

SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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With Significant Editorial Help From William Kanto, Jr.

The seeds of Revolution were sown by the French and Indian War. In the 1740s King George II became concerned at the progress the French were making in settling and in controlling North America. They controlled not only the St. Lawrence, but also the Valleys of the Alleghany, Monongahela, Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland, Kanawha, and Mississippi Rivers. They were cultivating relationships with the Indians with greater success than the English. The notable exceptions were the Iroquois and the Cherokee, whom the British courted with significant success. Western Virginia was, therefore, surrounded on three sides by the French presence in the Greenbrier Valley, the Kanawha / New River Valley, and even at present Nashville on the Cumberland, and a trading post on the French Broad River east of Knoxville. England also had three other problems in King George's mind – many 'excess' Scots, Irish, and German pietist religious refugees, all of whom had troublesome religious views. His solution to all these problems was to fill the land west of the Blue Ridge with these 'heretics', whom were often referred to as "off scourings of the earth". Like hungry wolves they would devour the French and the Indians, all the while providing a buffer zone to protect the English settlement east of the mountains.

King George II set up two land companies in Virginia to facilitate this process – the Ohio Company and the Loyal Company. Colonial Virginia passed legislation to implement this policy, which is commonly referred to as the 'corn right law'. It was the model for the later national homestead act. Western land could be obtained for little or nominal money.

This policy was very successful, and rapidly brought the English into conflict with the French and Indians. Settlement progressed rapidly into all the valleys mentioned above, and warfare with the Indians became a given constant. Formal war broke out in 1754 and the 'northern' Indians, such as the Shawnee, Mingo, Delaware, and Wyandotte ravaged the Virginia frontier. The Cherokee allied themselves with the English. When it was formerly over in 1763 England had won the war, but at great economic and psychological expense. King George III had assumed the throne in 1760, and blamed the Americans for the war, and he became determined to make America pay for it. To placate the Indians, and to ensure that it would never happen again, the Treaty of Paris which ended the formal fighting, sought to guarantee to the Indians all the land west of the New River. All settlement was to forever be confined to the territory east of that river. All American settlers were required to abandon their settlements west of the New River known as the 'Line of Demarcation'. There was to be no reimbursement for the monies paid to the Crown for this land. There was no plan to deal with the population pressure to push the frontier to the west.

Enforcement was arbitrary. For example, the portion of the Lead Mines in Austinville which at that time lay west of the New River were kept open. Traders with the Indians passed back and forth freely, and often lived half the time with the Indians. To ensure good behavior, the Indians frequently required the traders to marry polygamously within their tribes. Many unhappy frontiersmen moved from Virginia to what is now Tennessee into land that the English had designated as Indian territory, and declared themselves to be outside English jurisdiction. This ambiguity was exacerbated by a major error in the location of the line between North Carolina (Tennessee) and Virginia, which extended to a swath lying from Gate City, Virginia to Sevierville, Tennessee. It was frequently referred to as 'Squabble State'. This situation was exacerbated in 1771 when the settlers of the Yadkin Valley of North Carolina got into pitched battle with the colonial government, and as a result hangings and burnings of public buildings were commonplace, and the rebels were driven from that colony. Due to that surveying error many who had come to Squabble State thinking that they were out of North Carolina were actually still in it. This collection of events is termed the 'Regulator Revolt', and caused the largest mass migration in colonial America. Thousands poured into Cherokee land west of the Line of Demarcation, adding to the population that was forming in Squabble State.

Virginia had been in more or less constant war with the Indians since 1607. It had evolved a formal military structure that looks surprisingly modern in retrospect. The Governor was its head. Every able bodied man, with some official exceptions, was required to serve. The command structure was hierarchical, with the individual units usually being defined by counties, which themselves were often the great river valleys. In peace time all members were required to attend four company musters, one battalion muster, and one regimental muster annually. In time of war each militiaman had to spend a month a year in one of the forts.

In 1774 the Shawnee of Ohio became upset enough over the violations of the Treaty of Paris that they attempted to invade the New River Valley. A division of the Shawnee called the 'Cherokee Shawnee', which included the future great Tecumseh, had lived among the Cherokee. The Cherokee broke their allegiance with the Virginia Militia that they had had during the French and Indian War and remained neutral. The Governor, Lord Dunsmore, ordered that the frontier be fortified. The strategic plan acknowledged the fact that most of the settlements were in the Holston Valley. The militia believed in a forward defense. The plan, therefore, was to construct forts in the Clinch Valley at the northern end of the passes in Clinch Mountain that led into the Holston Valley. The most important of these were Glade Hollow at Lebanon, Russell's Fort and Moore's Fort at the two fords of the Clinch at Castlewood, Fort Blackmore north of Moccasin Gap, and Carter's Fort at Rye Cove. The Shawnee were defeated at the Battle of Point Pleasant, where the Kanawha River flows into the Ohio, in Lord Dunmore's War. The Cherokee did not participate.

In 1775 the American Revolution broke out. The British developed a two part plan to prosecute their goal to subdue the rebellious colonies. Their army would occupy the major ports along the coast where the Royal Navy could supply and protect them. Secondly the British would incite and supply the interior Indians to attack the settlements to keep them from assisting the rebel army that was attacking the British along the coasts.

Due to the marked pressures being applied to the Cherokee in East Tennessee by the Regulators and by the Squabble Staters the Cherokee sided with the British, who had promised to keep settlers out of their country. It was a very painful split as the settlers and the Cherokee were very intermarried. It was, in fact, a civil war on the frontier. The plan of attack on the Virginia / Kentucky / Tennessee frontier was for the British, operating out of Detroit, and their allies, the Shawnee, to wipe out the Kentucky settlements. The combined forces of the Cherokee and frontier loyalists were to make simultaneous attacks on the Wilderness Road in Lee County and to sever this umbilical cord connecting Kentucky with Virginia; wipe out the Squabble State settlements centered around Sycamore Shoals (Elizabethton) and Sevierville; and to roll up the settlements in the Holston Valley. This would restore the Line of Demarcation. July 19, 1776 this coordinated three point offensive was launched.

It should be noted that the 'Wilderness Road' was the main Indian trail east of the Mississippi, and ran from the Iroquois in the Mohawk Valley of New York more or less parallel to modern I-81 to Kingsport, Tennessee, where it veered off on US 58 to Kentucky. It became the main route of migration to the Midwest from the main port at Philadelphia. It is sometimes called 'the Boone Trail' because he blazed that portion of the trail running from 'The Anderson Blockhouse' in East Carter's Valley, Virginia to Boonesboro, Ky. in 1775.

To its dismay the Virginia Militia found that its forts were facing the north to defend against Shawnee invasion instead of south towards the Cherokee. The one exception was Fort Patrick Henry at Kingsport, whose earlier version – Fort Robinson – had been constructed during the French and Indian War. It was used as the command center for a new chain of forts designed to protect the Wilderness Trail to Kentucky, which they constructed in the winter of 1775-76. These included Rocky Station at Dot, Mump's Fort at Jonesville, Martin's Upper Station at Rose Hill, Owen's Station, and Park's Spring near Kaylor.

To go back in time we will pick up another thread of the story. In about 1760 a man of English descent from Tidewater Virginia named 'Trader John' Benge began making trips to the Over Hill Cherokee of East Tennessee. He was so well received by the Cherokee that they married him into tribal royalty to a woman whose English name was Elizabeth Watts, and soon a son was born, who was named Bob. His uncles were tribal chiefs. Like many Cherokee marriages this union did not last long. Cherokee society was matrilineal, and all a woman had to do to divorce a man was to set his moccasins outside the door. Somewhere along 1769-72 Elizabeth Benge married William Dorton, Sr., likely of English descent, in the Yadkin Valley of North Carolina. They moved to Castlewood, Virginia, and then to Copper Ridge south of Dickensonville. Bob went to live with the Dorts, but he seemed to have been a troubled teenager. He often ran away to his uncles in Tennessee, who were named Pumpkin Boy, Man Killer (also named Double Head), and Old Tassel. His mother would send her son by William, who was named Moses, to bring him back home. The Dorts maintained a fort on Copper Ridge, which served as a link between the forts of Castlewood and the upper Clinch, and those of the Valley of Big Moccasin Creek.

Lord Dunmore's War has been called "the first battle of the Revolution". That conceptualization is not far off. It reignited the conflicts between the Indians and settlers, placed the British colonial government of Virginia at odds with its citizenry, and started a realignment of allegiances among the Indians. The next year the Revolution broke out, and in headwaters of the Tennessee River at least, it is best described as a civil war. It split both the settlers and the Cherokee, who ultimately sided with the British.

The British plan to prosecute the war was implemented. They divided this operationally into Northern and Southern Departments. Kentucky fell into the area of responsibility of the Northern Department, centered in Detroit, and allied mostly with the Shawnee. Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee fell into the Southern Department controlled from Pensacola, and which allied itself with the Cherokee. West Florida, including Pensacola, belonged to Britain at this point in time. The Apalachicola River provided direct passage to the Cherokee at Chattanooga. The practical implementation of this plan was to attack the Kentucky settlements by the Northern Department, and to sever the umbilical cord connecting Kentucky and Virginia; and to run out the settlements in the Powell, Clinch, and Holston Valleys, thusly restoring the Line of Demarcation, all by the Southern Department.

'D-Day' was July 19, 1776. The Cherokee, along with hundreds of American Tories, simultaneously struck western Lee County near Park's Spring (Kaylor), Fort Lee at Sycamore Shoals (Elizabethton), and the main fork of the Holston at Long Island Flats (Kingsport). The Lee County campaign resulted in the evacuation of all the forts that had been built there the previous winter, except for the blockhouse at Rocky Station (Dot). The attack at Fort Lee went on for weeks, and technically ended in failure, except for the practical effect that many of the settlers retreated to Black's Fort in Abingdon. The attack at Long Island Flats started as a classic European style battle of formations, infantry, and Tory cavalry. The Indians had no taste for standing up in the open and getting killed, so the battle ended in their defeat. However, again, the practical results were more favorable to the British. The Cherokee held council, and decided to ignore their British advisors, and to break up into small individual parties who would sow terror among the settlements. The results were nearly completely successful. Hundreds of settlers evacuated the river bottoms of the Holston, and barricaded themselves into Black's Fort. The end result was that the Cherokee did succeed in clearing out the settlements of the major portion of Holston Valley, but the presence of a large armed garrison at Abingdon prevented them from going all the way to the New River. The umbilical cord to Kentucky was nearly cut. Only parties of about forty or more were relatively safe in making that passage.

Boonesboro and Harrodsburg in Kentucky, which had been settled under Daniel Boone's influence, were attacked by the Shawnee under a French Canadian commander, who was working for the British. The situation was desperate. Three messengers were dispatched in the middle of the night to go plea for help from the Holston militia. They reached Carter's Fort at Rye Cove, which was under siege itself. Two of the messengers were killed trying to gain entry to the fort, but the third made it in, and gave the alarm. A relief party of militiamen broke through the siege of Rye Cove Fort, made the 150 mile trip to Boonesboro in two and a half days, lifted the siege there, and saved Kentucky. This happened at least once again, but possibly four more

times. We need to pause a moment and realize that this action saved the possibility of American settlement of the continent west of Virginia and the Alleghanies. If it had not happened the rest of the United States as it exists today would most likely have been a foreign country, either British, Spanish, or Indian.

From the Loyalist's perspective, Rye Cove Fort had to go. Much to everyone's surprise this outpost in the middle of nowhere proved to be the lynch pin that held the future United States together. General Joseph Martin, whose home was in Martinsville, Virginia, which was named after him, was in command of the Holston Militia, whose headquarters was at Fort Patrick Henry in Kingsport. He tried to take the garrison from there to the relief of Fort Rye Cove, but the Cherokee had Moccasin Gap closed. Martin then tried to go to Rye Cove by its back door, Little Moccasin Gap, which also had been garrisoned by the Cherokee. The militia forced its way through, and reinforced Carter's Fort. A long siege with frequent sorties resulted. It became obvious that Rye Cove defended the back door to Black's Fort, and was what prevented the complete evacuation of the Holston Valley all the way back to Radford.

The New River Militia, under the command of Col. William Christian, came to the relief of the Holston Militia, who were barricaded up at Black's Fort and at Rye Cove. Under this umbrella of protection, the Holston Militia was able to reassemble itself into a functioning unit, and the two militias met at Kingsport, which was the headwaters of navigation on the Holston, at what was called then 'the boat yards', which was located at the present Netherland Inn, and built a flotilla of rafts and dugout canoes. In October half the force embarked downstream in this flotilla, and the other half went on foot. They attacked the Cherokee towns between the French Broad and the Little Tennessee and did to them what Sherman in a later war did to Georgia. There was little left.

There is no record of what role Bob Benge played in all this. It is obvious that during these events he decided that he was fully and completely Cherokee. His home town of Toqua was burned for the first time. He obviously became schooled in the Indian tactics of terror. The Overhill Cherokee divided into peace and war factions, with Benge joining the war faction that settled in the Chattanooga and Chickamauga area. Whether Benge's behavior was determined by testosterone, cultural identity issues, or perhaps a bipolar gene that may have run through the family as evidenced by Uncle Double Head is food for thought.

It is no surprise that April 1777 found Benge, along with a party of Cherokee teenagers, in Clinch Valley – hell bent on causing terror in the Valley of his earlier life. Fort Blackmore controlled the intersection of the Clinch Valley branch of the Wilderness Trail to Kentucky, and the trail running north and south that connected the Cherokee with the Shawnee. Benge attacked the Fort, sowing consternation, and then went up the valley to Moore's Fort in Lower Castlewood, and then made his escape to the Shawnee of Ohio, passing Gist's Fort at Coeburn on the way. This proved to be a pattern for most of his raids until his death – come into the settlements by one route, and exit by another, and his close cooperation with the former Cherokee Shawnee, who had returned home to Ohio.

To put Benge on a back burner for a while, let us follow the development of the Revolutionary War from the perspective of the Holston Militia. Following the Battle of Point Pleasant, some of the militia returned home to the news of the siege of Boston. They just kept on marching, and joined in those events in New England. William Russell of Castlewood became a General in the Continental Line. The British gave up on their suppressing the rebellion in the North, and late in 1779 moved to the South, under the command of General Cornwallis. In 1780 he started north towards Virginia. He protected his western flank with English troops under Tarleton, who protected his flank with a formation of Red Coated Loyalists from New Jersey and New York under the command of the Englishman, Col. Patrick Ferguson. Ferguson made the mistake of threatening the Over Mountain Militias with verbiage recalling the assault of the red coated forces of the Colony of North Carolina against the Regulators in 1771. It had the opposite of its intended effect. The militia swarmed into the Carolinas and annihilated Ferguson and his command at the Battle of King's Mountain in South Carolina. In doing so the Over Mountain militias withstood repeated bayonet charges made downhill against them by the Red Coats. This was unheard of. No army in the world stood up to a Red Coat's bayonet charge. This led Richard Henry Lee to say that the Holston Militia was the finest light infantry in the world.

The British and the American Continental Line rushed towards each other, and collided at Cowpens, South Carolina. The battle was to take place in a narrow valley, with the British charging the American forces. There were not enough of the Continental Line to plug the hole across the valley. The Holston Militia was chosen to fill that gap. Together, the Continental Line and the Holston Militia withstood the Red Coat charge, and Cornwallis was forced to go to Yorktown, where he expected succor from the British Navy. It was not to happen. Cornwallis was forced to surrender in 1781. The peace treaty was not signed until 1783. In the meantime, the Cherokee and the Over Mountain Militias continued to fight it out.

The line between North Carolina and Virginia had been resurveyed in 1780 and the excuse for Squabble State went away. The former 'Squabble Staters' still lived in Northeast Tennessee, and their attitudes had not changed. To drop back and pick back up the Benge story, in 1780 the Chickamaugans decided to attack the settlements while the militiamen were away at King's Mountain. The men from King's Mountain made it back in time, and met the Cherokee at the Battle of Boyd's Creek, near Sevierville. Benge's hometown of Toqua was burned a second time. His wife and children had been there.

The peace treaty ending the Revolutionary War came in 1783. Its terms guaranteed the Cherokee their land. This left the Squabble Staters in limbo, so in 1784 they formed the State of Franklin, which they viewed as an independent country. They bought the former Squabble State land from the Cherokee. The United States did not recognize the State of Franklin, and tried to enforce the terms of the treaty that they had signed with the British.

In 1783 William Dorton, Benge's step father, was killed by Indians while he was fighting with the militia. The specifics of what Chief Bob Benge was doing during this period are not known. Whatever they were, they were sufficient for his half-brother, Moses, to move to

Kentucky and to change his name to Dalton. Old Trader John Benge died at his home with the Chickamauga Cherokee.

The fighting in the Over Hill settlements intensified. In 1784 the State of Franklin was formed, defying the American government in its signing the Peace Treaty with the British the year before, and which had guaranteed the Cherokee their lands. The State of Frankliners attacked brutally the Cherokee. Benge led the militia into mouse trap ambushes, and gave them their only defeats in their history. Retaliation and counter retaliations were the rule of the day. They were so constant and so numerous that their names are not known today.

In 1785 Benge came into Virginia via Kentucky, and was upset to find Wallen's Creek in Lee County to have been settled. He attacked the home there of Archibald and Fannie Scott and killed all but Fannie, whom he took to Ohio with him. She was to make her escape and returned to the settlements. She lived a long life, and is buried in Elk Garden.

In 1788 John Sevier led the militia on an attack on the Cherokee towns along the Hiwassee River and Benge led the rear guard against them. In June Old Tassel was murdered by the settlers while he was under a flag of truce. Due to this, and to pressure from the United States, the State of Franklin collapsed. John Sevier was convicted of treason by a Federal Court. These explosive tensions provoked more violence.

At this point one can discern a subtle shift in Benge's tactics. His forays had started out as implementations of the Cherokee strategy of sowing general, unfocused terror. This policy evolved into one of focused political 'hits' against specific officers of the Holston Militia. One wishes that we know more about specifically who among the militia was responsible for the mayhem they were conducting in Cherokee country.

In 1790 Benge led a targeted hit against the family of Isaac Newland at Mongle Spring on the North Fork of the Holston. Isaac's wife and infant child were killed. Isaac was an officer in the Holston Militia. In 1791 Benge attacked the McDowell family and the Farris at Gate City, Virginia. It is not known what rolls these men had played in the attacks on the Cherokee towns.

In 1792 Benge conducted raids on Buchanan's Fort and the Ratliff family at Nashville. Big Aaron, a highly regarded warrior, was killed at Pine Mountain, Kentucky, which is on the Cumberland.

1793 opened with Double Head laying an ambush at Dripping Spring, Kentucky. The first settlers to happen by were Captain William Overall and a man named Burnett. The Indians killed the two and then with great premeditation on the terror value of their act, they cannibalized them. Later that year George Washington was trying to force peace on the Cherokee and the Over Mountain militias. Peace Commissioners headed by Major Thomas King dispatched by the national government met with leaders of the peace faction of the Over Hill Cherokee. While this was happening, Double Head attacked the settlements near Knoxville, and killed Thomas and James Gilliam. The militia under Capt. John Beard pursued the party of Double Head right into

the midst of the peace conference, and in the middle of the night shot up the place, killing and wounding several of both the peace commissioners and the peace faction of the Cherokee. Even though Double Head met with General Washington, the peace efforts were derailed, and a thousand Cherokee warriors invaded Knoxville, where Pumpkin Boy was killed.

That year Benge attacked Farris's Station at Gate City, and killed several, including a Livingston woman.

Though the exact year it happened is unknown, the likely one is also 1793. Benge's brother The Tail killed the Breeding family at Holmes Mill, Kentucky.

Bob Benge was not inactive. March 31st he ambushed Moses Ensign Cockeral (various spellings) in Kane's Gap between Duffield and Scott's Station. The two men were each icons within their communities, and often bragged about being eager to fight each other. All of Cockeral's companions were killed, but he himself escaped to the protection of the fort at the head of Wallen's Creek.

The grand climax of this long story came in 1794. In another of his targeted 'hit' missions Benge focused on four officers of the Holston Militia – the two sons of William Todd Livingston Henry (Harry) and Lt. Peter of near Mendota, and Major James Fulkerson and Peter Fulkerson of Hiltons, Va. The widowed mother of the sons was killed, along with some slaves. The new brides of Harry and Peter were carried off towards Hiltons, and the home of the Fulkersons. There was a barn raising in progress, and too many men were present to permit an attack. The Benge party took off through the western most of the two Hamilton Gaps in Clinch Mountain. That night they camped in a secret cove below a waterfall on Benge's Creek in the center of Copper Ridge. The morning of the 7th they passed down Benge's Creek, which they waded to prevent detection. Fortunately, Eliza Jane Addington, a little girl who lived where the creek crossed the road down the southern bank of the Clinch River saw a wet moccasin track on a rock in the middle of the creek, and realized what it was. She alerted the militia who regrouped themselves, and started after the party of Benge. That party had crossed the Clinch west of Dungannan on a fish trap dam. They made their way up Big Stoney Creek to Camp Rock on the top of Powell Mountain, where they rested for the night of the 7th.

The previous year a militiaman named Vincent Hobbs, Jr. had become alarmed at the depredations of Benge. He was part of a large clan that lived just upstream from the Livingstons. Next up the North Fork of the Holston was Benham's Fort, owned by John Benhams. All three of these families were intermarried. The Hobbs, who simultaneously maintained homes at Dryden, Va., and Benham had hunting camps on top of Black Mountain and Benham Spur. Then, there was that Livingston woman whom Benge had killed at Farris's Station the year before. Hobbs seemed to have been intellectually challenged, even perhaps insulted, that Benge could slip in and out of Hobb's back yard with such impunity. Hobbs spent the next winter walking the mountains until he had discovered all the passes that Benge had used. He felt certain that Benge would be back the next year, and Hobbs developed a plan to catch him. As Benge's escape routes

had several different variations, the militia had to block all of them. Each garrison was assigned a task.

Hobbs was part of a special forces group of rapid deployment 'spies', or scouts, that was stationed at Yoakum's Station south of Dryden. They were the elite of the militiamen. The plan he designed was that when the North Fork of the Holston was attacked again, a messenger was to go to Benham's Fort. From there messengers were to be sent to Dorton's Fort on Copper Ridge, and to Yoakum's Station. Then part of the garrison of Benham's Fort was to march through the night to Yoakum's Station. The garrison of Dorton's Fort was to march to the head ford of the Kentucky River at Whitesburg, Ky. where they were to interdict any attempt at escape down that river to the Ohio. The combined forces of Yoakum's Station and of Benham's Fort were to rush to Benge's Gap that connects Benge's Branch with Hoot Owl Hollow (shown on the modern maps as Carding Machine Branch) near Norton, which was the central corridor of Benge's habitual escape routes. This area afforded Benge the choice of either going through Winding Gap at Pound / Jenkins where he had the choice of going to Elk Horn City and on to the Ohio at Ashland, or down the Kentucky River starting at Whitesburg; or of going through Little Stone Gap to Ben's Branch (a modern corruption of Benge's Branch) at Appalachia and on through to Benge's Gap (modern Morris's Gap) at Keokee, Virginia, and on down the Cumberland to Chickamauga. The remainder of the garrison of Benham's Fort was to attempt to track the Indian party as they made their escape.

Sure that he had once again escaped the militia, and being exhausted from the raid, Benge and party relaxed the night of the 7th at Camp Rock. They were lazy about leaving the next morning, and just made it down to somewhere in the general area of the present Norton Reservoir before they again camped for the night of the 8th. Benge sent out two scouts to go to Appalachia where they were to set up camp and to kill and prepare supper for the camp of the 9th

In the meantime Vincent Hobbs, Jr. and his party passed through Big Stone Gap, and the evening of the 8th found them in Appalachia. They saw the smoke coming from the scouts camp fire, and killed them both. They then went up Ben's Branch and across Little Stone Mountain to Little Stone Gap, and the morning of the 9th began the descent into Hoot Owl Hollow. There, Hobbs divided his force, and sent half of it through Benge's Gap to a rock fin that comes near to blocking the hollow towards Norton.

The party of Benge and the party of militiamen collided on the side of the little hollow that branches off of Hoot Owl Hollow and leads to Little Stone Gap. The destroyed Benge's Rock stood near here. Benge was shot and killed April 9, 1794, the Livingston women rescued, and the pursuing party from Benham's Fort soon came upon the scene. The spot is now buried under the road fill of US 23 between Little Stone Gap and Hoot Owl Hollow.

Some of Benge's party escaped the ambush and retreated to Benge's Branch, where the militia at the second Benge's Rock killed all but three. These three were interdicted by the garrison of Dorton's Fort at the ford near Whitesburg, and killed two. Only one Indian survived

the Livingston Raid. This was the last Indian fighting in Virginia, and the last significant fighting with the Cherokee in the entire country. Most significantly, it was the real end of the Revolutionary War. It removed the last impediment to western expansion. The cork had been removed from the bottle, never to be replaced. Manifest Destiny was unleashed with explosive force.

The Livingston brides returned home, where they lived out their lives, and are buried in the family graveyard on a hilltop overlooking the lovely North Fork. Southwest Virginia has many of their descendants. Vincent Hobbs, Jr. moved to central Tennessee. The Hobbs family still live on the North Fork of the Holston, and along the Powell River around Dryden. Bob Benge has many descendants scattered across the country.

King George II's view that the German and Scots-Irish he put into the Valley of Virginia would consume all who stood against them was more prophetic than he realized. They took the first English Empire out in the process.

PRESENTED AT THE 2020 MECC ARTS AND CRAFTS DAY