



Patriots of
New Providence Presbyterian
Church Cemetery

I. The Settlement of Blount County



Figure 1: A spring morning view of the Great Smoky Mountains from the area of Heritage High School.

The area of Blount County, Tennessee was being permanently settled by 1785. Resting between the Little River and the Great Smoky Mountains, the land contains an abundant water supply and rich soil for nourishment of the settlers. The tributaries of the Little River became the first residences for the new arrivals. Many of these families were ardent



Figure 2: Photo from Martin's Station, VA

Patriots who had fought in the Revolutionary War and were hardened with the ability to carve their lives out of the wildernesses presented to them. The settlement began with numerous forts through the area. These forts along the Great Indian Warpath were necessary due to the conflicts arising from the new arrivals settling on lands claimed as the Cherokee's hunting grounds.¹

¹ Blount County History – Goodspeed's History of Tennessee, <http://tngenweb.org/goodspeeds/blount-county-history/>, Accessed: 2018-04-11 18:18:11

II. Establishments of Forts

Many forts were established along the frontier of Blount County. The first may have been



Figure 3: Photo of Martin's Station

Fort McTeer, built by Robert McTeer and settlers of the community of Eusebia.

Goodspeed's History of Blount County states "It stood about one and one-half miles south of Eusebia Church. It soon became the nucleus of an excellent neighborhood of intelligent, worthy,

and patriotic citizens, emigrants principally from the valley of Virginia, who brought with, and diffused around them, Republicanism, religion, intelligence and thrift."² Many of these forts or stations were simply homes or buildings connected by ramparts giving the settlers a means of protection while firing upon their foes. Of the earliest

forts/stations of Blount County included Fort McTeer, Fort John Craig, Fort David Craig, Houston's Station, Fort Gellispie, Henry's

Station, and others.

These

forts/stations

were necessary to keep the



Figure 4: Fort Watauga, Elizabethton, TN



Figure 5 Photo from Camden, SC

² Blount County History – Goodspeed's History of Tennessee, <http://tngenweb.org/goodspeeds/blount-county-history/>, Accessed: 2018-04-11 18:18:11

families of the area safe in times of turmoil with the ongoing native threats.

III. Ongoing Regional Dangers

Every spring, every ford, every path, every farm, every trail, nearly every house in the regions' first settlement was once the scene of danger, exposure, attack, exploit, achievement, and death.³ One cannot emphasize enough the dangers of the area west of the Appalachian Mountains during this time period, and the importance of the Forts and Stations. A few examples of the ongoing atrocities are listed below.

Mrs. Fannie Dickenson Scott of the Powell Valley was captured by the Indians after her husband and sons were murdered and scalped. She was marched by force to Kentucky by her captives who had assigned her as a wife to one of the braves while on trek. Each time that she would stumble, slow, or stop along the march, her kidnappers would urge her on by the whipping of her face with her husband and sons' bloody scalps. While the other Indians went off hunting, her new "husband" was left to watch her. As he fell asleep, she slipped off and began her journey home. They soon followed in the attempt to recapture her, but she had hidden inside a hollow log and slipped their discovery.⁴

In Blount County, six miles south of Maryville at Houston's Station, a half hour vigorous assault was made by the Indians in which Hugh Barry was struck in the forehead by one of the native's musket balls killing him instantly. While under attack Mrs. McEwan had acquired a bullet mold and was busy making ammunition for the inhabitants. At one point, an

³ The Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century, https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Annals_of_Tennessee_to_the_End_of_th.html?id=jpgpAAAAYAAJ, Pg 370, accessed 7/12/18

⁴ Statement from her Grandson, George W. Johnson, <http://www.lva.virginia.gov/>, accessed 7/12/2018

enemy bullet came through the station's log defenses, struck a wall next to her, and rolled to her on the floor. Mrs. McEwan snatched it up, melted it, molded it, and stated to her husband, "Here is a ball run out of the Indian's lead; send it back to them as quickly as possible. It is their own; let them have it in welcome".⁵



On the 17th of October 1788 Gillespies' Fort was attacked by a large Chickamauga war party led by Chiefs Bloody Fellow, Categisky, Glass, and John Watts. There were only a few men left within the fortification to defend it. Those who were present successfully defended the fort until they had

exhausted their supply of ammunition. When the war party recognized this, they entered the stockade and began tomahawking the settlers. Every white man in the fort and several women were killed. Two of the Chickamauga's took Colonel Gillespie's daughter prisoner. The two argued over which she would belong to and settled the dispute by stabbing her to death. They took twenty-eight women and children prisoner and burnt the fort to the ground. A letter was left for Col. John Sevier accusing him of his murdering Chief Old Tassel. Colonel Sevier, in retaliation, raided an Indian town, took prisoners to exchange for the return of those from Gillespies' Fort.⁶

⁵ The Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century,
https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Annals_of_Tennessee_to_the_End_of_th.html?id=jpgpAAAAYAAJ, accessed 7/12/2013

⁶ Handbook of the American Frontier: The Southeastern Woodlands,
<https://books.google.com/books?id=yFKJTymP4vsC&q=Gillespie#v=snippet&q=Gillespie&f=false>, accessed 7/12/2018

Captain John Fayne, and a few enlisted men, were part of a guard that were sent out as scouts, and a few settlers, to reconnoiter the countryside. They crossed the Tennessee River and found themselves within an apple orchard and carelessly began to pick the fruit. Unknown to these men, the Indians had been following and lying in wait for them to reach this point. The Indians surrounded them drove them back into the river, killing sixteen, wounding four, and taking one prisoner. Captain Evans and Major Stewart raised men



and in three days march made it to the Tennessee River to bury the dead. The next morning the men crossed the river and made their way to Citico where the massacre had taken place. Upon arrival they found one white man laying on his back with his belly ripped open, four men laying on a sand bar also with their bellies ripped up and their bowels floating in the water, the head of one man was cut off and his heart and bowels were torn out and thrown all over the ground. After

burying all of the dead, they returned home.⁷

After hearing these true stories of activities across the region one can truly understand the importance of having good fortifications for the protection of the families in the communities.

⁷ Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century,

<https://books.google.com/books?id=jpgpAAAAYAAJ&q=Citico#v=onepage&q=sitico&f=false>, Pg. 421,422, accessed 7/12/2018

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Of the group of Blount County forts, the one that we will focus on is Fort Craig (John Craig) as you can see marked below by the arrow.

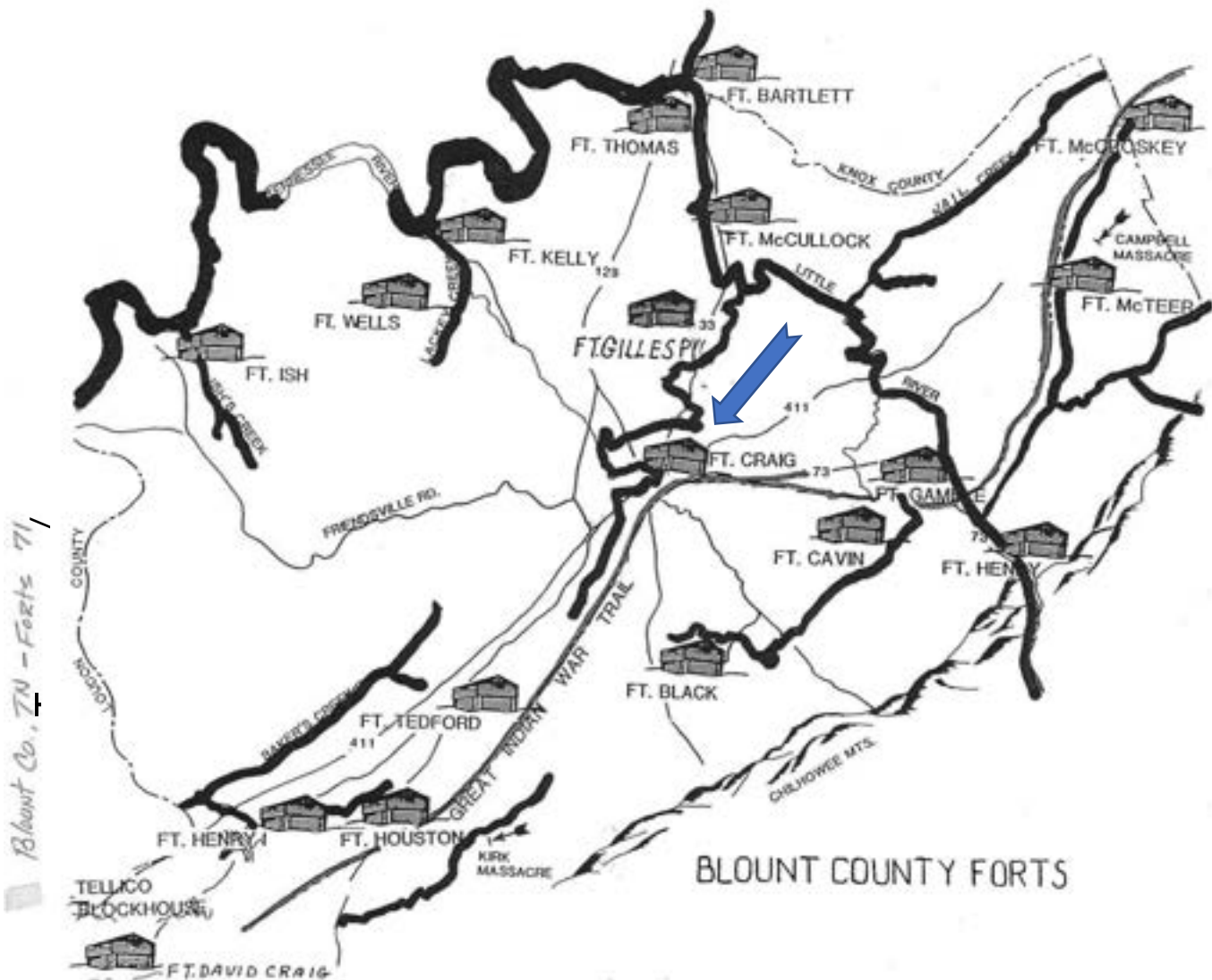


Figure 6: Forts and Stations in Blount County, Ken Cornett

IV. Fort Craig (John Craig)

John Craig purchased 343 acres from a Stokely Donelson grant of 5,000 acres.



Figure 7: Fort Craig Monument, Maryville, TN

Upon this land John Craig was to establish his Fort Craig in late 1784, or early 1785, on the corner of Washington and Church Streets upon Pistol Creek near the present site of where the Blount County Chamber of

Commerce sits. The fort enclosed 2.2 acres that included John's cabin as well as a large spring. Two weddings are thought to have taken place inside the fort. John Duncan and Mary Alexander, as well as Joseph Tedford and Mary McNutt are thought to have taken nuptials within the Fort. In 1793, Governor William Blount visited the fort to find 280 men, women, and children barricaded inside, living in miserable conditions. The settlers had been forced inside the fort by some 500 Cherokees, living with limited supplies while under siege, to which they eventually overcame.⁸



Figure 8: Photo from the Siege at Martin's Station

⁸ Forts and Stations in Blount County, Kenneth Cornett, Blount Co. Public Library

John Craig donated 50 acres next to his fort for the founding of a new town, Maryville. The 50 acres was divided up into 120 lots and streets to form the new county's seat. Incorporated as a city on July 11, 1795, the settlement was named in honor of Mary Grainger Blount, wife of the territorial governor William Blount. Blount County was named after him.⁹



Figure 9: Martin's Station

V. Establishment of Churches

Upon arrival of families creating communities, the need of Churches soon followed. The modern controversy is to which Church in Blount County was the first to be established. Out of the information available, the discussion of who was first lies between Eusebia



Figure 10: Eusebia Presbyterian Church and Cemetery circa 2018

⁹ Inez Burns, *History of Blount County, Tennessee: From War Trail to Landing Strip, 1795-1955* (Nashville: Benson Print Co., 1957), 2-30

Presbyterian Church and the New Providence Presbyterian Church. Never the less both were very important for the communities for which they provided houses of worship and support to the settlers. These were trying times where men slept with their muskets, at times barricaded their families inside forts, and tended outside chores while carrying their weapons. In such times people needed much support both spiritually as well as collectively in their communities. These churches began their history as simple log structures which over the years became more of a permanent fixture just as their builders did in their respective communities.



Figure 11: New Providence Presbyterian Church circa 2014

VI. Formation of New Providence Presbyterian Church



Figure 12: Rev. Archibald Scott's headstone in Augusta County, Virginia

In 1786 the Reverend Archibald Scott visited Fort Craig. Rev. Scott was a native of Scotland and was the minister of two Churches in Rockbridge, Virginia. He traveled down the Great Indian Warpath on a missionary journey to find the former members of his Church, many from Pennsylvania, who were now living under much duress in the backcountry wilderness facing the perils of war each day. Upon his arrival he immediately recognized the strength and courage of all those inhabiting the fort. With the cooperation of the fort's

inhabitants, Reverend Scott founded the new church - New Providence Presbyterian Church.¹⁰

VII. The Patriots Interred.

Now that we have a better understanding of the times and surroundings that these families endured, let us remind ourselves that many of these families are the same that helped secure our freedoms and establish a new nation. There are at least twelve Patriots that are buried inside the New Providence Presbyterian Church Cemetery. Each one will be listed in the pages to follow along with some information about them.

1. James Houston:

James Houston was born November 12, 1757 in Augusta County Virginia. On February 3, 1780 he married Esther (?). In 1791 James married his second wife Mary "Polly" Gillespie.¹¹ He entered the service in Augusta County, Virginia under Captain William Buchanan as a volunteer in a Patrolling Company. They patrolled the County of Augusta in search of and to guard against hostile Indians. In September of 1777 he moved his family to Washington County, Virginia. In 1778



Figure 13: James Houston portrait that hangs in the Maryville Tennessee municipal building

¹⁰ New Providence Presbyterian Church Website,

<http://www.newprovidencepres.org/templates/mobile/default.asp?id=32126&PID=275760>, Accessed 4/26/2018

¹¹ Transcript:James Houston (1757-1840) Family Bible, Maryville, Blount County, TN - Genealogy,

[https://www.werelate.org/wiki/Transcript:James_Houston_%281757-](https://www.werelate.org/wiki/Transcript:James_Houston_%281757-1840%29_Family_Bible%2C_Maryville%2C_Blount_County%2C_TN)

[1840%29_Family_Bible%2C_Maryville%2C_Blount_County%2C_TN](https://www.werelate.org/wiki/Transcript:James_Houston_%281757-1840%29_Family_Bible%2C_Maryville%2C_Blount_County%2C_TN), 2018-04-11 17:23:16

he once again entered the service under the command of Col. Isaac Shelby on Long Island. They proceeded by canoe down the Holston River, then into the



Tennessee, to the mouth of the Chickamauga Creek where they were to destroy the encampments and provisions of the Cherokee Indians, called the Chickamauga's, but had no encounters with the enemy. From October 1st, 1778 to 1779, James once again was called for duty to reconnoiter the frontiers of Kentucky to protect the settlements from the hostile Indians. In October 1780 James entered the service under the command of Col. William Campbell to fight at the Battle of King's Mountain. He returned home to be

discharged after the battle.¹² In 1782 James removed from Washington County, Virginia, to Greene County, North Carolina, now Tennessee, then on to Blount County, Tennessee. James was a member of the First General Assembly of the State of Tennessee¹³. James Houston died at 82 years old on March 2, 1840.¹⁴

2. Thomas Turk, Jr.:

Thomas Turk, Jr. was born the son of Patriot Thomas Turk, Sr. and Mary Grove of Augusta County, Virginia, about 1755.¹⁵ Thomas was cited by Joseph Baugh as "shooting dead" a British sentinel just outside of Portsmouth, and aiding in the taking of seven prisoners.¹⁶ In Augusta County, Virginia between 28th of February and 13th of October 1781, Thomas Turk was reimbursed for

¹² James Houston's Rev.War Pension S1914, <http://www.revwarapps.org/s1914.pdf>

¹³ James Houston's Rev.War Pension S1914, <http://www.revwarapps.org/s1914.pdf>

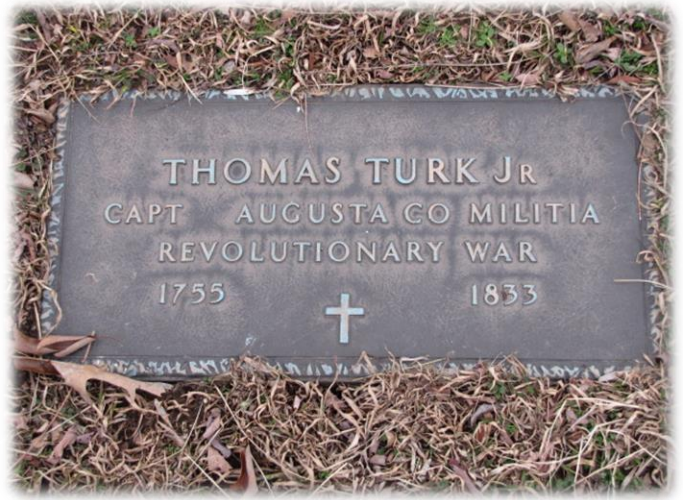
¹⁴ James Houston's Headstone at New Providence Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

¹⁵ Will of Thomas Turk, SR, Page 306, Proved 7/24/1809.

¹⁶ Joseph Baugh's Rev.War Pension R21837, <http://revwarapps.org/r21837.pdf>

four bushels of corn, fifty-two bushels of rye, thirty-four pounds of bacon and four beef furnished to the militia. On May 18th 1784 he was reimbursed for nine bushels of corn and for wintering a beef.¹⁷ On March 21st 1782 he and his father were reimbursed in Augusta

County at the Court of Claims.¹⁸ Thomas Turk, Jr. died in 1833 in Blount County, Tennessee.



3. Benjamin Kilburn/Kilbourn:

Benjamin Kilburn/Kilbourn was born in 1761 in Nova Scotia, Canada. While living in Blount County in 1819, he applied for a Revolutionary War pension. His pension application states that he enlisted while living in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. During his first term he was in the Battle of Paoli. In 1782 he reenlisted for the term of the war in Reading, Pennsylvania, and served under Captain Andrew



Walker and Colonel Richard Butler in the 3rd Pennsylvania Regiment.

Benjamin was appointed sergeant and served under Captain Christy in the 3rd Pennsylvania Regiment until his

¹⁷ Abercrombie and Slatten, Virginia Revolutionary 'Publick Claims', volume I, pages 89, 91-93.

¹⁸ Court of Claims 1772-1785, Augusta County, Virginia, pages 1, 51, GRC 1970, DAR Library

discharge at Carlisle in September of 1783.¹⁹

Benjamin's wife, Diana applied for a widow's pension in October of 1842 stating that her maiden name was Denning prior to their marriage in 1781, or 1782, in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. She stated that she and Benjamin moved to Blount County, Tennessee in 1802, and that Benjamin died there in 1828.²⁰

4. David Eagleton:

David Eagleton was born March 16, 1748. Some genealogists report that he



was born in Scotland. By the mid 1770's he was living alongside the Nolichucky River in what later became Greene County, Tennessee. Prior to 1775 he settled two miles north of Maryville along the banks of Pistol Creek in Blount County, Tennessee. Before 1783, he was married, possibly to a lady by the

name of Mary Eleanor (?). Many family genealogies have reported this, but no sources have been found.²¹ David Eagleton is listed as being a private in the Washington County Militia.²² David and his first wife had six children. He and his second wife, Elizabeth Hook, had four children.²³ David Eagleton died on May 17, 1828.²⁴

¹⁹ US GenWeb Archives, <http://files.usgwarchives.net/tn/blount/military/revwar/pensions/kilbourn192nmt.txt>, accessed 4/28/2018.

²⁰ Pension S*W7999- PA Archives 5th Ser. Vol. 3, pp 1085-1090.

²¹ Patriot Biographies, <http://sarpatriots.sar.org/patriot/display/152204>, accessed 4/29/2018.

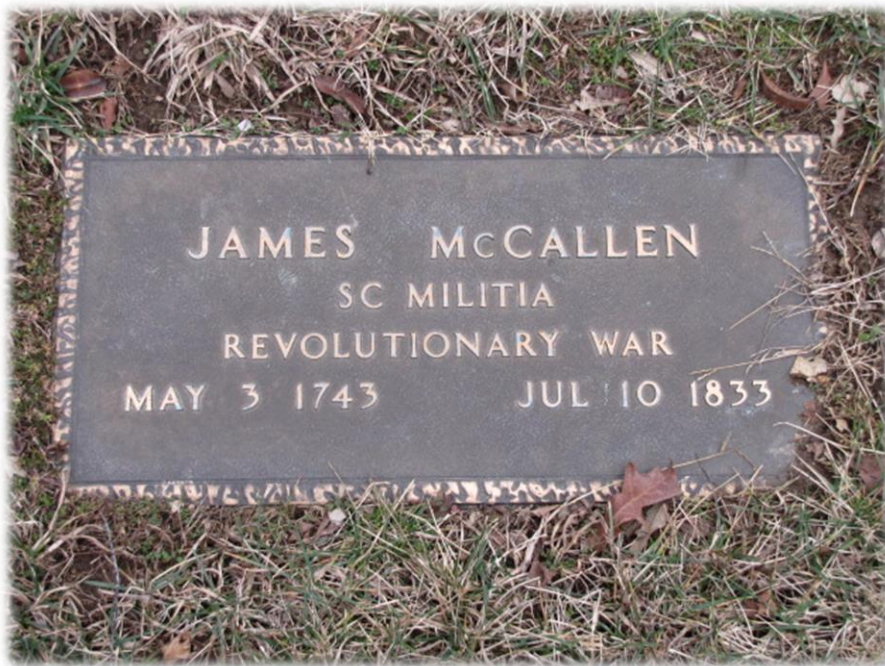
²² Revolutionary War Pay Voucher, #3786, North Carolina State Archives.

²³ David Eagleton Family Bible.

²⁴ Military Grave Marker, New Providence Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

5. James McCallen:

James McCallen was born May 3, 1743, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He has been reported to have been married to Sarah Love in North Carolina.²⁵ In his Revolutionary War pension application, he states that while he lived in York County, South Carolina he served 4 tours of duty, equaling twelve months, under Captain Andrew Love. Afterwards, he moved to Lincoln, North Carolina where in the spring of 1780 he was taken prisoner by the British and Tories. Upon his capture he was taken to the Camden jail where he was held for three months. After being released from prison and paroled he headed home where he arrived in August of the same year. In late August of the same year he volunteered once more where he served in Colonel William Graham's Regiment at the Battle of King's Mountain. After the battle he was discharged to return home.²⁶ James later moved to Blount County, Tennessee, where he died on July 10, 1833.²⁷



²⁵ Familypedia, [http://familypedia.wikia.com/wiki/James_McCallon_\(%3F-%3F\)](http://familypedia.wikia.com/wiki/James_McCallon_(%3F-%3F)), accessed 4/29/2018.

²⁶ Revolutionary War Pension s2779, <http://revwarapps.org/s2779.pdf>, accessed 4/29/2018.

²⁷ James McCallen Grave Marker, New Providence Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

6. Col. James McGinley:



James McGinley's family was from the York/Lancaster County areas of Pennsylvania. James married Susan Alexander around 1787 in East Tennessee. The Craig's, Alexander's, and McGinley families were related, and moved from Pennsylvania, to Augusta County Virginia, then to Washington County Virginia, then on to Greene County Tennessee, finally settling in Blount County Tennessee.²⁸ James served under Captain Thomas Orbison, York County, Pennsylvania's Militia 781 2nd Battalion. James died on March 26th 1834.²⁹

7. John Davis, Sr.:

John Davis was born in 1759 in Anson County, North Carolina. He married Polly Taylor in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.³⁰ In 1778, at the age of

²⁸ <http://owslfl.tripod.com/williamalexander/ancestry-of-william-alexander.html>, accessed 4/28/2018.

²⁹ James McGinley Grave Marker, New Providence Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

³⁰ DAR Website, http://services.dar.org/public/dar_research/search_adb/?action=full&p_id=A030433, accessed 4/29/2018.

19, he entered service as a substitute for his brother Andrew Davis, who was drafted into the militia in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.³¹ Serving under Captain James Osborn and General Lincoln, he marched to Charlestown, South Carolina while it was under siege. He was there in its defense for seven



weeks until it was surrendered. He was taken prisoner under Clinton and Cornwallis, urged to join the British by taking \$50.00, a suit of regimentals, and a share of the spoils of the City of Charlestown. He was finally paroled on the condition that he would not take up arms against Britain again, and sent home. On his second tour John joined under the command of Captain James White in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Their tour took them into the Wilmington, North Carolina area. In John's pension application he states that at that time he had been a member of

New Providence Presbyterian Church for twenty-six years.³² John Davis died January 18th, 1839.³³

8. James Weir:

James Weir married Margaret on February 19th, 1783 in Augusta County, Virginia. James served in the militia from Washington County, Virginia,

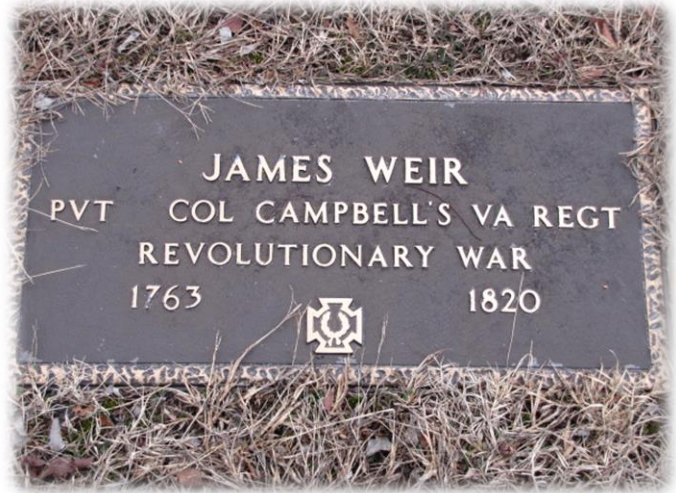
³¹ John Davis' Revolutionary War Pension Application, <http://revwarapps.org/s3259.pdf>, accessed 4/29/2018.

³² John Davis' Revolutionary War Pension Application, <http://revwarapps.org/s3259.pdf>, accessed 4/29/2018.

³³ John Davis' Headstone, New Providence Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

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under the command of Colonel Campbell and was at the Battle of King's Mountain. He also served a term under the command of General Greene, where he fought at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. In Margaret's widow's pension application, James Cunningham states that he was wounded before the Battle of Guilford Courthouse and James Weir stayed with him until he was able to travel and return home. James died on March 11th, 1820 in Blount County, Tennessee.³⁴



9. John Toole:

Born to John Tool, Sr. in 1756 in Ireland. John served in the 3rd Pennsylvania Regiment and was present with Washington at Valley Forge for the winter of



1777. John was a surveyor under Colonel Thomas Craig from May 25, 1777 until January 1st, 1781.³⁵ He married Ruth Rankin and relocated to Greene County, North Carolina, now Tennessee, near Jonesboro in 1782. In 1787 he received a

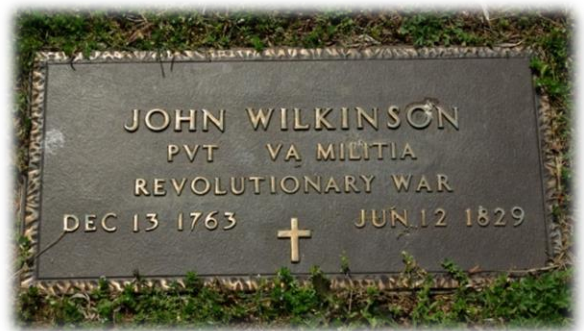
³⁴ Margaret Weir's Widow's Pension Application, Revolutionary War, <http://revwarapps.org/r11287.pdf>, accessed 4/30/2018.

³⁵ NARA, M881, Comp. Mil Ser Record, roll #805.

land grant from North Carolina on the Tennessee River about twelve miles west of Knoxville, Tennessee known as “Toole’s Bend”. John Toole drowned in the Tennessee River on March 13th, 1791 while trying to rescue a friend who could not swim.³⁶

10. John Wilkinson:

John was born December 13th, 1763 in Virginia. About 1801 John married Margaret Brady Brown-Wilkinson Wear.³⁷ John was a member of Tennessee’s Fourth General Assembly in Knoxville in 1801, and the Sixth General Assembly in 1805, representing Blount and Sevier Counties.³⁸



11. John Duncan:

John Duncan was born 1752.³⁹ In 1775, while living in Rockbridge County, Virginia, he entered the service under Captain Andrew Crockett. He was soon transferred to Daniel Morgan’s Regiment of Riflemen.⁴⁰ With his transfer to this elite light infantry unit, John had to be a crack shot. Desiring only the best marksmen, Daniel

³⁶ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/21786518/john-toole>

³⁷ [https://www.werelate.org/wiki/Person:John_Wilkinson_\(96\)](https://www.werelate.org/wiki/Person:John_Wilkinson_(96)), accessed 4/30/2018.

³⁸ TENNESSEE SENATORS TERRITORIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 1794 ONE HUNDREDTH SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2009 – 10, Compiled by Diane Black, Librarian, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

³⁹ John Duncan’s headstone, New Providence Church Cemetery, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/21700866/john-duncan>, accessed 5/9/2018.

⁴⁰ John Duncan’s Rev War Pension Application, <http://revwarapps.org/w353.pdf>, accessed 5/9/2018.

Morgan created a test by posting a seven-inch circle on a plank at approximately 250 paces. He would hold the test twice, taking the first forty men to strike the mark each

stint. The shooters only had one chance, with no sighters.⁴¹ On July 17th, 1788, John married Margaret Alexander inside Craig's Fort, Maryville, due to Indian hostilities raging in Blount County.⁴² John died on April 29th, 1836 in Blount County



12. Jesse Wallace:



Jesse Wallace was born October 4th, 1767 in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina⁴³ to William and Mary Wallace.⁴⁴ Jesse moved to the Washington District of North Carolina (now Washington County, Tennessee) when he was four years

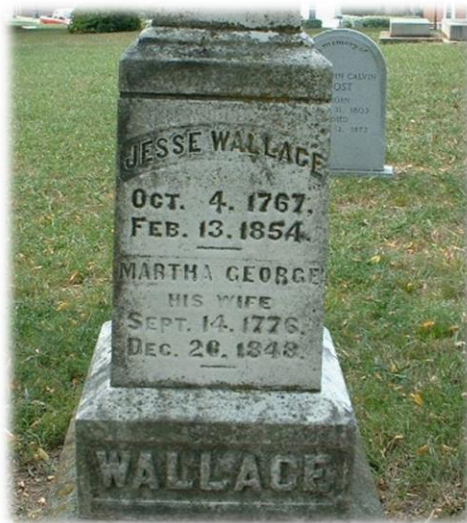
⁴¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morgan%27s_Riflemen, accessed 5/9/2018.

⁴² Margaret Duncan's Rev War Widow's Pension Application, <http://revwarapps.org/w353.pdf>, accessed 5/9/2018.

⁴³ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/21678326/jesse-wallace>, accessed 5/9/2018.

⁴⁴ Jesse Wallace, <https://www.geni.com/people/Jesse-Wallace/6000000031577424212>, accessed 5/9/2018.

old. At the age of 15 years old he entered service under the command of Col. John Sevier.⁴⁵ He married Martha George, daughter of Edward and Martha George.⁴⁶ Jesse's marker lists him as serving in the Continental Line in the Revolutionary War.⁴⁷



⁴⁵ Garrett and Goodpasture's History of Washington District, Page 57.

⁴⁶ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/21678401/martha-wallace>, accessed 5/9/2018.

⁴⁷ Jesse Wallace's marker, New Providence Church Cemetery, Maryville, Tennessee.