 1779, Preston Papers, Library of Congress, folder 1028; William Christian to William Fleming July 23, 1779, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 2ZZ81; Summers, Washington County, 277. Colonel Charles Lynch is a person whose name has gone down in history; his name has become a verb of terror yet there is no evidence to suggest that he initiated the practice of "lynching" that the Campbells practiced. Colonel Lynch was a "good" Bedford County Quaker who helped found the Smith River Meeting. He served in the House of Burgesses, took the oath of allegiance, wielded a weapon and fought for his nation. For these transgressions, he was drummed out of the Quakers. Prior to the Revolution he supposedly developed a new quicker way of making gun powder by utilizing saltpeter found in mountain caves. Perhaps it was this expertise that convinced the Virginia Convention to appoint him in place of Captain James Callaway, as Superintendent of the Mines in 1778. Colonel William Christian, the man whom Christiansburg is named for, was the son of Israel and Elizabeth (Stark) Christian. William Christian, who lived near Dunkard Bottom at Manahaim, married Patrick Henry's sister Anne. A member of the Fincastle Committee of Safety, he signed the Fincastle Resolutions. Like Preston and McGavock he was a gentleman justice. Colonel Fleming married Christian's sister Anne. Percy, Piedmont Apocalypse, 36, 37, 40; Stoner, Seed-Bed, 286-288, 291; "Fighters, Gentlemen," Roanoke Times.

[29]Summers, Annals, 277; William Christian to William Fleming July 23, 1779, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript, 2ZZ81.

[30]Several sources, including Summers in his History of Southwest Virginia and his Annals give the date of Francis Hopkins' demise as the spring of 1780. In the spring of 1780 Campbell was in Richmond at the General Assembly which did not adjourn until July, 1780. This researcher believes this miscarriage of justice occurred during the spring of 1779. In Draper's King's Mountain Papers, there is the statement that Colonel William Campbell hanged "the Tory Spy" in 1779. This was told to Draper in September 1833 by Lee Crockett, probably a descendant of the Southwest Virginia Crocketts. The account described by John Redd of Henry County conforms with the idea of the unfortunate man being a Tory spy. Unfortunately Redd does not recall the year. The Ebbing Springs Presbyterian Church was built on the Kilmakronen tract patented by Preston's uncle. He bequeathed the land to his daughter Mary, wife of William Thompson. After her death

the land to his daughter Mary, wafe of William Thompson. After her death the land came to their som James. Apparently Hopkins' body was interred near the tree. After a lapse of around 150 years, "the skeleton of one of the hanged Tories was given up by the grave to remind people of the hectic days of their forefathers." At this time the grave was on the grounds of an estate called Brook Hall. The above quote suggests that Campbell used the giant sycamore more than once for punishing Tories. In 1780 Campbell and others raided a beautiful sheltered, uninhabited little valley known as "Black Lick," located in present-day Wythe County where they found a number of Tories who used the place as a hide-out. Campbell's men captured a dozen of the Tories "and hung them upon two whiteoaks" which became known as the Tory trees. The location where Campbell, Dysart, and Thompson captured Hopkins became known as "Tory Ford." J. Cloyd Byars, whose family purchased the property from a member of the Thompson family, grew up in the shadow of the giant sycamore where Hopkins met his maker. Byars recalled that a groundhog once brought to the surface a human jaw-bone with many teeth still extant. He felt this tended to confirm what has come down through history. Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 518; Summers, Washington County 276, 277; Charles Coale, Life of Wilburn Waters, 116, 117; Summers, Annals, 1000-1003; John Redd, "Reminiscences of Western Virginia," VMHB VII (October 1899), 119-121; "Sketch of Fort Kilmakronen," Bulletin of the Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia (n.d.), 42: "Speech on Fort Kilmakronen" delivered by J. Cloyd Byars, January 19, 1943, published in Bulletin of the Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia X (July 1943), 3-4; A. Hyatt Verill, Romantic and Historic Virginia (New York: Dodd, Meade & Co., 1935), 181, 182.

[31]Percy, Piedmont Apocalypse, 45; Ben Beagle, "History Clears Tree's Reputation," Roanoke Times October 19, 1975; Johnson, William Preston, 222, 223; Kinnear, "German Pioneers," Montgomery News Messenger.

[32]Johnson, William Preston, 222, 223; Kinnear, "German Pioneers," Montgomery News Messenger; Declaration of David Allee, in Frederick B. Kegley, Virginia Frontier: The Beginning of the Southwest, The Roanoke of Colonial Days, 1740-1783 (Roanoke, Virginia: Southwest Virginia Historical Society, 1938, hereinafter cited as Frederick Kegley, Virginia Frontier), 665. In 1783 Job Hale requested a survey of 100 acres on Little River where he apparently lived. William Terry was granted 200 acres at the head of Beaver Dam branch in 1785. He applied for surveys in 1783 on 61 acres along Little River; 130 acres on the northwest side of Brush Creek; and a 300-acre tract along Brush Creek adjoining Robert McIlheney's grant. Kegley, Western Waters, I, 305, 306.

[33]Montgomery Order Book II, 203, 204; Summers, Annals, 717-719.

[34]Montgomery Order Book II, 259, 260; Summers, Annals, 719-722.

[35]Montgomery Order Book II, 262, 266; Summers, Annals, 293, 294, 297, 298, 723, 724.

[36]Governor Thomas Jefferson to William Preston October 15, 1779, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Kellogg, Frontier Retreat, 24; Price, "Smithfield;" Summers, Washington, 278; Hening, Statutes, X, 195, Journal of House of Delegates October 22, 1779, 21. Notice that Lynch is not named in the statute absolving Campbell, Crockett, et. al. of liability. Later on, a different one was passed that specifically mentions Lynch, but this was not until November of 1782.

Chapter V

THE PLOT THICKENS: "A HORRID CONSPIRACY", 1780

A most horrid Conspiracy amongst the Tories in this Country being providentialy discovered about ten days ago obliged me not only to raise the militia of the County but to care for so large a Number from the Counties of Washington and Botetourt that there are upwards of four hundred men now on Duty exclusive of a Party which I hear Colonel Lynch marched from Bedford towards the Mines yesterday.

William Preston to Thomas Jefferson August 8, 1780 Jefferson Papers, III, 533.

By 1780 Virginia patriots could take comfort in the facts that on a world-wide scale, Spain had entered the war against Great Britain, in the English Channel the audacious John Paul Jones proclaiming, "I have not yet begun to fight," had seized the British warship, *Seraphis*. Across the Ohio, Virginian George Rogers Clark had forced the capitulation of the British outposts, Forts Kaskaskia and Vincennes; and in New York General Anthony Wayne had recaptured Stony Point from British hands. But there were in 1780 also bad auspices. A black thundercloud gathering strength with each passing day, rested ominously on the Southern horizon. Sir Henry Clinton, now Supreme British Commander, was reaping rewards from his foray into the Southland. The fall of Savannah in December of 1778 had wrenched colonial hearts, and patriots feared Charleston was next on Clinton's agenda.

Within Virginia, the governorship had passed from Patrick Henry to Thomas Jefferson. In order to better defend the frontier, the new

governor proposed constructing a chain of forts and called on Colonels Christian, Fleming, and Andrew Lewis to recommend sites. They suggested that forts be built near the mouth of the Guyandot River; near the junction of Licking Creek with the Ohio River and north of the Big Sandy River; and at Martin's place in Powell's Valley. In southwest Virginia, Colonel Preston had recovered from his malady; Colonel Fleming had journeyed to Kentucky after having been appointed a land commissioner to settle title disputes; and Indian depredations no longer loomed as an immediate threat. A letter to Sir Henry Clinton from General Frederick Haldimand explains why the spector of Indian attack no longer shadowed the Virginia settlements. Haldimand regretfully informed Clinton that "very little is to be expected, in co-operation from the Indians upon the frontiers of Virginia." Even though the British had taken the utmost care in offering large sums of money to pay for the Indians assistance, Haldimand discerned little enthusiasm for raiding settlements. However, the backcountry residents were not privy to dispatches exchanged between British officers. They continued to worry and wonder when and where the next attack would befall the frontier.[1]

With the coming of an unusually harsh winter of 1779-1780, the frontier deflected the magnates' attention from Tories and Indians to the rigors of everyday life. Customarily, Indians preferred warm weather when they attacked the backcountry settlements, especially during an autumnal warm snap. From this occurrence came the frontier term: "Indian Summer." But there was no Indian Summer in Autumn 1779. On

the contrary, by August all the trees had lost their leaves which seemed to indicate an unusually frigid fall and a bone-chilling winter.[2]

The routines of everyday life were more difficult than ever during this winter. Several years of deficient harvests, the demands of provisioning continental and militia troops, the scarcity of legal tender, and the uncertainties of credit all combined to put the backcountry in a sorry state. The price of corn soared to £10 which Colonel Christian seemed to think was an exorbitant sum. Salt, the mainstay in curing and flavoring meat, sold for £65 in Botetourt during January. Ultimately, the supply sold out and reportedly was unavailable west of Bedford. The scant amount of pork had caused its price to inflate. Cattle forage and fodder was running out quickly. In February of 1780 Colonel Christian lamented to Colonel Fleming that many families would face starvation in a winter so severe that the [New] River was "a Bridge of Ice [for] Six Weeks; [and] we have hardly seen the Earth for two months." The recent backcountry immigrant from Charlotte County, Presbyterian preacher Caleb Wallace complained that he was so busy trying to find "Corn for my Family" that he had been unable to provide services for the Fleming family.[3]

Besides regional news, Colonel Christian's letter showed frontier leaders were well informed about the larger course of the war. Indeed, Virginia and Carolina troops in the Continental Army were en route to Charleston where the residents "dreaded" an attack by Clinton's 6,000 redcoats. Upon hearing that the Spaniards had seized West Florida

Fleming theorized the British troops were traveling "to the aid of that Colony." [4]

But the winter did not hinder Tory plans for the coming spring and summer. The inclement season provided a good opportunity to plot the sequence of events they hoped to set into motion in the spring and summer of 1780. They could travel more freely without worrying because frontier folk stayed close to home in bad weather, not even going far afield in search of game. According to the Patriots, the local Tories of Montgomery and Washington counties and western North Carolina corresponded frequently by means of couriers who carried intelligence to and from British officials in the South to perfect a great conspiracy. The conspirators had four objectives. First, the King's enemies would have to be disarmed and some killed to make their point. Second on the agenda was the destruction of the Lead Mines. Third, they planned to unite with Indian allies to "burn, Destroy & cut their Way to the English Army" and fourth, help it subdue the rest of the South. Colonel William Preston and other frontier officials had good reason to fear this new, better organized conspiracy, because by 1780, Montgomery County "was said to have as many Tories as Patriots."[5]

The Loyalist Conspiracy of 1780 was without a doubt the most significant and serious Tory plot in southwest Virginia. The largely haphazard planning of 1779 served merely as an appetizer for the main course. The sourthwest Virginia Tories expended all their efforts in the 1780 Plot. In order to gain adherents, British agents made the

ignorant, the poor and the downtrodden the prime targets of their propaganda, telling them that the King's army had subdued both South and North Carolina, and would soon enter Virginia. Furthermore, they made it clear that the restored royal government would take vengeance against any who did not pledge fealty to the King. Those who remained loyal would receive monetary and other compensations.[6]

When Patriot officials learned details of the insidious conspiracy in early March, Preston informed Governor Jefferson. Preston, claiming that the plot had been brewing for almost a year, asserted that those involved desired to murder "[all] individuals in Authority on this Quarter." Approximately seventy-five citizens had taken the royal oath, thereby renouncing their loyalty to the Commonwealth and the nation. To make matters worse, fifteen people in the Montgomery-Washington County area had received commissions from British authorities. The cabal came to light when two of the malcontents, betrayed the plot, risking themselves and their families. Preston considered the Patriots very lucky to have learned of the conspiracy before it had been into motion. His old nemesis, John Griffith, was very involved in the Tories' plans according to the informers. One of the informers, Gerret Bramton, had been sworn to secrecy about the cabal by a man named Bullock. He named Thomas Binford, Aaron Collier, Ephraim Dinkins, John or James Esson, Francis Hamilton and David Short as perpetrators. Preston and his officers were alarmed to learn that two of their militiamen, named Hudson and Stanley "who resided in the hollows" were Tory conspirators.[7]

The insurgents had the familiar goals of disarming the King's foe, destroying the lead works, and joining the Indians in ravaging the countryside before joining the British Army. The Tories' timetable was carefully orchestrated. This was no haphazard attempt at subversion, but a detailed well-thought out plan. One of the perpertrators of the scheme "was said to have visited British headquarters near Charleston, and to have been commissioned by Sir Henry Clinton in person." The insurgents planned their conspiracy to coincide with the British regulars gaining a definite foothold in South Carolina.[8]

Preston wasted no time in ordering four militia captains to disarm any within their companies men whose loyalty was suspect. Another informer reported that a few inhabitants had procured arms but remained undercover. The Smithfield colonel ordered a detachment of militia to take the ringleaders into custody pending trial by the justices. After the ringleaders' capture and incarceration, Preston empowered two captains to take twenty-five militiamen apiece to the rest. He decreed that confiscated arms were to be kept at the Mines, "... as I have not a doubt but the destruction of that Place will be attempted on the first breaking out of the Tories." As county lieutenant, Preston was at a loss as to what to do with the prisoners, since Montgomery County lacked a completed jail. He considered sending them to the August County gaol for incarceration until the trial or until additional evidence could be secured. Since apprehension of the chief perpetrators had been cloaked in the greatest secrecy, Preston

hoped that incriminating papers might be taken before their comrades "Suspect any Danger or Discovery being made of their infernal Schemes." Colonel Preston requested advice about the Tories' legal rights and treatment.[9]

Shortly after the Montgomery County Lieutenant informed Governor Jefferson of the plot and its frustration Jefferson sent Preston the requested legal instructions on March 21st. He replied that he was sorry to hear about the disaffection. The Chief Executive approved of his vigorous action to apprehend the guilty and to be scrupulous in trying them according to the law. Jefferson cautioned however, that we must "avoid any [ir]regularity which might give them legal means of withdrawing themselves from punishment." He suggested that the prisoners remain in the county under heavy guard instead of being transferred to Staunton. Doubting that any written proof of treason would be found, Governor Jefferson proposed charging them with "a misprision of treason" which was punishable by fine and prison sentences at the discretion of the county court.[10]

When the Montgomery County Lieutenant informed Governor Jefferson of the plot, Preston's news so upset the Chief Executive that he warned George Rogers Clark about the incipient Tory insurrection on the southwest Virginia frontier. Jefferson alerted him to the possibility of providing assistance. Virginia's governor recognized that a full-blown frontier insurrection would be a dangerous diversion of the war

effort. The Chief Executive wanted to crush the revolt in its infancy. After Clark convinced the governor that the Indians were not planning to attack western Virginia, Jefferson eased Preston's mind on that score so that he could concentrate his energies on the more immediate threat from the Loyalists. Above all, the Governor urged Preston to "Take the most immediate measures for protecting the lead mines ...[,]" by calling out sufficient militia from neighboring counties and arming them with weapons seized from the malcontents.[11]

Word from Colonel Martin Armstrong, county lieutenant of Surry County, North Carolina, provided evidence of substantial plotting and cooperation between the King's friends in the two-state area. Armstrong's letter of April 10th confirmed exactly what Preston's informants had revealed. In addition the North Carolinian declared that the plotting was more widespread than local officials envisioned, reaching throughout the backcountry from Virginia to Georgia. Colonel McDowell reported the Cherokees were supplying the insurgents with 1,500 braves and twenty horseloads of ammunition. He believed that General Clinton had authorized the scheme because Marion Dolly, one of the ringleaders, recently had visited the British commander. The plot was to commence on April 25th and had been carefully orchestrated. Armstrong requested Crockett's help in making a preemptive strike in order to save lives and property. Armstrong even invoked allegiance to a higher order. "...It is a Duty we owe God & our Country in this

day of Distress." A Colonel Owens asked Crockett to send troops up the New River to disarm all members of Captains Cox, Osborn, and Swift's companies, but since residents were in the midst of planting time, he felt the task would be difficult.[12]

Governor Jefferson and General Clark had been overly optimistic that the Indians not harass the frontier. On April 19th he informed Clark of "many Murders recently committed by the Indians" in Greenbrier, Kentucky, Montgomery, and Washington counties and in the neighborhood of Fort Pitt. To counter the insidious foe, Jefferson directed the county lieutenants from the affected counties to enlist militiamen for an expedition into Indian territory. Militia officials from the counties named by Jefferson met May 8th in Botetourt. Their pessimism was probably due to Tory machinations and the possibility of Indian attack, while the troops marched to the Northwest. Perhaps the whole series of attacks were merely a clever ruse designed to draw able-bodied men away so that the Tories and their allies could begin their reign of terror.[13]

The excitable Colonel Arthur Campbell of Washington County feared the fate of Charleston would hearten the local Tories. He was the first to estimate the size of Colonel Butler's British regulars at 600 and his Indian allies at over 1,000. They intended to attack Virginia outposts in the Northwest, and timed their assault very closely with the Virginia Tories timetable. Campbell hoped Preston would contribute

a company to march with two companies from Washington in support of the Northwest. Preston ordered Captain Thomas Quirk and his detachment at the Lead Mines to accompany the troops en route to Kentucky and points north. Quirk replied that his company was too small (twenty-nine men and two sergeants) and inadequately supplied with arms and clothing. Supplies did not reach them in time to join the expedition. It was providential that the troops remained at the Lead Mines, soon the object of renewed Loyalist activity.[14]

Undaunted by the discovery of their conspiracy in April, the Tories, probably confident because of their own numbers and those of their Indian allies, swung into action. The local Whigs gained their first inkling of the Tories' movement on June 24th, 1780, when the commander at the Mines (presumably Quirk) relayed the disturbing news that the Tories had assembled "near the flower Gape" and up the New River. The insurgents began a reign of terror by murdering nine men and robbing five others. Similar news came from Colonel Armstrong across the border in North Carolina. Colonel Arthur Campbell, upon hearing the unsettling news, ordered Major William Edmiston to send seven companies posthaste to shore up the defenses at the Mines. Edmiston, Beattie and Dysart were to command the expedition with Edmiston being the final authority.[15]

Likewise, Colonel Crockett in Montgomery sent word to all militia captains in the upper end of the county to assemble their companies at

the Lead Mines immediately. Crockett proposed marching against the rebels as quickly as possible to crush their defiance. Colonel Campbell declared that this action by the Tories once and for all, would disclose who they were, "...It may be for our good if they all thro' off the Mask" and this time they could not plead for leniency. He reported rumors that Tories from North Carolina had been lurking about along Reed Creek the day before.[16]

On June 25th Campbell received firm intelligence that about 200 of the King's friends were gathered in the Glades which lay at the head of the Holston's south fork, not far from the Lead Mines. He urged Edmiston to hurry his militiamen along since time was of the essence. Writing from the Lead Mines James Breckinridge confirmed this report and added that the Tories had murdered several settlers on their way. A patriot spy named Husk disclosed that the Tories near the Glades was in the company of nine light horsemen from North Carolina. Captain Flower Swift, substantiated this story adding that some British officers were also at the gathering. Breckinridge cautioned Preston to beware since some of his neighbors "will be very active upon this occasion."[17]

Preston's Tory neighbors probably heard of the plot from their trusted friend, Michael Price, whose loyalties were not certain. A confirmed Tory named Jacob Peteson wrote Price that Montgomery County "[was] like[ly] to be torn to pieces by the Whigs" since they heard

of Charleston's fall and requested that Price meet him at Shull's on June 29th to discuss events freely.[18]

From Fort Chiswell James McGavock furnished additional details about the Tory plans learned from a trusted informant's wife. The elusive Tory organizer, John Griffith, had recently journeyed to the Walker's Creek area to encourage and mobilize support, promising that he would return within two weeks from Ramseur's Mill in North Carolina, with a "large body of Tories" who would join forces with their Virginia comrades. Confident of success, Griffith promised rewards to whoever could seize any Patriot officials of Montgomery County, especially James McGavock and William Preston.[19]

Colonel Arthur Campbell found cause for concern in the Tories' failure to remove their property for safe-keeping, saying this was circumstantial evidence that they planned to return in great numbers. Campbell advised McGavock to report this mixture of fact, rumor and supposition to Colonel Preston in the hope that he would request assistance from neighboring counties. On his part, Campbell vowed to raise one hundred militiamen who would be ready to march on the briefest notice. That the patriots were becoming paranoid is suggested by Andrew Armstrong's claim that the Tories poisoned three of his horses worth £8300 at Hans Meadows in order to delay him in transporting powder from Colonel Fleming's to Fort Chiswell.[20]

Doubtless upon Preston's prompting, Governor Jefferson on July 3, 1780, dispatched letters to Colonel William Campbell and William Preston

concerning the Tory uprising on the frontier. Governor Jefferson approved wholeheartedly of Preston's measures for protecting the Mines by calling out the militia from the tri-county area. To Campbell he wrote:

> I have received advice from Colonel Preston of a dangerous insurrection on New River. He thinks the insurgents will attempt to destroy the works at the lead mines, and has called on the militia of Washington and Botetourt to oppose them. I am to desire you will a second time take in hand these parricades, and if they have proceeded as we have heard to actual murder, to recommend that you take such effectual measures of punishment as may secure the future safety of that quarter.[21]

Colonel Arthur Campbell did not delay in keeping his word to McGavock. Upon reaching his home in Washington County he sent out the call for troops. By July 3rd he was on the New River leading a band of militia in a distant pursuit of the insurgents led by one of the Roberts family. In western North Carolina, the Tories defeat at Ramseur's Mill on June 20th gave reason to hope that North Carolinians might round up all their enemies. Indeed, some of the latter were so disheartened by the crushing defeat that they tried to disappear into the wilds of Virginia, only to be apprehended by Campbell's soldiers. To discourage additional adherents he had ordered troops to fan out along the border and "to disarm, distress, and terrify the different Settlements that have been most active in joining and countenancing our enemies." Prisoners apprehended within North Carolina he proposed turning over to the proper authorities. In a fine bit of irony, those

captured in Virginia should be incarcerated at the Lead Mines. Although he made a weak offer to send the proceeds of confiscated property to the Commonwealth if the governor demanded it, he gave no opposition to his troops' insistence that all confiscated property should be sold for their benefit.[22]

Preston responded to Campbell's news with speed. On July 5th he ordered Captain James Byrn to take fifty men from Captain William Robinson's, Daniel Trigg's and his own companies in Montgomery to disarm the disaffected. Under the guise of going to garrison the blockhouse at the Lead Mines, he ordered them to proceed down the Great Wagon Road near Peak Creek. When they reached Walker's Creek they were to disarm with great secrecy and speed, all the disaffected, beginning above Thomas Shannon's home and methodically ascending the various branches which emptied into the creek. After they disarmed the Walker's Creek inhabitants, Wolf Creek was next. Arms would be returned to the "friends of American liberty" once they proved their commitment. Preston also ordered Byrn's detachment to seize anyone having treasonable documents and hold them for trial. If the militiamen managed to locate the elusive infamous Nathaniel Britain, Preston advised securing him carefully while in custody. At the same time, he sternly warned that "... no Violence is to be offered to Women or Children or the old or helpless, nor indeed to any other ... who will give up their Arms and Auumnition peaceable." These explicit instructions left no room for procedural error in apprehending the Tories. Furthermore, Preston

authorized Byrn to impress horses, soldiers and provisions if he deemed it necessary. His main hope for Byrn's mission was that it would be a "means of humbling those People and of course removing the Cause of so much Disturbance for the future." He cautioned Byrn to choose the guides for the expedition very carefully.[23]

On July 12th, the Smithfield colonel ordered Captain Isaac Taylor to perform in the New River area essentially the same duties that he had given to Captain Byrn. Preston commanded Taylor to raise two small troops of light cavalry of thirty men apiece to disarm the disaffected. Through this activity, Preston also hoped such a military presence would hearten the well-affected. Captain Taylor and Captain Robert Sayers were to command the companies who would enlist for a three-month tour of duty. Preston suspected that some members of four existing militia companies of Montgomery might be disaffected. After disarming the Tories along the New River, Preston ordered Taylor to perform the same duty among the people who lived near the Courthouse, confining all suspects at the Lead Mines until the County Court could try them. As he had cautioned Byrn, Preston implored Taylor to practice restraint and behave with consideration when dealing with alleged Tories and their families. Regarding the seizure of property, Preston decided it should be secured but not sold until the justices could determine its disposition.[24]

By mid-July, the garrison at the Lead Mines was well-prepared for any eventuality. Colonel Arthur Campbell, stationed at the lead works wrote Colonel William Campbell that around fifty of the enemy was

encamped nearby. They might do mischief outside the palisade but he doubted they could breach the mines' defenses.[25]

At the same time Preston again felt the need to address his neighbors regarding their disaffection. This time however, the missive was not addressed to his neighbors at large, but to specific individuals whom he named: James Bane, David Harless, Howard Heavin, John Heavin, Joseph Poppicover, Michael Price, Jacob Shull, and John Wall. Preston reminded them that until now they had enjoyed every protection of life and property even though "their conduct ha[d] been Dark[,] Sul[len,] Disgus[t]ful[,] Suspicious and offensive to the Government of this State." To back up his assessment of their behavior, Preston made a list of their misdeeds. In spite of their agreement in 1779 not to engage in behavior prejudicial to the country, Michael Price had broken his word by sending messages and preparing for war. On one occasion Preston's messenger had been intercepted and made so drunk he proclaimed the supremacy of King George! On another occasion Preston heard Thomas Hale, Price's future son-in-law, had threatened to kill one of Preston's messengers. Preston did not specify who was responsible but he complained that trees had been emblazoned with insults to the country. Rumors were that an assassin was offered a new rifle and a large amount of money in return for killing him (Preston). The irate colonel also asserted that his son's life had been threatened and someone in the Walker's Creek area had offered a purse of guineas for Preston.

Furthermore, Mr. H. [probably Hercules] Ogle accompanied by four

others had even come to Smithfield under the pretence of purchasing a still, but in reality, to murder him.[26]

With righteous indignation Preston wondered what he had done to deserve such enmity. Noting that Colonel William Campbell's instructions came directly from the governor and his council, the county lieutenant warned that he could not restrain Campbell unless his neighbors ended all their activities which might be interpreted as being on the King's behalf. He urged them for their own protection and that of their families to attend a meeting at Smithfield on July 22, 1780 to discuss measures for safety. If they failed to comply with his magnanimous invitation, Preston admonished, "I shall then take it for Granted that you have farther Views which are Distructive to the Peace of the country."[27]

One of the accused neighbors, John Heavin, felt it incumbent to deny his guilt and that of his friends. "I have seen several of the Neighbours that all say they are Clear and ... they all say they only want pease ..." Under the impression that his absence had been construed as guilt in Tory plans, Heavin continued:

> My Disappearing shall be no token of my Gilt and ... to sattisfy the Internal peas of this State I know not How to doe that, I have no way to sattisfy you ... unless it is to sweare and that I Cannot doe ... for I Never meddleed with war from the first moment and Cant think of Intangleing my selfe with it now ... to my knowledg no man means to Rais arms Against you ...[28]

After the Smithfield meeting, various justices of the Montgomery County Court began issuing warrants for the arrest of suspected Tories. Joseph Gregg empowered Captain James Barnett to arrest John McDonald who declared that "he would loose [sic] his Life before he would give up his Arms." Some Tories who had to post bond for their good behavior were James Bane, Jr., Thomas Burk, John McDonald, Robert McGee and Jacob Seilor.[29]

Further to the southwest Colonel William Campbell felt it expedient to call out forty-five militiamen from the companies of Captains Walter Edmiston, Aaron Lewis, and James Dysart to march to the Lead Mines. The day after his arrival there he learned from two Patriot spies, that near Captain Cox's on the New River, they had seen 105 men bearing arms and a considerable number without weapons. Their information could be considered accurate for three reasons: they had experienced the misfortune of being captured and held for about twenty-four hours, a disorganized "rabble" had released them; and they reported that the disheartened Tories had dispersed, presumably to return to their homes.[30]

Colonel William Campbell favored tracking down the insurgents but some Montgomery militia officials persuaded him to wait until they could collect more militia. When the combined force of militia set out early the next day, their ranks contained about 140 men. Upon reaching Captain Cox's the troops learned that around forty of the malcontents had crossed the river two hours earlier, taking with them Cox's son as a hostage. The militia set out in pursuit; but were unable to locate

where the Tories were encamped. Campbell addressed the situation by coercing a man whose brother was known to be among the malcontents. By hook or crook, he informed the man they would apprehend the culprits. He calmly told the unfortunate man that if he did not reveal where the Tories were, he "would put him to death." The man talked freely.[31]

Soon, scouts located the Tory camp in a large glade. From overhearing their conversation the scouts learned that the Tories expected reinforcements soon. The malcontents,boasting among themselves about their invincible location, concluded their camp was secure, since any attempt to dislodge them would be prohibitive in casualties. Campbell, recognized the truth of their boast, and admitted his unwillingness to sacrifice good men in an attempt to chastise the worthless wretches in a night assault.[32]

As soon as it became daylight, the militia company set out a second time in the direction of the enemy's camp. The soldiers reached the glade just as the sun peeked over the horizon. Fog descended, soon obscuring the sun and allowing the Tories to flee, being uncertain how strong the patriots were. In their haste the Tories abandoned all their supplies except their weapons and even allowed their hostage to escape. Some fled into mountainous laurel thickets where pursuit on horseback was difficult. The disgruntled troops found only one "who was immediately shot." Campbell berated himself for the Tories' escape: "You cannot conceive my chargin [sic] when I saw the situation of the enemy's camp. I found that had I known it myself, it was in my

power to have destroyed nearly the whole of them." Following the largely unsuccessful pursuit the militiamen consoled themselves with a sumptuous breakfast on the Tories' forgotten provisions.[33]

On the company's return to Cox's residence, they met a party of 130 men commanded by Colonel Benjamin Cleveland from Wilkes County, North Carolina. The preceding day his troops had apprehended a man named Zachariah Goss, a member of a band of murderers, horse thieves and brigands. They hanged Goss, and two other men with him received a severe whipping. Campbell detailed around seventy men under the command of Captain Henry Francis to collect all horses and cattle belonging to the Tories, leaving each family one horse and milk cows for its sustenance. Campbell hoped that his combination of force and mercy would draw the culprits down out of the mountains. His actions convinced some to surrender their arms, but most of the insurgents escaped the dragnet and slipped into Montgomery where they became the responsibility of Preston and his subalterns.[34]

On August 6th at Fort Chiswell, Colonel Walter Crockett took charge of a new expedition of over 250 men mounted to track down the Tories. The stimulus for renewed action was the recent murder of a [Captain William] Letcher, for which two men named Meeks and Nicholas were thought to be guilty. A lesser cause was the theft, presumably by Tories, of six horses from Colonel John Green's house near Herbert's Ferry. To add insult to injury, they had attempted to capture and rob Green's slave but a detachment of militia from the Lead Mines arrived in time

to prevent the robbery. Crockett suggested that Preston send troops to Greasey Creek and the Flower Gap where the "wretches" were reportedly encamped.[35]

In the meantime the uprising was spreading like wildfire; new areas heretofore unentangled in Tory machinations, became involved. From scant evidence, it appears that the Bedford friends of the King reacted at approximately the same time as their brethren who lived over the mountains. From Richmond on August 1, 1780, Governor Jefferson approved of Colonel James Callaway's actions in putting down the Bedford conspiracy of a "treasonable nature." In so doing he provided instructions on how officials should treat conspirators. The ringleaders who were probably guilty of high treason (having recruited new adherents and/or received commissions) should be tried as quickly as possible. The lesser involved conspirators who vowed repentence, and who gave states' evidence should not be prosecuted at all. Jefferson's reason for not prosecuting these people was the absence in Virginia of a law allowing the governor to pardon those convicted of treason. The governor could recommend pardons, but the legislature had the only authority to allow pardons. Governor Jefferson urged Callaway to detail as many men as necessary to guard the prisoners. To assist him the Chief Executive sent forty-one blank militia commissions.[36]

That same day Governor Jefferson wrote Colonel Charles Lynch also of Bedford regarding the disaffection. The governor expressed his perplexity that citizens of a Commonwealth which guaranteed all

possible freedom, advantages and rights would willingly accept a foreign government that would deny these rights. As a practical matter, Jefferson stated: "the most vigorous decisive measures should be continued for seizing everyone on whom probably proof of guilt shall appear." Just as he had related to Callaway, he declared that the ringleaders of treason should be tried as quickly as possible and if judged guilty, should be transported to Richmond for further trial. The Chief Executive endorsed Lynch's actions by saying:

> Your activity,...deserves great commendation, ...The method of seizing them at once which you have adopted is much the best. You have only to take care that they be regularly tried afterwards... I can add nothing but an exhortation to continue the energy with which you have begun to suppress these parricides of their country before they shall have further Leisure to draw other innocent men into the same danger.[37]

Little evidence survives that indicates the nature of the plot in central Virginia. A local historian of Campbell County tells of written documents that revealed the plot in then Bedford County. The documents, which detailed plans to thwart the government were discovered in a hollowed out section of a large square bedpost.[38]

Although the Bedford Tories concerned themselves with the Montgomery Lead Works other targets of equal attractiveness existed closer to home. According to local historian Alfred Percy, their aims were to free the 5,000 Convention prisoners interned at Charlottesville, to arm them with weapons seized from the New London arsenal and to capture both the arsenal and the Oxford Iron Works, east of Lynch's

Ferry. Apparently, the Bedford Tories hoped to accomplish these objectives while their southwest Virginia brethren attempted once more to seize the Lead Mines. Little is known about the New London arsenal during this period. It was one of several established by the Continental Congress to repair weapons and it also served as a supply depot for both food and arms. The Oxford Iron Mines and Works on Beaver Creek, owned and operated by James Callaway, manufactured cannonballs which were used by the Continental Army. It can easily be seen why these installations attracted the attention of Tory eyes.[39]

By the time Colonel Callaway wrote Virginia's Chief Executive, he, Colonel Lynch and Captain Bob Adams, Jr. had arrested at least seventy-five conspirators. Information that came to light in Montgomery County led to the capture and arrest of the Bedford Tories and the discovery of their plans. A daring young man, Lieutenant John Wyatt, volunteered to pose as a Tory in order to learn their designs. Wyatt had escaped during the surrender of Charleston and managed to intercept copies of Sir Henry Clinton's proclamations to the Tories. These he presumably showed to the proper authorities in Montgomery who realized that Wyatt's possession of them gave him legitimacy as an evident Tory. Preston, probably with misgivings, agreed to Wyatt's offer. Wyatt, accompanied by an unidentified soldier went among the connivers in the guise of Tories. The unsuspecting Loyalists readily accepted Wyatt as one of them because he bore copies of Clinton's directives.[40]

The subterfuge allowed Waytt and his companion to unravel the plot. To no one's surprise, the major objective was the destruction of the Montgomery Lead Mines. After achieving this goal the Tories intended to unite with British troops in freeing the Convention prisoners and quelling the countryside. The two spies learned the names of the King's officers who were apprehended before they discovered Wyatt's true colors. When as a gentleman justice Preston revealed details of the conspiracy, he reported that at least sixty of the malcontents were held under extremely tight security. In fact so many Tories were captured that Preston had to request additional magistrates from Botetourt for determining whether each suspect should be tried.[41]

Calling the suspects "deluded Wretches," Preston believed that the inquiry into their crimes would take at least two weeks. He reached this conclusion after commenting that the previous three days' of prosecution had barely made a dent in bringing the Tories to justice. New prisoners arrived hourly and new developments enabled authorities to learn more about the cabal. The most serious offenders who came within the realm of the treason statute should be incarcerated in the jails of neighboring counties until they could be tried under the General Assembly's new statute, a copy of which Preston had been unable to procure. Some of the accused had to provide security to appear in court for as much as £100,000. Several received as many as thirty-nine lashings and some charged with minor crimes were permitted to enlist in the Continental Army.[42]

Several principal Tory plotters who had eluded the net imposed to catch the Tories left their personal property behind. This abandoned property presented problems. The militiamen insisted that the spoils be sold and the proceeds divided among themselves. Because Preston feared that to deny their demands would have a chilling effect on enlistment in the militia, he requested Governor Jefferson's opinion. On August 9th, Governor Jefferson addressed the question of plunder in a letter to Colonel Arthur Campbell. Although Jefferson expressed satisfaction with Campbell's "spirited manner" of suppressing the Tories, he declared that this did not fall within the governor's jurisdiction, and advised him to exercise his own judgment. Jefferson cautioned that if suspected Loyalists were found innocent, then their property should most definitely be restored. Captain Patrick Lockhart of Botetourt expressed to Colonel Preston his belief that the policy of confiscation should be uniform in the two counties.[43]

On August 14, 1780, Colonel Preston, acting on the Commonwealth's behalf, recommended pardons for Thomas Heavin and other Loyalists. After noting that Heavin had accepted a commission; had enlisted men to serve the King; had administered the King's oath to others; and had held private and treasonable meetings with enemies who conspired to subvert the government, Preston still offered to help him and other offenders secure pardons if they promised to refrain from treasonable activity.[44]

Word of Colonel Lynch's methods must have filtered back to Smithfield because Preston asked the Lead Mines superintendent "to Desist in trying torys." Lynch felt compelled to deny whatever Preston had heard, "What sort of tryals you have been inform'd I have given them I know not, but I can assure you I only Examine them strictly and such as I believe not Very criminal I set at Liberty." He conceded Preston might have thought it rather odd that he had been in Montgomery apprehending people Preston had already questioned; but in his defense he believed just cause existed for his actions when he learned the range of the conspiracy. Originally intending to offer his assistance to the Montgomery magnate, Lynch altered his plans when he heard the Botetourt militia was en route to aid Preston. Lynch took it upon himself to march to the headwaters of Reed Creek where his information indicated some of the principal villains were hiding. His foray achieved a degree of success because he apprehended several of the Welsh conspirators: David Herbert, John Jenkins and Roger Oats. After their capture they revealed all their knowledge concerning the old and new plots.[45]

The Bedford colonel convinced several of the consiprators who worked at the lead works to confess. Essentially, Thomas Douglas, David Herbert and John Jenkins related the same story. John Griffith had recruited them and other Welshmen employed at the Mines. Griffith had questioned them as to why "Brittainers wou'd assist in Makeing Lead to fight against the King of Britain." Griffith also tried to

convince his recruits that some of the most ardent Whigs were privy to the plot. He told James Douglas that Colonel William Ingles, David Ross of Bedford, James McCorkle and James McGavock had a "warm side for the Tory Party." Lynch learned that Griffith had been in and out of the area enlisting support since the battle for Savannah late in 1778.[46]

Before his trial for treason, Robert King contacted Preston to apologize and admit he had been "rong." He professed great sincerity and pleaded for the justices to take his apology into consideration before passing judgment. The desire to keep his property from being confiscated may have motivated his seemingly heartfelt admission of guilt.[47]

The trials must have commenced shortly after King's confession. Justices from the Botetourt-Montgomery area heard the witnesses against the accused and rendered judgments. The justices present were: William Preston; William Christian; Captain John Taylor; Captain James Thompson; Patrick Lockhart; Andrew Boyd; Colonel James Robertson; Captain Daniel Trigg; Captain James Barnett; Robert Sayers; William Campbell (not Colonel William Campbell); George Rutledge; Captain Joseph Grey; William Neeley; and James Byrn. The Court heard the cases of forty-nine defendants, all of whom were charged with treason. Colonel William Ingles was ordered to post £100,000 after the Court found him guilty. Samuel Robinson and Walter Stewart were acquitted because the charge was "not fully supported;" but had to post £20,000 each

for their good behavior. Gasper Garlick, Abraham Morgan, and Jeremiah Stover were judged guilty and agreed to accept thirty-nine lashes as punishment. The justices found Hezekiah Phillips and his future brother in law, Henry Lybrook, guilty of assaulting Christian Snidow while he was on duty. The Court sent seven Tories to the Augusta County jail to await further trail: John McDonald; Joseph Poppicover; Jacob Shull, Jr.; Swain Polson; Robert McGee; Nathaniel Britain and James Kerr.[48]

The rest of the Tories were treated with leniency. Individuals who were too old or were the sole support of a numerous family were allowed to substitute their son or sons in their place. Among those who took advantage of this leniency were Joseph McDonald, Samuel Ingram and James Bane, Sr. Presumably this is also the reason that David Price agreed to enlist. Oddly enough, the name of his father, Michael Price, an old man called one of the Tory ringleaders by Colonel Preston does not appear in the court proceedings. The justices acquitted John Harrison and Henry Stafford of treason.[49]

Captain Thomas Madison of Botetourt heard of Tory activity in Henry County from his brother-in-law, former governor Patrick Henry. The ex-governor reported that the Tories had been conspiring locally as well as over the mountains. He hoped they were sufficiently suppressed; the authorities had sent out posses to apprehend the malcontents but as of the present, none had been captured. Understandably, Henry showed concern because he was a target of the local Tories. After the hostilities ceased, old men remembered serving

as guards for the Henry family and home, Leatherwood, "portholes having been made for their guns." John Redd of Henry County recalled the expedition against the Tories in that region. The Tories robbed "a great many of the Whigs" and killed "a gallant Whig in cold blood, Captain Letcher." Colonel Abram Penn, a militia leader, enlisted 500 troops and pursued the Tories to the head of the Dan and Ararat rivers, where many of the King's friends lived. Upon arriving at the Tory stronghold the vengeance-seeking troops found nothing. The alleged murderer, William Nickoles [Nicholas/Nichols] originally enlisted in the American army. After deserting, he went to the British who commissioned him a colonel of horse. Upon being commissioned he returned to the headwaters of the Yadkin where he enlisted a company of light horse and soon after, shot Captain Letcher dead in his own home.[50]

By the end of August as the Tories were being tried locally, the threat from the British advancing toward Virginia increased. Frontier officials began to hear reports of new plans for the Indian and Tory attacks. An Indian chieftain named The Raven provided information that Indian war parties, accompanied by 700 Tories, would shortly begin attacking the exposed frontier. The local Patriots took time out from their busy duties dispensing justice, to answer Gates' plea for assistance. Desperate for troops Preston presented many of the suspected and convicted Tories with a choice. They could be punished in the conventional manner or they could enlist in the American forces. Many

chose the latter option, causing Preston to report with relief, "I have enlisted near one hundred into the Continental Army.[51]

By the end of August some unrepentent Tories of Montgomery and Washington counties were still involved in nefarious doings. On August 26th young Thomas Armstrong, son of Colonel Martin Armstrong, arrived at Major Joseph Cloyd's home, pleading for men to assist his father. Colonel Armstrong had hoped that his son, a lad of twelve, would avoid being stopped, but he could not be sure. To insure his safety from suspicious Tories Thomas might pass en route, he dressed him in a "full Tory suit." Upon hearing young Armstrong's story, Cloyd wasted no time in raising three companies of horsemen, commanded by Captains James Bryant, George Pearis and Abram Trigg.[52]

One young slave of William Campbell's carrying correspondence was waylaid at Sinking Spring by five Loyalists, four of whom were armed. They told the terrified slave that as soon as they reached Peak Creek they planned to kill him in retaliation for Campbell destroying their property. Enraged because of confiscation and destruction of their personal effects, they also meant to kill Campbell and his wife. Upon finding the letters contained only personal information they threw them down in disgust. Fortunately for the slave, wagons appeared and the malcontents fled.[53]

For John Wyatt his activities as a one-time spy remained in the memories of some Loyalists. When Wyatt resumed his regular service, he and Preston feared for his safety because many Loyalists, now in

the Continental Army might do him harm if he were recognized. The Smithfield colonel wrote General Peter Muhlenberg about his concerns. Preston, very appreciative of Wyatt's role in ferreting out the Tories and their designs, asked Muhlenberg to grant Wyatt a discharge. If this was not possible then Preston requested that a substitute be allowed to serve in Wyatt's stead until December 1781. Nearly 100 southwest Virginia Tories had volunteered to serve in the Continental Army in lieu of further punishment.[54]

If the southwest Virginia Tories appeared suppressed, for the most part, their allies in North Carolina did not, prompting Colonel Armstrong to request Preston's assistance once more. The Montgomery magnate directed Colonel Crockett to send two or three companies to assist in suppressing the Tories. Preston hoped that this assistance would allow Surry County militiamen to enlist in the Southern Army without worrying about their families' welfare. Preston also requested help from the county lieutenants of Botetourt and Washington.[55]

Most well-affected mountain men from Virginia heeded the appeal to fight Cornwallis' army of crack soldiers. These mountaineers lacking formal training, came down from the peaks and out of the hollows, to challenge the finest army in the world. They responded to the appeal because they were angered by Banastre Tarleton's treatment of fellow Virginians at the Waxhaws several months before and Major Patrick Ferguson's vitriolic proclamation.[56]

Walter Crockett voiced exasperation with some of the Montgomery militia who were slow to enlist for duty against the British. This resulted in fewer residents of Montgomery, when compared to Washington County, being present at King's Mountain. "I have try'd all in my power to raise the Militia of this County, but never saw them so backward before," Crockett reported to Preston on October 2nd. He had been able to raise 150 troops and any other units that straggled in were supposed to meet him at the Lead Mines in seven days. Reports indicated that Major Cloyd had arrived at the Quaker Meadows. Crockett planned to join Colonel Cleveland who was encamped about twelve miles this side of the Wilkes County courthouse, in suppressing the Tories.[57]

In early October the mountain men from the Clinch, Holston, New, Nolichucky, Roanoke, Tennessee and Wautaga rivers marched to King's Mountain where Ferguson waited. On October 7th the mountaineers engaged the British regulars and their allies, the Tories. The American forces won the day; their decisive victory marked a turning point in the Revolution. They captured many prisoners and General Horatio Gates suggested that they be interned near the Lead Mines while awaiting exchange. Gates proposed having a fort errected near Fort Chiswell to house the prisoners since the area was good Whig territory and well-stored with provisions, but the most important advantage, in his mind, was the area's "difficulty of access to the Enemy." Calling Preston "a person of the greatest Zeal, in promoting the interest of the United States," Gates placed the matter completely in Preston's weary hands.[58]

William Preston disagreed strongly with Gates' proposal saying:

> I beg your Excellency will not take it amiss that I differ in opinion with you about Errecting a place of Confinement in the neighborhood of Fort Chiswell, where Montgomery Court House stands. I am sorry to inform you that we have more Tories in this County than any other I know of in Virginia. The suppressing of whom has cost the Officers and the well affected Militia much time and Trouble and put the state to a considerable Expense. Add to this vicinity of that Place to Surry and the other disaffected Counties in North Carolina, as also to the Savages and the safe Retreat that deserters from the Prisoners might have through the mountains to the Friends in Carolina or elsewhere.

Preston recommended Botetourt's Courthouse which was better suited as a place to receive and house the prisoners. Provisions were more plentiful, the roads were much better, and the distance between the Moravian settlements and the Botetourt county seat was much shorter.[59]

Governor Jefferson ordered Patrick Lockhart of Botetourt to assume command of the King's Mountain prisoners. Lockhart was ordered to transport the regular soldiers to Winchester, while the Chief Executive decided what to do with the Tories. Governor Jefferson agreed with Preston's assessment that "very disaffected" Montgomery County was not the ideal place for incarcerating the Tories. Professing that he was "at a loss [about] what should be done [with] the King's Mountain [prisoners]," Jefferson contacted Congress. Samuel Huntington, President of Congress, replying on behalf of Congress left the decision in the hands of the Virginia Chief Executive. Unfortunately,

Jefferson's instructions were delayed two weeks and when Lockhart reached Surry County, he discovered to his disgust, that Colonel Martin Armstrong had exchanged many of the prisoners with the King's forces. As a result of Governor Jefferson's directive, none of the prisoners were incarcerated at neither the Lead Mines or the Botetourt Courthouse. Nevertheless, tradition perseveres that a small number of these captives were brought by William Madison to his home at Cloverdale, and at least one was interned at Fincastle.[60]

Simultaneously, Governor Jefferson reported about a "very dangerous insurrection in Pittsylvania" having been discovered before the plans were set into motion. Fortunately, the conspiracy had been discovered three days before it was due to happen. The Chief Executive considered news of the plot to be a harbinger of future events. The chief conspirators had been seized from their beds. He warned that:

> this dangerous fire is only smothered: When it will break out seems to depend...on events. It extends from Montgomery County along our southern boundary to Pittsylvania and Eastward as far as [the] James River. Indeed some suspicions have been raised of its having crept as far as Culpepper [sic].[61]

Why Governor Jefferson included Montgomery County in areas where Tory uprisings were occurring, is perplexing. The records do not indicate that Montgomery experienced renewed Tory activity in October of 1780. Southwest Virginia, with the exception of Washington County where the Indians were on the warpath, remained relatively calm. After the stormy months of summer, peace reigned. Following King's Mountain,

Tory activity in southwest Virginia all but ended. Their defiant spirit seemed to have evaporated with the devastating blow delivered to their cause on that North Carolina mountain. However, frontier officials continued to show concern that the disaffected would rise again; not trusting in the quiet that pervaded the area.

Notes - Chapter V

[1]General Frederick Haldimand to Sir Henry Clinton January 1780, Summary of Proposals of Virginia Council June 8, 1780, George Rogers Clark Papers, Draper Manuscript, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. Microfilm copy in Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; 58J113-114, 50J42; Johnson, William Preston, 227; Goodwin, Fleming, 35. The writer has modified the spelling of Charles Town to conform with the better known name of Charleston.

[2]Hamilton, "Settlement, Defense," JRVHS, 45.

[3]William Christian to William Fleming February 5, 1780, Frontier Wars Papers, Draper Manuscript, 2U73; Kellogg, Retreat, 128, 131. Reverend Caleb Wallace to William Fleming February 15, 1780, Frontier Wars Papers, Draper Manuscript, 2U73-74; Kellogg, Retreat, 130.

[4]Ibid.

[5]William Preston to Thomas Jefferson March 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ28; Kellogg, Retreat, 143-144; Price, "Smithfield."

[6]Kellogg, Retreat, 24-25; Price, "Smithfield;" Summers, Washington County, 292.

[7]William Preston to Thomas Jefferson March 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ28; Kellogg, Retreat, 143-145, 24; Johnson, William Preston, 235.

[8]Ibid. except for Johnson.

[9]William Preston to Thomas Jefferson March 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ28; Kellogg, Retreat, 143-144.

[10]Thomas Jefferson to William Preston March 21, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 325; Thomas Jefferson to William Preston March 21, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ24.

[11]Thomas Jefferson to George Rogers Clark March 19, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 317; Thomas Jefferson to William Preston March 21, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ24.

[12]Colonel Martin Armstrong to Walter Crockett April 10, 1780, Preston Papers, Archives, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 310-311; Walter Crockett to William Preston April 15, Preston Papers, Archives, Virginia State Library; Kellogg, Retreat, 170.

[13]Thomas Jefferson to George Rogers Clark April 19, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 356; Proceedings of Officers in Botetourt May 8, 1780, "Preston Papers," VMHB, 42-44.

[14]Arthur Campbell to William Preston June 23, 1780, Preston Papers, Archives, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 311-312; Kellogg, Retreat, 192; Major Thomas Quirk to William Preston June 23, 1780, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 313. Captain Quirk, a native of Ireland, had resided in August or Frederick counties before coming to Montgomery. "Preston Papers," VMHB, 48.

[15]Walter Crockett to William Preston June 24, 1780, "Preston Papers," 49; Arthur Campbell to William Edmiston June 24, 1780, King's Mountain Papers, Draper Manuscript. 9DD21. The Flower Gap, which Christopher Gist came through in 1751, lies along the Blue Ridge mountains between Carroll County, Virginia and Surry County, North Carolina. David Beattie, born in Rockbridge County, moved to Washington County around 1772. His family resided in the Glade Spring area and in 1777 was commissioned a lieutenant in the county militia. Promoted to captain in April of 1783, after quelling the Tories, he and his two brothers enlisted for the King's Mountain Campaign. James Dysart, an Irishman, emigrated to America in 1761. He settled along the Little Holston and married Agnes Beattie, sister of David. He served as a justice, a militia officer, and as sheriff of Washington County, in the latter capacity, from 1777-1784. He participated in the Battle of King's Mountain where he sustained a wound. Kellogg, Retreat, 236, 196.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Arthur Campbell to William Edmiston June 25, 1780, King's Mountain Papers, Draper Manuscript, 9DD22; James Breckinridge to William Preston June 25, 1780, Preston Papers, Archives, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 314; Kellogg, Retreat, 198. The lack of water in the medium high ground led to certain sections of land to be called "glades." These being undesirable because of the lack of water were usually last to be entered for settlement or speculation. The glades in question were located near the headwaters of the Holston's south fork, in then Montgomery County, not far from the lead works. James Breckinridge, Preston's nephew, was born in Augusta County near Staunton in 1760. He became a noted Federalist in the Virginia delegation in Congress. For more on Breckinridge, see Katherine K. McNulty, "James Breckinridge." (unpublished master's thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institue and State University, 1970), 8, 43. Kegley, Western Waters, II, 235. Kellogg, Retreat, 198.

[18]Jacob Peteson to Michael Price June 29, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ35.

[19]James McGavock to William Preston June 30, 1780, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 315, 316.

[20]Ibid.; Frederick Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 653.

[21]Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 479.

[22]Arthur Campbell to William Preston July 3, 1780, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 316, 317. One of the Roberts family was known as a Tory as early as March of 1776. The Battle of Ramseur's Mill, located in Lincoln County was an important Tory defeat. Had the Tory commander, Colonel John Moore, waited for Major Patrick Ferguson with his force of 2,000, the Whigs probably would have been dealt a serious defeat which might have slowed the Patriots momentum before King's Mountain. DeMond, North Carolina Loyalists, 126.

[23]William Preston to James Byrn July 5, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ37; Kellogg, Retreat, 211-213. Captain William Robinson was an officer in the Botetourt militia. Preston probably selected him and his company because he felt sure of their fidelity to the country. Captain Daniel Trigg had been chosen as sheriff of short-lived Fincastle County in 1773. In 1777 he was selected as a militia captain. Kellogg, Retreat, 212.

[24]William Preston to Isaac Taylor July 12, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ40; Kellogg, Retreat, 215, 216. Robert Sayers, son of Alexander Sayers, was born about 1752 at Beverley Manor and was educated in Bedford County. He served during the Revolution in the Continental Army; in May of 1779 he received an honorable discharge and came to Montgomery County. Kellogg, Retreat, 215.

[25]Arthur Campbell to William Campbell July 12, 1780, King's Mountain Papers, Draper Manuscript, 8DD3.

[26]William Preston Address to Neighbors: Michael Price, John Heavin, Howard Heavin, James Bane, Jacob Shull, John Wall, Michael Harless, [Joseph] Poppicover July 20, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ41; Kellogg, Retreat, 220, 221. John and Howard Heavin were brothers who settled not far from Samuel Pepper's Ferry along the New River. Thomas Heavin, presumably a brother, had been arrested in February 1777 for toasting the King and threatening the life of a militia officer. James Bane and his wife, the former Rebecca McDonald, lived in the Tom's Creek area. His son James Jr. married Elizabeth Heavin, daughter of John Heavin. Jacob Shull lived near the mouth of Stroubles Creek. John Wall, son of John Wall, Sr. had land adjoining James Bane and Michael Price. David Harless was a son of Johan Philip and Margaretha (Price) Harless had received 300 acres of Tom's Creek, as his inheritance in 1772. Joseph Poppicover lived on Crab Creek, not as close to Preston and the others. Kegley, Western Waters, I, 227, 189, 266, 278, 216, 244.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Joseph Gregg to James Barnett, Warrant for Arrest of John McDonald July 24, 1780; James Bane, Jr. to Governor Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Burk to Governor Thomas Jefferson, John McDonald to Governor Thomas Jefferson, Robert McGee to Governor Thomas Jefferson, Jacob Seilor to Governor Thomas Jefferson, Bond for good behavior, July 26, 1780; 5QQ44, 46-49, 51-52. John McDonald was the son of Joseph McDonald who lived in the Tom's Creek area. Robert McGee bought 350 acres along Tom's Creek from James Patton's executors. Jacob Seilor resided on land also in the Tom's Creek area; he didn't receive title until 1783. Kegley, Western Waters, I, 239, 240, 185. Earlier, Thomas Burk had resigned his commission.

[30]William Campbell to Arthur Campbell July 25, 1780, King's Mountain Papers, Draper Manuscript, 8DD4. Aaron Lewis, originally from Albemarle County, became quite influential in Washington County. He served as justice, coroner, major and was later named lieutenant colonel of the militia. Around 1784 he moved to Kentucky where he became a member of the state legislature. Kellogg, Retreat, 196.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid. Colonel Benjamin Cleveland of Wilkes County, North Carolina, was a Virginian by birth, having been born in Orange County. Around 1763 he moved to North Carolina along the Yadkin River. Cleveland gained quite a reputation in dealing with Tories, similar to that of Colonial William Campbell's. As a story goes, Jesse Franklin, nephew of Cleveland, was captured by Tories and were in the process of hanging young Franklin when he remarked something that halted the proceeding. He reminded them if they hung him that his dreaded uncle would "pursue [them] like a blood hound ... while there [was] a drop of warm blood running through [their] veins." Franklin later became governor of North Carolina. Redd, "Reminiscences," VMHB (October 1899), 123, 124. Henry Francis was a member of the Montgomery militia.

[35]Ibid.; Walter Crockett to William Preston August 6, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ48; Kellogg, Retreat, 236. This is probably the Captain Letcher killed in Henry County as later described by John Redd. Herbert's ferry was near the mines, probably where Jackson's Ferry is today, in Wythe County.

[36]Governor Thomas Jefferson to James Callaway August 1, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 519, 520.

[37]Governor Jefferson to Charles Lynch August 1, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 523; Percy, Unsung Victory, 35.

[38]Ruth H. Early, Campbell Chronicles and Family Sketches: Embracing the History of Campbell County, Virginia, 1782-1926 (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1978, reprint of 1927 edition), 196.

[39]Percy, Apocalypse, 34, 38.

[40]Governor Thomas Jefferson to James Callaway August 1, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 519, 520; William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson August 8, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 533, 534; William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson August 8, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ50; Alfred Percy, Origin of the Lynch Law, 1780 (Madison Heights, Virginia: Percy Press, Inc., 1959), 17, 18. The local leaders, Callaway, Lynch and Adams were so successful in capturing Tories that someone composed a short ballad in their honor: "Hurrah! for Captain Bob Adams, And Colonels Lynch, Preston, and Callaway, They never turned a Tory loose, 'Till he cried out: "LIBERTY!" Preston probably does not belong in that crowd since his methods of apprehending Loyalists were somewhat more restrained. Percy, Unsung Victory, 21.

[41]William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson August 8, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ50; William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson August 8, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 533, 534. Colonel William Ingles was the suspect put under £100,000 bond.

[42]Ibid. Preston probably refers to an act adopted by the General Assembly in May of 1780 concerning crimes less than treason. See Hening, Statutes, X, 268-270 for provisions.

[43]Ibid.; Arthur Campbell to Governor Thomas Jefferson August 9, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, III, 534, 535; Patrick Lockhart to William Preston August 12, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ53; Kellogg, Retreat, 244.

[44]William Preston to Thomas Heavin, et. al, Proposal for Pardon on August 14, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ55; Kellogg, Retreat, 246, 247.

[45]Charles Lynch to William Preston August 17, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ57; Kellogg, Retreat, 250, 252. David Herbert's Confession, 5QQ54; John Jenkins Confession, 5QQ54; Roger Oat's Confession, 5QQ54. One of the letters Preston received complaining of Lynch's

methods was from Nancy Devereaux, wife of Charles Devereaux who was employed at the Mines. She informed Preston that "there is a missunderstanding [sic] between Colonel Lynch and the Welsh in General." She begged to have him tried at Michael Price's or somewhere else that Preston and the justices could convene. Nancy Devereaux to William Preston [August 1780] Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ58.

[46]Confessions of John Jenkins, David Herbert, James Douglas, Thomas Douglas, [circa August 17, 1780], 5QQ54, 59, 60; Confession of Peter Kinder August 17, 1780 Preston Papers, Archives, Virginia State Library. The Herbert family had been employed at the Lead Mines since Chiswell began operating them. As his supervisor, Chiswell hired William Herbert, father of David Herbert. Other Welsh arrived with the Herbert family to work at the lead works. Among them were Charles and Nancy Devereaux, John Jenkins, and possibly Philip Dutton. In fact so many Welshmen arrived that the lead works in its early days, acquired the name of the "Welsh Mines." Patricia G. Johnson, The New River Early Settlement (Pulaski, Virginia: Edmonds Printing, Inc., 1983), 165.

[47]Robert King's Confession [August 1780] Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ71.

[48]Proceedings of Botetourt-Montgomery Court [August 1780] Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ73-79; Kellogg, Retreat, 257-264. These proceedings are not in Montgomery or Botetourt order books.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Robert D. Meade, Patrick Henry: Practical Revolutionary, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1969), II, 224, 225; Redd, "Reminiscences," VMHB (July 1899), 6, 7. A friend of Captain Letcher's, George Hairston, reacted in the manner of William Campbell, by hanging the culprits without the benefit of a legal court. The place where this illegal act occurred in Patrick County is still called Drumhead. In 1781 Hairston married the widow Letcher and became step-father to Letcher's infant daughter. She married William Pannill and their daughter Elizabeth married Archibald Stuart. Archibald and Elizabeth (Pannill) Stuart were the parents of JEB Stuart. Thomas Madison of Botetourt, cousin of President James Madison, married Susanna Henry. He also served several terms as Botetourt representative to the General Assembly. Virginia G. and Lewis G. Pedigo, History of Patrick and Henry Counties, Virginia (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1977, reprint ed., Roanoke 1933), 148, 149. Stoner, Seed-Bed, 305, 306.

[51]Arthur Campbell to William Campbell August 13, 1780, King's Mountain Papers, Draper Manuscript, 8DD5. William Preston to Peter

Muhlenberg September 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ81. The Raven, also called Savanooka and Coronah, was an important chieftain of the Overhill Cherokees whose main town was Chote. Kellogg, Advance, 363.

[52]William Christian to William Preston September 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ72; David E. Johnston, A History of Middle New River Settlements and Contiguous Territory (Huntington, West Virginia: Standard Printing and Publishing, 1906; hereinafter cited as Johnston, Middle New River), 75. At the Battle of Ramseur's Mill, Tories had worn sprigs of greenery to differentiate themselves from the Whigs who used white paper in their hats to identify themselves. So Thomas Armstrong's "tory suit" was probably green. DeMond, North Carolina Loyalists, 126.

[53]William Christian to William Preston August 30, 1780, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library; Branch Papers, 318, 319.

[54]William Preston to Peter Muhlenberg September 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ81; Kellogg, Retreat, 268, 269; Frederick Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 655, 656.

[55]William Preston to Martin Armstrong September 18, 1780, Horatio Gates Papers, New York Historical Society, New York, New York. Microfilm copy in Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; hereinafter cited as Gates Papers, reel 12, frame 330.

[56]Messick, King's Mountain, 42, 43.

[57]Walter Crockett to William Preston October 2, 1780, Preston Papers, Virginia State Library.

[58]Horatio Gates to William Preston October 13, 1780, Gates Papers, reel 12, frame 700.

[59]William Preston to Horatio Gates October 27, 1780, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ84; Stoner, Seed-Bed, 110.

[60]Thomas Jefferson to Patrick Lockhart November 8, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, IV, 103, 104; Thomas Jefferson to Horatio Gates November 10, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, IV, 108; Samuel Huntington to Thomas Jefferson November 21, 1780, IV, 135; Patrick Lockhart to Thomas Jefferson IV, 177, 178; Stoner, Seed-Bed, 112.

[61]Thomas Jefferson to Virginia Delegates in Congress October 27, 1780, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, IV, 77; Hurt, Pittsylvania County, 109.

Chapter VI

THE CURTAIN FALLS: WORRIES ABOUT TORYISM PERSIST, 1781-1782

> I beg leave to observe, that it is not in my power to get Militia to guard the Mines. That they are in some danger from the disaffected.
>
> William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson April 13, 1781, Jefferson Papers, V, 438.

The crushing defeat of the British regulars and the Carolina Tories at King's Mountain in October of 1780 all but ended Tory activity in southwest Virginia for the remainder of the war. General Nathanael Greene was correct in his assessment of the victory of King's Mountain: "It will give a severe check to the Tories' spirit & confidence to the Whigs." Although the tide seemed to be turning, the war was not yet over and Colonel Preston and Governor Jefferson continued to show concern about protecting the lead works and possible Tory uprisings. The Patriot forces followed up their triumph at King's Mountain with a great victory at Cowpens, South Carolina, in mid-January of 1781. The tables had been turned; Cornwallis was no longer the confident aggressor but the anxious defender.[1]

On the southwest Virginia home front there were prosecutions against persons whose loyalties were suspect, but by and large, such proceedings were sporadic. When a Botetourt jury found Augustine Broomley guilty of treason, it displayed greater leniency than in previous sentences. The Court ordered him to pay only 400 pounds of tobacco and court costs and required two securities to post £2,500 each

as a guarantee for his good behavior. At this stage of the Revolutionary War it was more war-weariness than outright disaffection that plagued the American army. Grumbling was more frequent than desertion and there were instances when it was difficult to determine whether a continental soldier was absent without leave or a deserter. In Botetourt Arthur Cooper, accused of harboring a deserter was convicted and fined 5,000 pounds of tobacco. In early February 1781 Montgomery justices ordered that David Fulton's property be sequestered until they could try him at the regular March Court when they would hear the witnesses against him. Although the Court had acquitted Fulton of Tory behavior in September, 1779, subsequently militiamen had seized his property. In a commendable if belated act of justice the justices ordered that everything taken by militiamen be returned to Fulton, who although persisting in his allegiance to the Crown, had refrained from "join[ing] the Enemy." With appropriate sternness the Montgomery justices admonished him to behave himself if he wanted to retain his rights as a citizen of the Commonwealth.[2]

Little of consequence occurred within the region until Cornwallis' army approached Virginia. The residents diverted their attention from Tories and enlisted to fight the formidable threat which the British army represented. General Nathanael Greene appealed for the over-mountain men who had soundly defeated Ferguson at King's Mountain to come to his aid against Cornwallis. Andrew Pickens made the situation clear: "General Green's dependence lies greatly on the mountain men."

Many frontiersmen who had fought courageously at King's Mountain now believed the presence of a large British army on Virginia soil would encourage and be the signal for a new wave of Indian attacks against frontier families. In Washington County, Colonel Arthur Campbell expected the Cherokees to attack. Therefore Washington contributed no volunteers because the Indians began raids against Washington families. Colonel George Skillern of Botetourt was so apprehensive about the safety of the lead mines that he sent 104 men to guard the facility and sixty volunteers to join Greene.[3]

On February 8, 1781, Colonel Preston conferred with his militia officers about sending troops to aid Washington County against the Indians or defending the country against Lord Cornwallis' army resting on the Virginia - North Carolina boundary. Preston and his officers believed reports that Cornwallis might send a detachment to destroy the lead works. After a council of war, Preston ordered out the entire militia of the county. In order to encourage the older men and the youthful residents fit to bear arms who normally were not liable for service, Preston planned to enlist himself, despite his advanced (for the time period) age. The situation was so ominous that he recalled his sixteen-year-old son, Francis from school in another county.[4]

The master of Smithfield kept his word, journeying to the Mines, rendezvous point for the militia. His contingent remained in the area until the 18th of February when his troops, approximately 350 sharp-shooting riflemen on horseback, marched toward Hillsborough, North

Carolina. Along the way Preston reported, "the disaffected & some others...[he] had drawn out, [had] deserted." After approximately two weeks of action, Preston and Colonel Crockett returned home with a few of the troops who had marched from the Mines. The desertions caused Preston "great pain" and he hastened to assure Governor Jefferson that his troops had done their duty as long as any of the other mountain men. The Smithfield colonel noted that he lacked the power "to get militia to guard the mines" and that the facility remained "in some danger from the disaffected." Although miners had discovered a rich vein of ore whose yield would greatly increase production, he urged the governor to encourage their patriotism and productivity by sending foodstuffs, especially meat.[5]

At the same time Preston was enlisting troops, Cornwallis did in fact dispatch agents to recruit support among the King's friends. At least one of his emissaries reached the New River Valley and addressed residents on behalf of Cornwallis. The British general's proximity to the state and successes at Alamance and Wetzel's Mill, North Carolina, must have encouraged the Tories in southwest Virginia to plot once again. Worried, Colonel Arthur Campbell wrote Governor Jefferson: "The destruction of the...Lead Mines are an Object the Tories have in view early in the Spring." There is no proof however, that Colonel Preston was correct in believing that Cornwallis had promised to send a detachment of troops to assist in destroying the lead works.[6]

Governor Jefferson placed the entire burden of defending the Mines on Colonel Preston. Both men knew only too well the perils and disadvantages of short-term enlistments for state militia. Wistfully, the governor explained, "I wish it were possible for you to enlist a Guard for twelve months for the lead Mines." In June Colonel Arthur Campbell reported new rumors indicated trouble was brewing on the frontier. That stormy personality of the Virginia - Tennessee borderlands identified his sources as Colonel John Sevier who had it from a man named Crawford, who had recently escaped from the Cherokees, that a British agent, some Tories and many Indians were fermenting trouble for the backwoods. Campbell did not mince words: "Our frontier is now-threatened with an Invasion from the Creek Indians, Cherokees, Tories, & Co."[7]

Reluctance to enlist for militia service continued. Although Colonel Skillern bemoaned his neightbors' unwillingness to enlist, he counseled that attempts to draft them most assuredly would fail. When Colonel Crockett appealed for men to join General Greene's forces only twenty-one showed up before he lost hope and sent them home. Crockett voiced exasperation about the situation: "if there is Nothing dun to force those disobedient people that Constantly disobeyed all orders, we may expect nothing else for the Futer." Deserters retreated to the mountains where they could escape detection by militia authorities. Montgomery and Washington counties contained a goodly number of "Toreys and Deserters...[who] no Doubt have correspondence with Each Other & should they embody, might become very Dangerous to the Back Country.[8]

Disaffection was rampant and growing worse. Colonel Preston echoed a similar lament. When the Mines had been threatened in February, only about a third of the militia had appeared for service, even though it was the slack season for farmers and the tour of duty had been short. Requests for militia service in April and May had failed totally. According to him, "the Tories [could not] be drawn into the service by any means whatever, and the Whigs who would [have] render[ed] any service, [were] afraid to leave their property and connexions to the mercy of the former."[9]

Whatever plans the King's friends in southwest Virginia may have conceived, they came to naught. Colonel Preston reported no overt deeds and merely voiced prudent suspicions concerning Tory designs. With Cornwallis' surrender on October 19, 1781, Tory hopes of overcoming the Patriots died a final death. After their disheartening experiences it is likely that Loyalists of southwest Virginia despaired of tangible British support and wisely swallowed objections to the iron grip of the area's Patriots. In default of any hard evidence, one can only speculate upon contingencies. If Cornwallis had succeeded in Virginia, if the war had dragged on another year, the southwest Virginia Tories might have proved the rumor correct that they would again try to disrupt or destroy the Lead Mines.

Notes - Chapter VI

[1]Nathanael Greene to George Washington October 31, 1780, Letter Books October 16, 1780-April 8, 1782 and General Correspondence, Nathanael Greene Papers, Library of Congress. Microfilm copy in Special Collections, Carol M. Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; Tuttle, "William Preston," 92, 93.

[2]Summers, Annals, 336, 341, 747, 749.

[3]Andrew Pickens to William Preston February 21, 1781, Branch Papers, 323; Arthur Campbell to William Preston December 5, 1780, Preston Papers, Library of Congress, folder 1091; William Preston to William Campbell December 20, 1780, Preston Papers, Library of Congress, Reel 15, Item 19; George Skillern to William Preston December 13, 1780, "Preston Papers," VMHB, 316, 317.

[4]William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson April 13, 1781, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, ed. by William P. Palmer, 11 vols. (Richmond, 1875-1893; hereinafter cited as Virginia State Papers), II, 35; William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson, April 13, 1781, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, V, 437. Preston was 52, having been born in 1729.

[5]William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson, Ibid., II, 436; William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson, Ibid., V, 438.

[6]Johnson, William Preston, 280; William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson April 13, 1781, Virginia State Papers, II, 35; William Preston to Governor Thomas Jefferson April 13, 1781, Boyd, Jefferson Papers, V, 437. Tradition in Michael Price's family recounts that Cornwallis' agent's horse lost a shoe at Price's Fork and had to be reshod before his trip could be resumed. Johnson, William Preston, 280.

[7]Governor Thomas Jefferson to William Preston April 21, 1781 Boyd, Jefferson Papers, V, 524; Arthur Campbell to Governor Thomas Jefferson June 4, 1781, Virginia State Papers, II, 143.

[8]George Skillern to Governor Thomas Nelson June 26, 1781, Virginia State Papers, II, 183, 184.

[9]Walter Crockett to William Preston May 17, 1781, Branch Papers, 325. Johnson, William Preston, 297.

EPILOGUE: A REASSESSMENT OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA TORIES

> WHEREAS a number of ignorant people in the south western parts of this state have been deluded and misled by the emissaries of the common enemy,...Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That all and every person and persons whatsoever in the counties of Henry, Bedford, Pittsylvania, Botetourt, Montgomery, and Washington, who...have been guilty of taking an oath of fidelity to the King of Great Britain... or enlisting others into the service of the said King...shall...go before some justice of the peace in any one of the said counties... [before February 28, 1781] and take the oath of fidelity to this commonwealth.
>
> Hening, Statutes at Large, 324, 325.

That Tory sympathy in southwest Virginia was stronger than in most areas of the Commonwealth is beyond doubt. It is now and always has been next to impossible to be much more specific. Colonel William Preston was in the best position to know and he was not a man given to exaggeration; but he was never more specific, than to say that the Tory element was formidable. In the crush of events he did not have time to decide whether his neighbors were guilty or innocent of reputed treason. Uncertainty was the bane of his existence during these years. Posterity is not any better off than he in distinguishing between rumor and fact, or in answering a number of vexing questions. How large was the King's following in the southwestern counties? Where were the real centers of disloyalty? Who were the principal leaders of Tory activism, as distinct from grumblers? Why did people want to remain subjects of the mother country?

There was and is nothing certain about the demography of the Virginia frontier of 1776-1780. No one really knows its population,

since Virginia's 1783 census for tax purposes could not have been enforced fully in the wilderness. Surviving lists of militia were not uniformly included in Virginia's calendar of state papers. Thomas Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia is probably the best general authority for ascertaining the basic demographic character of the region. For the counties of Botetourt, Montgomery and Washington, he estimated that there were about 2,150 able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and fifty who were liable for militia service.[1]

In fairness, the disaffection in the counties can be attributed to several factors other than Loyalism. The unwillingness of residents to quit their homes during times of Indian troubles came from a natural desire to protect their loved ones and property. Some militiamen have always complained about their duties in every country and time, but this should not be equated with serious disaffection. There are other anomalies. A number of individuals who were accused later of Tory behavior had willingly served in Lord Dunmore's War of 1774. One of these had been Duncan O'Gullion, a ringleader of the 1779 Tory plot. While there is not necessarily any specific reason that a colonial participant in the Battle of Point Pleasant should have decided to join either the Patriot or Loyalist cause during the Revolution, one still wonders what made him decide to fight for the King during the Revolution? Was it not from the fear of royal wrath if the British prevailed? Was it for hope of reward? Due to their isolation frontiersmen had ambivalent opinions with both native and British-born officials.[2]

Although it is conventional to divide the 1774-1780 population of a colony into thirds between Loyalists, Neutralists and Patriots, it is clear from Colonel Preston's inability to define who belonged to which of these groups and from his and Governor Jefferson's unwillingness to crowd frontier neutralists into the Tory corner, that Neutralists constituted a majority of the frontier folk. The men whom the Patriots labeled as Tories were not the weak of heart or cowardly. But in most instances their course was not so much courageous as it was in drifting too long with the neutralist tide. It is likely that the southwest Virginia Tories did not appreciate soon enough the consequences of refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth. Identified by rumor as a suspected Tory, many of these frontiersmen became so defensive that they backed into the Tory corner. As they became more desperate they began formulating plots to destroy the Lead Mines in the belief that whether they won or failed, retribution of some sort was certain to follow.

Certainly, the Revolution did not enjoy widespread support in southwest Virginia. Fortunately, for the majority of the conspirators, they lived within the boundaries of Montgomery County where the official attitude toward the King's friends was more restrained in pursuing justice. To have acted on one's convictions while living under the watchful gaze of Colonels Campbell and Lynch took nerve, because the two frontier officials believed in painful retribution. Campbell favored "lynching" and Lynch believed in confessing one's

sins to the sound of a rawhide cord whipping bare skin. It is ironic that in the Patriots' quest for inalienable rights, they overlooked their fellow citizens' prerogatives. Those whose fidelity was suspect could be physically punished in the hallowed name of freedom without waiting for the slow-moving wheels of justice. This tendency to forget one's ideals in the struggle to achieve them was not peculiar to the American revolutionaries; rebels before and since have adhered to the concept that the end justifies the means. The fact that disaffection to the American cause was pervasive did not convince, but instead dissuaded the most responsible frontier officials from thinking that any action to "persuade" the offenders could be excused. Preston realized that he had probably glimpsed only the proverbial tip of the iceberg in identifying Tory conspirators.

The areas of Loyalist concentration were near Fort Chiswell and the Lead Mines and along Cripple and Greasey Creeks. To the east along the Great Wagon Road, many who lived near Peak, Walker's and Wolf Creeks did not desire independence. Another sizable group who lived along the Holston River and its north and south forks remained loyal to the King and Parliament. A smaller, if no less worrisome concentration of Loyalists lived along Tom's Creek and its tributaries in the vicinity of Smithfield and Draper's Meadows. Tory sentiment along the North Fork of the Roanoke River was small but numerous enough to be mentioned by frontier officials. Investigation of land titles of suspected Loyalists shows that Tory sentiment was a

"neighborly" phenomenom. If a man's neighbors sympathized with the King, it was more than likely that he did, too. This phenomenom was especially true the further one went from the more settled areas. The residential pattern of frontier Loyalists was not that they were not scattered, but clustered together.[3]

Why did Tories choose to maintain their loyalty? Why did some embrace the concept of an independent nation free of English authority and others fight to prevent breaking its bonds? Many Tory stereotypes do not hold true in the mountains and valleys of southwest Virginia. There was more barter than commercial activity among the sparse populace. The notion of English or Scotch merchants who remained loyal in hope of protecting their businesses simply did not apply to this section whose nearest commercial center was the hamlet of New London in Bedford County. Nor is their adequate cause to attribute Loyalism to religion. Anglicanism was not the religion of choice in the backcountry. There Presbyterian and Lutheran tenets predominated, reflecting the ethnic heritage of so many of the pioneers. Anglicanism was too much like Roman Catholicism, too formal and ritualized for the free spirits who settled in the backwoods of southwest Virginia and who were inclined to a more individual interpretation of the Bible. For example, the Price family abandoned Roman Catholicism and joined their shipmates in founding in Montgomery County, St. Peter's Lutheran Church.[4]

Few Englishmen had settled along the frontier, so the positions of authority and power fell to those who were familiar with Virginia

version of English ways, most of whom were Scotch-Irish in background. By the time of the Revolution these men had firmly entrenched themselves in power and saw Virginia's perpetuation in an independent Commonwealth. The difference between them and Tories of the same ethnic background was what they had to lose. The frontier magnates had little to gain if the royalist forces prevailed. They already enjoyed social position and influence and Tory promises of a small sum, plus land free of quit rents for twenty years did not entice these men who owned large tracts of land. They enthusiastically embraced the concept of independence, if only to insure their positions.

The German element represented the largest pool of potential Tories. Generally they were creatures of habit who disliked altering the status quo. Whether in Hanover or on the Virginia frontier they saw the British as benign rulers under whom they enjoyed great freedom. Whether in the Palatine or in transmontane Virginia, the Germans wanted to be left alone to care for their families and to tend their land. These considerations made the German settlements of Montgomery County a hotbed of the King's friends during the Revolution. Because of their metalurgical skills, there were a number of Germans in the vicinity of the Lead Works which provided additional fertile ground for Tory agitators.[5]

In the midst of a neutralist majority there were some southwest Virginians genuinely committed to the King. There were a few who were won by hope or actual payment of financial gain. Most of the King's

friends were honest and unsophisticated. Fortunately their support of the King did not bar their early reassimilation into local affairs. After the war some received militia commissions; some served on juries; and others were appointed to the important post of overseers of the road. Patriot officials did not penalize or ostracize those rumored to have flirted with disloyalty. Few, if any, felt compelled to leave the area. Children of the two factions intermarried so frequently that it is clear that little ill feeling resulted. If Colonel William Preston could ignore rumors of Michael Price's neutralism or disloyalty. who could fail to follow his example? It was at Michael Price's home in 1783 that the redoubtable Colonel fell ill and died.[6]

The Tories in southwest Virginia created major difficulties for those who supported independence. Their activity disrupted production at the Lead Mines which inhibited the supply of lead for shot. Had they gained control of or destroyed the only lead facility capable of production on a large scale in America, who can say what the result would have been. The supply of lead was very important in winning the Revolution and the King's friends and their activities were certainly "thorns in the side" of local patriotism. The efforts by the state and local authorities to contain and combat the Tory menace adhered for the most part to Virginia's constitution. Their actions were humane - with the exceptions of Campbell and Lynch who set themselves up as judge and jury and exacted corporal punishment. Reasons for the restraint practiced on the frontier lie in the conduct

of Governor Jefferson and Colonel Preston during the greatest crisis of patriotism within the Virginia backcountry. Neither man was loath to executing a villain on charges of treason, but neither did so. Both appreciated the extent and relative innocence of neutralism. Both were pragmatists who did not wish to allow patriotic excesses to become persecution, to convert neutralists into Tories.[7]

Notes - Epilogue

[1]Jefferson, Notes, 86. A discrepancy exists between Jefferson's count of Montgomery militia in his Notes and the returns given in his papers (IV, 614) as edited by Boyd. After examining Mary Kegley's Militia of Montgomery County, Virginia, 1777-1790, (Roanoke: Copy Cat, 1975) one concludes that he gives too large a number for Montgomery troops.

[2]See Reuben G. Thwaites and Louise P. Kellogg, eds., Documentary History of Dunmore's War, 1774 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1905) for the complete list of southwest Virginians who served. A number of future Tories are on the list.

[3]See land records transcribed from deed books in Montgomery and Botetourt counties in Kegley, Western Waters, I, II. For Washington County records, see deed books at the Courthouse in Abingdon, Virginia.

[4]Records in the possession of Christine Neuenschwander, Salt Lake City, Utah prove that Michael Price and his siblings were baptized Catholics in Rheinland Pfalz, the Palatine, Germany. They emigrated to the colonies in 1738.

[5]Kinnear, "German Pioneers", Montgomery News Messenger; Wust, Virginia Germans, 109-111; Ulysses A. Heavener, German New River Settlement (n.p., 1928), 3.

[6]Johnson, William Preston, 308. See Summers, Annals, for the militia appointments and other court records. In one notable case, a confrontation during the war led to a romance and culminated in marriage between Nancy Heavin and Captain Daniel Howe. See Daniel D. Howe, Listen to the Mockingbird: The Life and Times of a Pioneer Virginia Family (Boyce, Virginia: Carr Publishing Co., Inc., 1961), 17-21 for the story.

[7]Merrill Peterson, Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 198. Claims against "William Preston, Robert Adams, junior, James Callaway, and Charles Lynch, and other faithful citizens..." led to the House of Delegates passing a bill to idemnify them. Hening, Statutes, XI, 134, 135; Journal of House of Delegates, November 30, 1782, 47.

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Appendix A

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE*

I do hereunto swear or affirm that I renounce and refuse all allegiance to George the third, King of Great Britain, his heirs, successors and that, I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the Commonwealth of Virginia as a free and independent State and that I will not at any time do or Cause to be done any matter or thing that will be made known to one Justice of the Peace for the said State all treasons or traitorous Conspiracies which I know or hereafter shall know to be formed against this or any of the United States of America.

* Oath sworn to in Montgomery County, 1777. Montgomery County Revolutionary War Book.

Appendix B

TORIES NAMED/TRIED, 1776-1778*

Botetourt

William Davies - charged with being disaffected; had to post £1,000 bond, could not leave the state or have dealings with the Indians.

Timothy Keith - charged with counterfeiting; acquitted.

George Levner - charged with causing a breach of the peace; fined £20.

John Robinson - charged with being disaffected; had to post £50; charge eventually dismissed.

John Van Bebber - charged with being disaffected; acquitted.

Montgomery

James Bane

Lawrence Buckholder - charged with being an enemy of the state; found guilty; fined £210.

Thomas Burk - resigned militia commission.

John Heavin

Thomas Heavin

Jacob Kettering - charged with being an enemy of the state; found guilty; sentenced to one year in prison, fined £250 and sent to Staunton.

John Michael Price

_____ Roberts

Jacob Shull

Will Strother - charged with passing counterfeit money; acquitted.

James Thompson - charged wth stealing bar iron from the Lead Mines; found guilty, fined 40 shillings and whipped 39 times.

Washington

Robert Caldwell

Philip Hanson - had to post £200 bond.

Francis Hopkins - charged with counterfeiting; fined £50 and imprisoned for six months at Cocke's Fort on Renfroe's Creek.

William Hopkins - charged with treasonable practices.

William Huston - charged with having a disposition inimical to America.
William Pruit, Jr.

Peter Reazor - charged with being inimical to America; had to post £250 bond and not leave Montgomery or Washington counties for two and one-half years.

Jeremiah Slaughter - charged with having a disposition inimical to America.

* Extracted from Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript and Summers, Annals.

Appendix C

TORIES IMPLICATED IN PLOT OF 1779*

William Atkins

Daniel Atter - acquitted.

John Atter - had to post £1,000 bond.

Humphrey Best - took state oath to avoid prosecution.

James Blevins - took state oath to avoid prosecution; also had to post £200 bond.

John Blevins - took state oath to avoid prosecution; also had to post £200 bond.

Nathaniel Britain

Andrew Bronstetter

Frederick Bronstetter - had to post bond.

Joseph Caldwell

James Carr - threatened Preston.

Jeremiah Clounch - acquitted.

Peter Clove - acquitted.
Charles Collins

Thomas Conway - took state oath to avoid prosecution; had to post bond of £200.

John Cook - acquitted.

John Cox

Samuel Cox - acquitted.

Matthias Crumb - had to post £1,000 bond.

Jacob Darter - had to post £1,000 bond.

John Dowes - guilty; sentenced to serve 24 months; six months commuted.

Philip Dutton - innocent; but had to post bond of £1,000.

Joseph Erwin - had to post £1,000 bond.

Robert Fristoe - took state oath; had to post bond of £200.

David Fulton - acquitted.

James Green - took state oath and ordered to reappear in court.

John Griffith - released on bail after trial.

John Henderson - had to post bond of £100.

William Hopkins - charged with treasonable practices.

John Hudson

James Ingram - acquitted.

William Ingram - took state oath to avoid prosecution.

George Irvin - took state oath to avoid prosecution.

Benjamin Jones

Joshua Jones

Robert Kerr - charged with treason; sent to Williamsburg for more trial.

Francis Kettering

Michael Kettering - had to post bond.

Peter Kettering - had to post bond.

Peter Kinder - had to post bond.

Philip Lambert - had to post bond of £100.

Griffith Lewis - had to post bond of £500.

John Lewis - had to post bond of £500.

Thomas Loosey - charged with counterfeiting.

Philip Lottenger

Samuel Martin

Joseph McFarlane - had to post £1,000 bond.

David McKenzie

Frederick Moore

Philip Morris

Duncan O'Gullion - guilty of treason; sent to Williamsburg for more trial.

John O'Gullion - had to post bond.

Jeremiah Patrick - acquitted; had to post bond of £1,000.

Joseph Payne - charged with counterfeiting.

John Phillips - took state oath to avoid prosecution.

George Patterson - guilty.

John Patterson - acquitted.

John Michael Price - provided meeting place for Griffith.

John Raines - £2,000 bond for good behavior.

Peter Reazor - tried in Washington County.

Thomas Rennex - took state oath and ordered to reappear in court.

Adam Runner - guilty; fined £250.

Daniel Sebertin

Frederick Slemp - innocent; but had to post bond.

David Smith - took state oath and ordered to reappear in court.

John Stephens - had to post £1,000 bond.

Edward Sysmore - took state oath and ordered to reappear in court.

James Turman - charged with passing counterfeit money.

David Vaught - innocent; had to post bond.

Henry Vaught

John Vaught - innocent; had to post bond.

Adam Waggoner

Moses Wells - acquitted.

Jenkin Williams - innocent; had to post bond.

Isaac Williamson

Henry Willis

Isaac Winfrey - acquitted.

Nicholas Wyrick - guilty of treason; sentenced to 18 month in prison and fined £500.

* Extracted from Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript; Preston Papers, Virginia State Library and Summers, Annals.

Appendix D

TORIES IMPLICATED IN PLOT OF 1780**

Captain William Austin

James Bane, Sr. - charged with treason; son Edward volunteered to enlist in Continental Army.

James Bane, Jr. - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

Abraham Beaver - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

George Bell

William Blevins

*Nathaniel Britain - charged with treason; sent to Staunton for more trial.

*Andrew Bronstetter

John Bullock

David Bustard

George Bustard

William Clevings

John Clifton

James Cooper

Thomas Copeley - charged with treason; rest of manuscript blank.

David Copeman

*John Cox

John Croom

Nicholas Darter

Charles Detrick

Charles Devereaux

James Douglas

Thomas Douglas

Thomas Downard - charged with treason.

John Draper

*Philip Dutton

Bryant Fanning

Elias Fanning

George Forbush

Jacob Francisco - charged with treason; "enlisted [under] Howard Haven for British service"; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

*Robert Fristoe

Gasper Garlick - charged with treason; agreed to take 39 lashes as punishment.

John Gillehan

Tom Gillehan

William Grant - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

John Grayson - charged with treason.

Robert Grayson - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

William Grayson - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

John Griffith

Valentine Harman

John Harrison - charged with treason; acquitted.

Toloman Harrison

James Heavin - charged with treason; took state oath; William allowed to enlist in his place.

John Heavin - charged with treason; took state oath; William allowed to enlist in his place.

Thomas Heavin

William Heavin - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

*John Henderson - charged with treason "took King's oath administered by Thomas Heavin"; rest of manuscript blank.

Robert Henderson - charged with treason.

David Herbert

John Hook (Bedford)

Leonard Huff

Colonel William Ingles - charged with treason; ordered to appear in court any time and to post £100,000 bond.

Jonathan Ingram - agreed to enlist in Continental Army in his father's place.

Samuel Ingram - charged with treason; his sons, Jonathan and James agreed to enlist in Continental Army in his place.

John Jenkins

Amos Johnson

*Joshua Jones

George Kegley

*James Kerr - charged with treason; sent to Staunton for more trial.

Lawrence Kettering

*Peter Kinder

Robert King - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army and also furnish "another good and fit soldier."

Jeremiah Lambert

*Philip Lambert

*Griffith Lewis

Adam Liveer - charged with treason; confessed and agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

Marcum Lovell

Andrew Lower - charged with treason, "an enlisted soldier under Howard Haven for the British Service"; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

Henry Lower - charged with treason, "an enlisted soldier under Howard Haven for the British Service"; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

Henry Lybrook - charged with assaulting Christian Snidow, "an officer on duty"; found guilty and agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

John McDonald - charged with treason; sent to Staunton for more trial.

Joseph McDonald - charged with treason; being an aged man (58 yrs.) with a large family the court allowed his sons, Edward and Joseph to enlist in his place.

*Joseph McFarelane

Robert McGee - charged with treason; sent to "gaol" [Staunton] for more trial.

Andrew McWilliams

Jesse Meeks

Abraham Morgan - charged with treason; agreed to take 39 lashes as punishment.

John Morgan

Nathaniel Morgan and Sons

John Newland

John Newton

Roger Oats

Barnabas O'Gullion

Richard Oney

*Jeremiah Patrick - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

George Pemberton

Samuel Pepper - charged with treason; rest of manuscript blank.

Hezekiah Phillips - charged with assaulting Christian Snidow, "an officer on duty"; found guilty.

Swain Polson - charged with treason; sent to Staunton for more trial.
Peter Poor, Sr. and Son

Joseph Poppicover - charged with treason; sent to Staunton for more trial.

Thomas Potter.
David Price - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

*Peter Reazor - examined on November 8, 1780; ordered to appear before Washington County Court and post £5,000 bail and his two securities £2,500 each; later bail raised to £15,000.

David Reid

Gasper Reid - charged with treason; being an aged man (60 yrs.), the court allowed his son David to enlist in his place and further ordered that Gasper serve at the Mines for two and a half months.

Reuben Remember

Michael Riddle

James Roberts

John Robinson - had to post £15,000 bond.

Michael Roger

James Romine

David Ross (Bedford)

Samuel Sadler - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

Jacob Shull, Sr.

Jacob Shull, Jr. - charged with treason; sent to Staunton for more trial.

John Shull - charged with treason; agreed to enlist in Continental Army in place of his father.

Andrew Sidney

*Frederick Slemp

Frederick Smith - charged with treason; son agreed to enlist in his place.

Henry Stafford - charged with treason; acquitted.

Walter Stewart - charged with treason; acquitted and ordered to post £20,000 bond.

William Stewart - acquitted.

Jeremiah Stover - charged with treason; "finding him with his Gun Hid in a Barn with Several Tories" and lived among them; [agreed] to take 39 lashes as punishment.

Benjamin Thomas

Andrew Thompson

Sanuel Thompson

Adnrew Vaught

George Vaught

Jacob Waggoner and Sons

George Walter(s) - charged with treason, "enlisted in British Service"; agreed to enlist in Continental Army.

Richard Ward

Moses Wells

John Wiley

Evan Williams

*Jinkin Williams - had to post £15,000 bond.

Others

Cowley at John Boyd's

Gresham

Young Grayson

Martin on Walker's Creek

Old Vaught and all his sons

Old Bronstetter

* involved in plot of 1779.

** Preston Papers, Draper Manuscript, 5QQ54; 5QQ55; 5QQ57; 5QQ58; 5QQ59; 5QQ60; 5QQ61; 5QQ71; 5QQ73-79. Summers, Annals, 743; confession of Peter Kinder, Archives, Virginia State Library.

Appendix E

SUSPECTS WHOSE PROPERTY WAS CONFISCATED*

David Fulton - Court ordered his property returned February 7, 1781.
Richard Green - Court ordered his property returned November 8, 1780.
George Herd - Court ordered his property returned November 8, 1780.
James Howell - Court ordered his property returned November 8, 1780.
Moses Johnson - Court ordered his property returned November 8, 1780.
Clem Lee - Court ordered his property returned November 8, 1780.
Jeremiah Patrick - Court ordered his property returned August 5, 1779.
George Reeves - Court ordered his property returned November 8, 1780.
Neal Roberts - Court ordered his property returned November 8, 1780.
William Roberts - Court ordered his property returned November 8, 1780.
Richard Wright - Court ordered his property returned November 8, 1780.

* Extracted from Summers, Annals.

Appendix F

BEDFORD TORIES IMPLICATED IN PLOT OF 1780*

John Ayres (convicted of treason)
Richard Bandy (convicted of treason)
John Beachboard
John Blankinship
John Bradshaw
John Bourden
Edward Burgess
William Cheeke (convicted of treason)
Peter Claywell
Shadrack Claywell
John Cowan
John Craighead
John Cundiff
Peter Daniel, Jr.
John Dodd
Henry English
Anthony Epperson (convicted of treason)
David Farmer
Bernard Feazle
Jacob Feazle (convicted of treason)
Samuel Fielder
Peter Funk
Thomas German
Joseph Greer (convicted of treason)
Nathan Greere
John Haill
Lake Harding

William Harris
Edward Hore (convicted of treason)
Abraham Huddleston
Daniel Huddleston (convicted of treason)
Samuel Huddleston
William Huddleston
Thomas Hunt (convicted of treason)
William Hurt
John Keith
John Kelly
William Lucas
Martin Mason
Gilbert Mason
Sylvester Massy
Thomas Massy
Josiah Maxey
William Mead, Jr.
Robert Mead
Robert Meade
Josiah Meadows (convicted of treason)
Edward Orr
Thomas Overstreet, Jr.
William Overstreet
John Owen
Owen Owens
John Paine
James Pratt
Slewman Rees
Randolph Richardson (convicted of treason)
David Rust
Peter Rust
Wayman Sinclair (convicted of treason)

Christopher Sinclair (convicted of treason)
James Smith
James Snow
Sameul Stiles
John Treeble
John Trent
Richard Trimble
Daniel Warren
Thomas Watts (convicted of treason)
William Watts
John Webber
John Welch
Rowland Wheeler (convicted of treason)
Stephen White
John Wilks (convicted of treason)
Joseph Wilson (convicted of treason)
Peter Woode

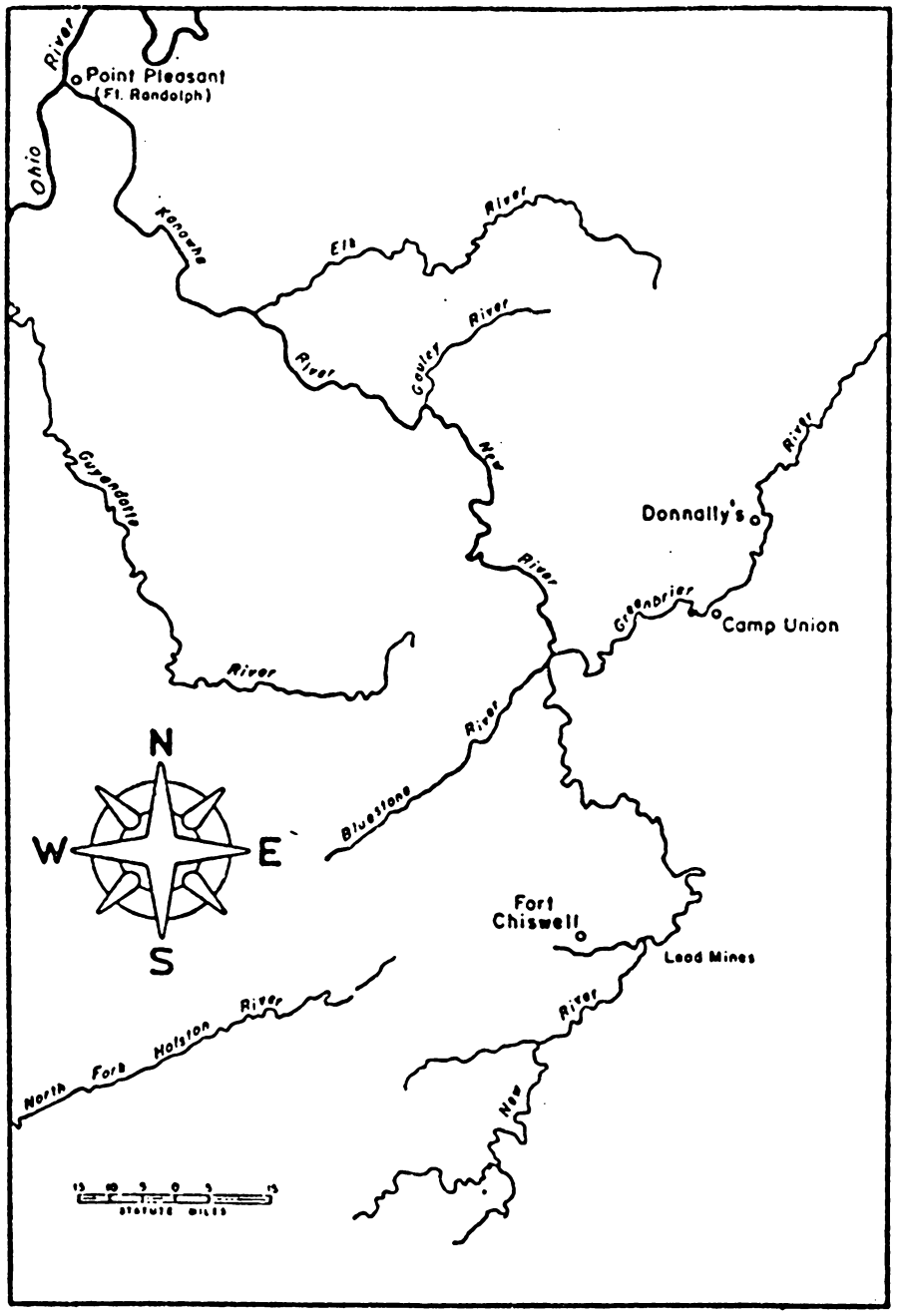
* December 5, 1780 Journal of House of Delegates (1773-1781), reel 3.

Appendix G

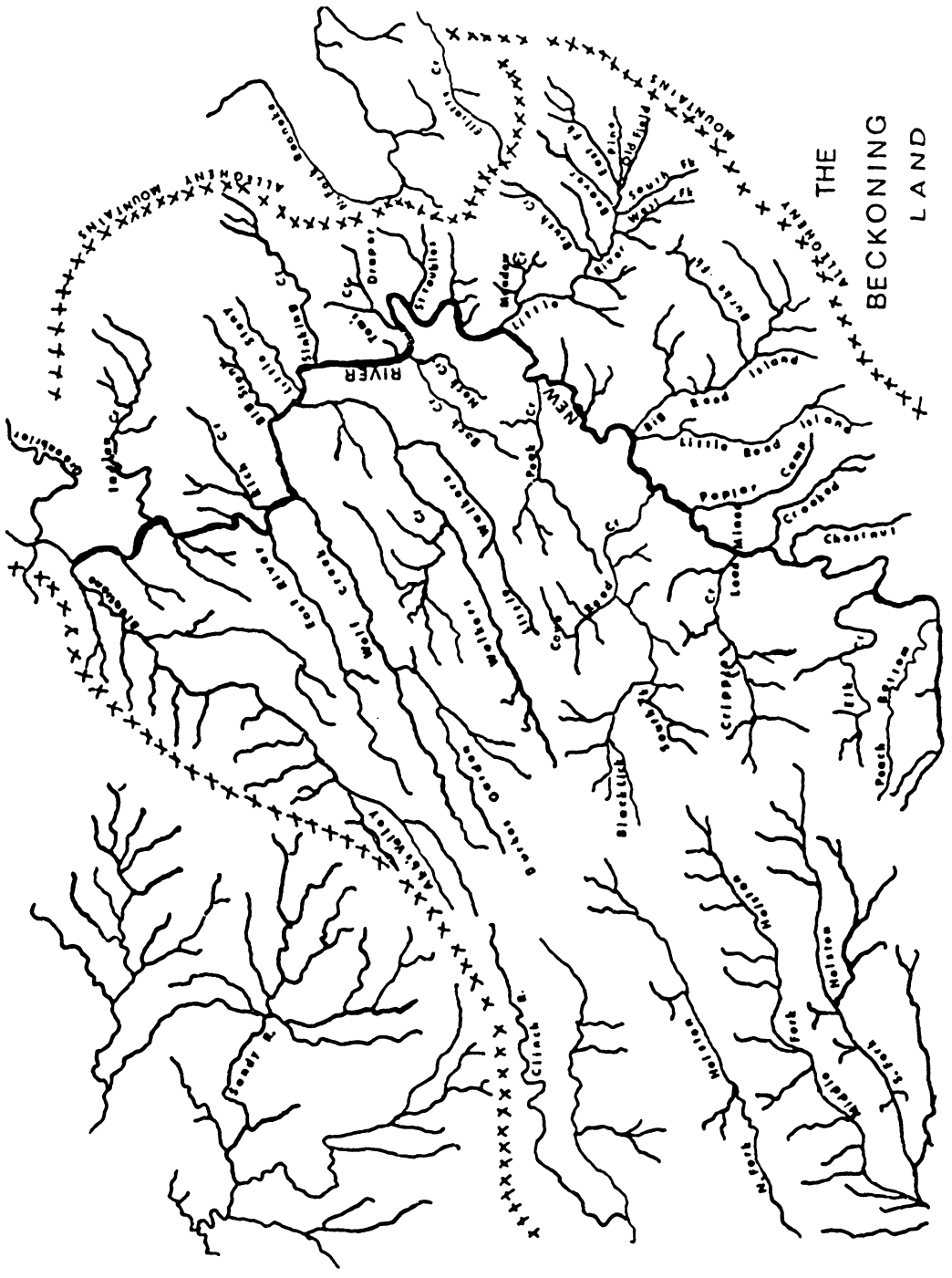
THE SALE OF TORY PROPERTY IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA (PLUS BEDFORD)*

	Amount	Purchaser	Price
John Brander	300	George Dooley	£ 500
	376	George Dooley	500
	600	Robert Clarke	2,500
	676	Robert Clarke	2,500
	400	William Leftwich	4,000
William Donald and James and Co.	2	Harry Innes	4,600
Andrew Edmondson	6	Harry Innes	215
	½	John Calloway	400
John Graham	440	Zachariah Johnston	3,000

* Extracted from Mitchell, "Loyalist Property," 209, 210.



Waller, Revolution in the West, 84.

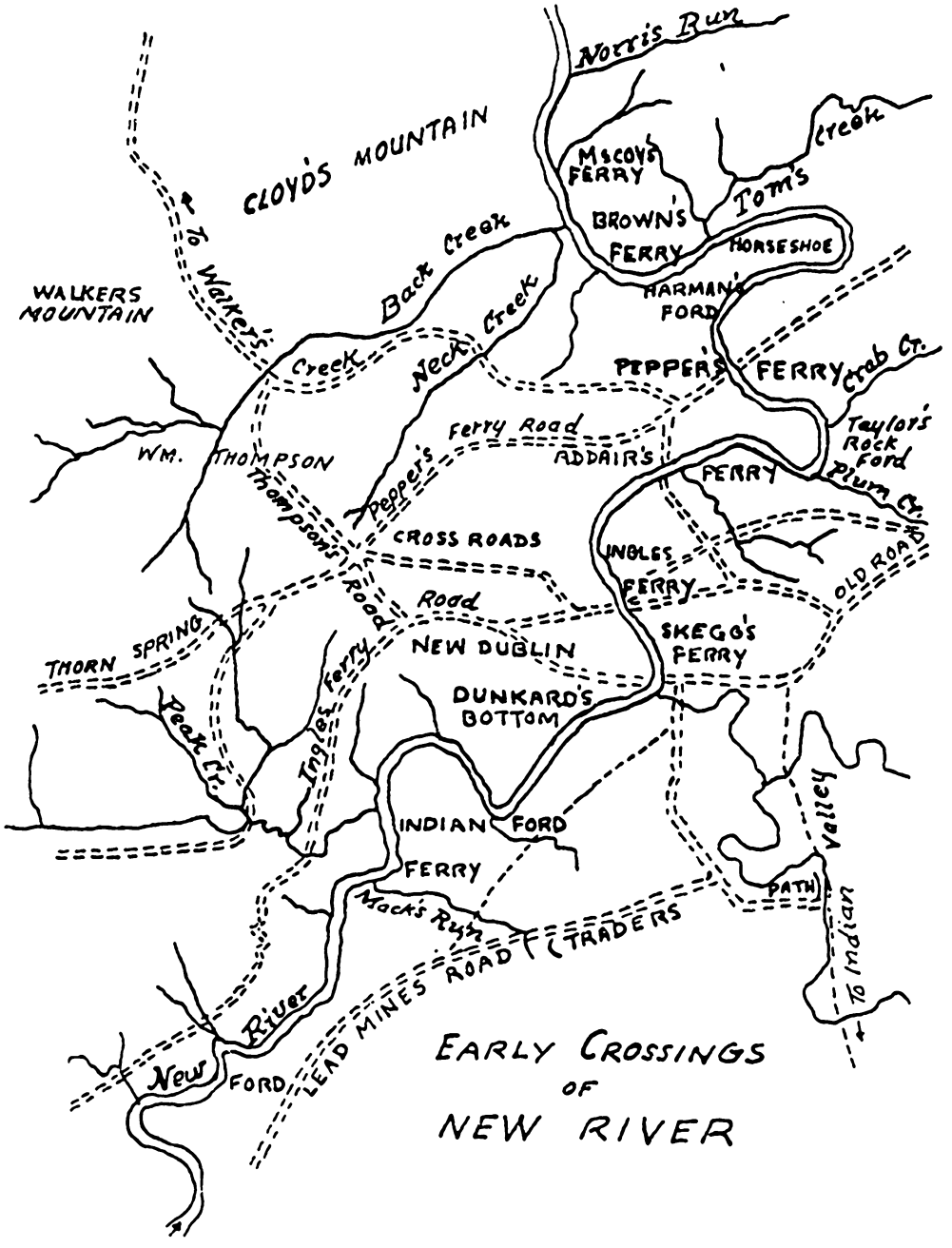


The Beckoning Land on the Western Waters. Map by F. B. Kegley and Mary B. Kegley

Kegley, Western Waters, I, 4.

The Creeks on East Side of New River and on Little River, present Montgomery and Floyd Counties.
Map by F. B. Kegley

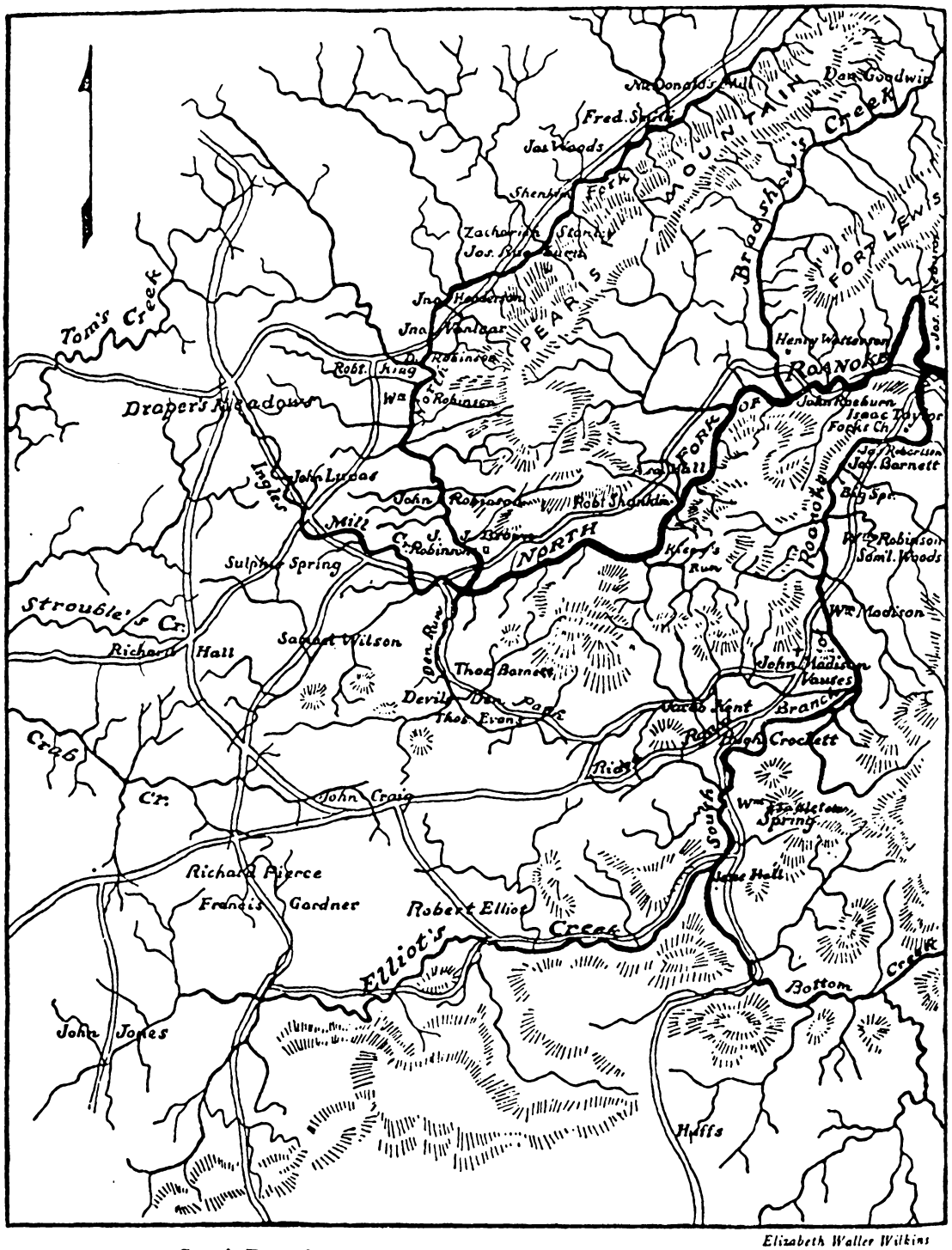
Kegley, Western Waters, I, 282.



Early Crossings of New River.

Map Drawn by J. R. Hildebrand, from information by F. B. Kegley

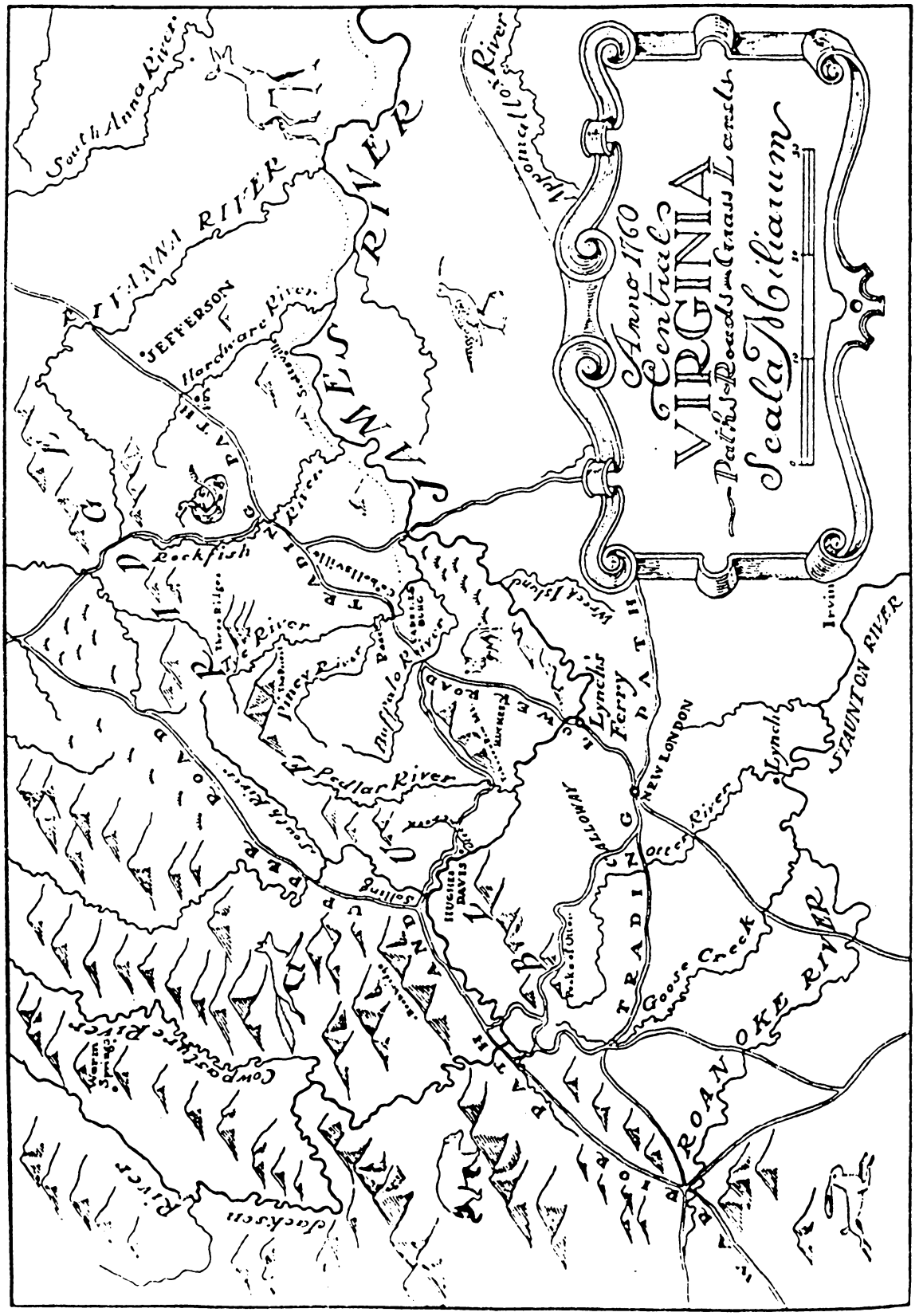
Kegley, Western Waters, I, 289.



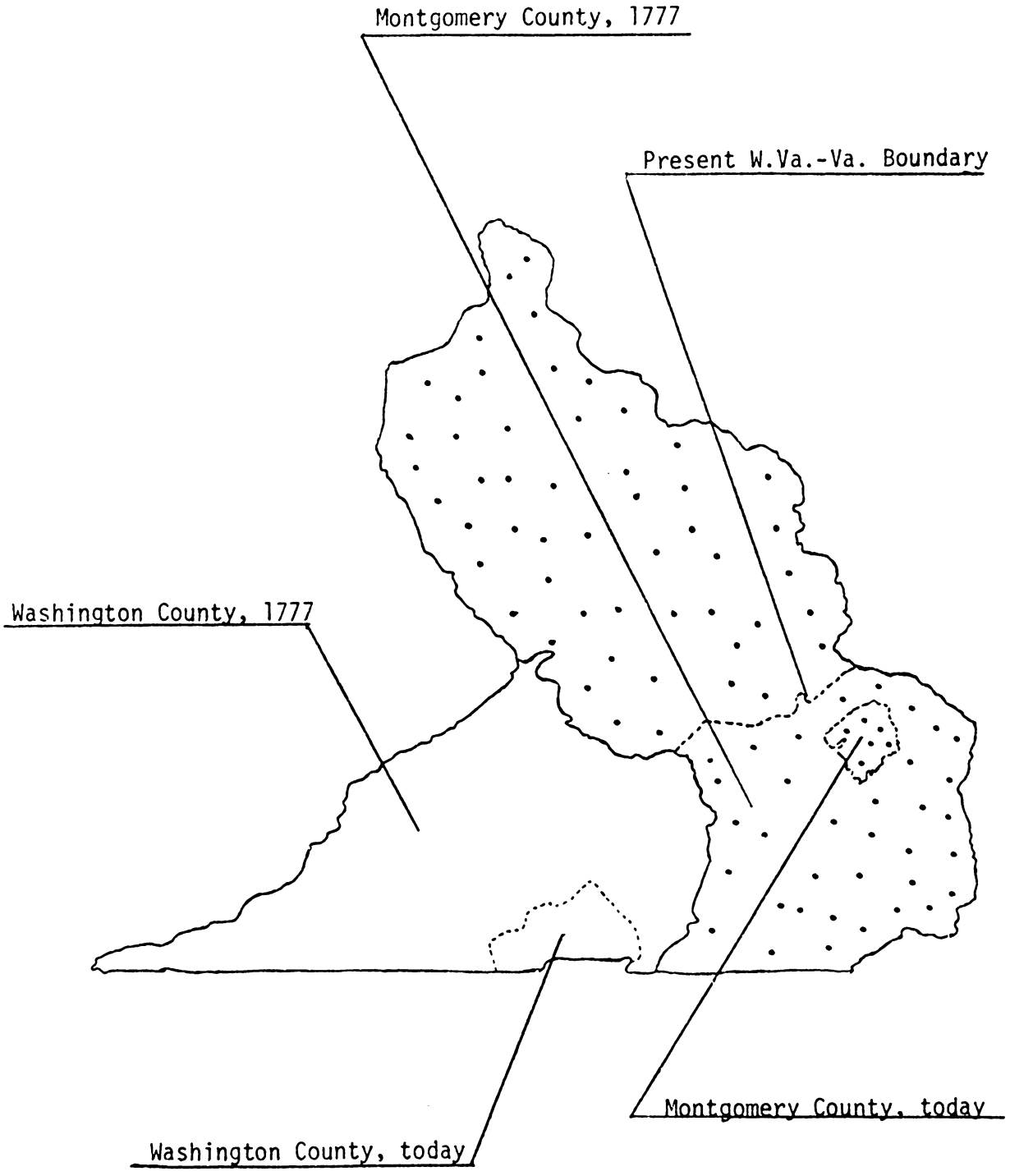
Elizabeth Waller Wilkins

South Branch and North Fork in Early Botetourt County

Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 602.



Percy, Piedmont Apocalypse, frontispiece.


Montgomery County, 1777
Present W.Va.-Va. Boundary
Washington County, 1777
Montgomery County, today
Washington County, today

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ABSTRACT

The activity of southwest Virginia (Botetourt, Montgomery, and Washington Counties) Tories is important because of the presence of the all-important Lead Mines in what was then Montgomery County. During the Revolution the Montgomery Mines supplied the needs of the Continental Army, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the state of North Carolina. Along the frontier itself, the threat of Indian attack loomed as an ever-present fear and made protection of the lead works essential to the safety of its inhabitants.

This study discusses Loyalism in general, as well as the presence of Loyalists in Virginia and the other twelve colonies. The work then focuses on the people who settled in and the environment of southwest Virginia. Characteristics of some ethnic groups, especially the Germans, made them more susceptible to becoming Tories; while traits of other groups made them likely to support independence.

Throughout the Revolution frontiersmen faced a dual threat from Indians and Tories. It was in 1779 that the southwest Virginia Tories began their campaign to destroy the Lead Mines. Undaunted by failure, they attempted once more in 1780 to wrest the Mines from the Patriot's seemingly iron grip. Principal figures involved in suppressing these uprisings were Colonels Arthur and William Campbell of Washington

County; Colonels Charles Lynch, Manager of the Mines, and William Preston of Smithfield in Montgomery County. The dearth of Tory success disheartened many, and no further attempts of any seriousness were launched.