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REMINISCENCES OF WESTERN VIRGINIA,

1770-1790.

BY JOHN REDD, HENRY COUNTY, VA.

[The manuscript which we begin to print in this number of the Magazine, has apparently been for a considerable period in the collection of the Virginia Historical Society. It consists of forty foolscap pages, stitched together, and is evidently a series of answers to questions which had been addressed to the writer. There is no title nor signature, but it was judged from internal evidence that the paper was written by John Redd, of Henry county. This is confirmed by a statement of Lyman C. Draper, in the new edition of Withers's Border Warfare, p. 59. He quotes some statements made in the beginning of this manuscript, and states that the information was given him in 1849, by Major John Redd, of Henry county, Va. At that time Major Redd must have been upwards of eighty years of age.

It is probable that our manuscript is the original of the information given Mr. Draper. At any rate it is evident that the questions, to which answers are given, were propounded by one well informed in regard to the history of the West.]

1st. The house which Davell lived in and which was pre-
viously occupied by Stephen Holston, the house was located on a hill side about 30 yards from the head spring of the middle Holston. I know not what became of Holston, whether he died there or moved off. I think the settlement of Fort Chiswell was the nearest settlement to Holston's cabin. There was no flat land near his house.

1. I know nothing of Ambrose Powell.
2. I know nothing of Colby Chew.
3. Of Stalemaker, I know nothing.

6th. I hardly think it probable that Walden, with some 16 others, ever established a hunting camp in Powel's valley as early as 1761. There is no doubt but Waldin was a long hunter as early as 1761, and probable before that day. The long hunters hardly ever went with more than two or three in a company, besides as you remarde at that period war existed between the Indians and whites, and it would have been the very height of folly for 16 men to have gone at that time to Powel's valley. It is vary probable that Walden, Cox & Blevins established a hunting camp in Powel's valley a few years after 1761, for the Blevinses & Coxes were a vary numerous family, and many of them were long hunters; they lived on Smith's river in the neighborhood with Walden, and they were connected to him by marriage. If Walden had of establish a station in Powel's valley in 1761, I am satisfied that I should have heard something of it. Walden was a man of darke skin about 5 feet 10 or 11 inches; a big, square built and weighed a bout 180 pounds, vary cours fatures, ordinary intellect and was regarded as a very honest and correct man in all his transactions. When I became acquainted with him in 1774, he was about 40 years of age. Walden had very little property, he never cultivated the soil but lived entirely by hunting. I know not where Walden was from originally. When I first knew him he lived on Smith's river at a place called the round-about, near the centre of the county, and about two miles east from Martainsville, the present county seat of Henry, he lived near his wife's fathers, Will. Blevenes. Walden, the Blevines & Coxes owned no land, but were squatters on land owned by a company of speculators.

During the revolutionary war the assembly of Va. passed a
law that all British subjects owning land in Va. must come in by
caeartin time and take an oath of alegence, and become actual
setlers, or ther land would be confiscated. After the act was
passed, two of the british subjects owning land in Pitsolvania
(now henry), came in and complied with the act of the assembly,
and toock possesion of their land, this gave alarm to Walden,
the Blevinses and Coxes, for they feared they would have to pay
many years rent they all moved off enmess. The Blevinses &
Coxes settled on the holston a bove the long Islleans. Walden
settled on the holston about 18 miles above where knoxville now
is. I know not how long he lived there. In the year 1776, I
called by to see him, he was not at home, his wife informed me
that he had gone on a hunt and had been absent a month. A
few years after this he moved to Powel’s valley, remained there
a short time, removed from there to Missoura and settled in the
vary extreme settlement up the Missoura river. I suppose his
object in going to Missoura was to get where game was more
plentiful; he followed up hunting as long as he was able to follow
the chase; he died on the fronteers of Missoura at a very ad-
vanced age; he performed no military duty during the war.

7th. Wm. —— was born in Albemarl co., Va., he was the
first son of his mother; notwithstanding his mother & her hus-
band were both vary respectable and had a fine estate, yet when
Wm. was born he turned out to be a dark mulatto. The old
man being a good natured sort of a fellow and with all, vary
credulous, was induced by his better half to believe that the col-
our of his son was a judgement on her for her wickedness. Wm.
was sent to school and learnt the rudaments of an englis edu-
cation and at the age of 18 he was furnished with a good horse,
gun & some money and dyrected by his reputed father to go to
the fronteer and seek his fortune and never to return. In the
early part of the spring, 1775, I became personly acquainted with
—— at Martain’s station in Powel's valley: he was then about 40
years of age; he never married and had been living on the fron-
teer for something like 20 years. He lived in the forts and sta-
tions and lived entirely by hunting. Notwithstanding his coller
he was treated with as much respect as any white man. Fiew
men possessed a more high sence of honor, and true bravery
than he did. He was possessed of a vary strong natural mind
and allways cheerful and the very life of any company he was in. Had hunted in the brush many years before I became acquinted with him. He was about the ordinary height, little inclined to be corpulent; slightly round shoudered and weighed about 160 or 70, and vary strong for one of his sise.

8th. I know not where Wm. Crabtree was from originally. In 1777 he lived on watauguar not far above its junction with the holston. I know not what finally became of him, he was about 30 years of adge, a real back woodsman; in appearance tall, slender and spare made, his hair sliteley red. Aldridge was some 30 years of age. I know not where he was from originaly. He lived in the neighborhood with Crabtree. He was possessed of a spritely mind, dark hair, stooped in the shoulders, heavey built, near 6 feet high. Wm. Pitman, about 40 years of ag., some 6 feet high, fine personal appearance, fair skin, light hair. Henry Skags, some 50 years of age, sliteley gray, slender frame, dark skin and some 3 inches taller than Pitman. I know not where he and Pitman was from originally in 1776. They both lived on New River (I do not know the precise locality), they remained there until their death, they both had families. I know nothing of their descendents.

9th. Newman, Cox, Blevens, Drake and others. I know nothing of their exploring trip.

10th. of Abram & Isaick Bledso,*John Montgomery, I know nothing of their exploring trip.

11th. I know nothing of Taylor7 and others trip down the Ohio in 1769.

12th. of John Finley Boons Companion I know nothing.

13th. I have examined my orriginal manuscript and find that I stated that Dr. walker run a line about 1763, and my Grandson who copied it made a mistake and put it 1773. in looking over the copy I did not discover the mistake. when I was in Powels valley in 1775 there was a line running through the valley called Dr. walker's line, the nearest point of this line to Martain's Station was about 12 miles South, besides this there was a beech tree where this line crossed Indian creek with the name of Thomas Walker cut on it in full and I think the date 1763. I never examined this tree but many of our company toled me that they saw it vary frequently. near this tree it was said that there was
some sign of a camp which it was believed was pitched when the line was run. I can not see how this mistake could have occurred unless at the date mentioned above. Dr. Walker didn't com-
plete his line and from some cause did not mention it in his official report. If you are sure that Dr. Walker did not run (or attempt) to run a line at that date then it must have been that he or some other man by his name crossed Indian creek at the time and place alluded to on some exploring expedition, for I am perfectly satisfied that the name of Thomas Walker was carved in full on the beach and a line crossed Indian creek called Walker's line.

14th. I know nothing of Bon's defeat in Powel's valley in 1773, it has entirely escaped my recollection. the old kentucky trace crossed Walden's ridge at the head of Walden's creak. There was another trace not often used that went down walden's creak and crossed it several times. I do not know where the new road crosses walden's Creak in 1780. when I went to Kentucky the road crossed Walden's ridge at the head of Walden's creek at the same place where the trace crossed in 1775.

15th. I know nothing of the two men who discovered the Indians on the morning of the battle of Point Pleasant.

16th. Priests fort was located some 5 or 6 miles up the valley from Martain's station; it was on no water course; there were several fine springs near the fort. Priests & Mumps fort were never reoccupied after their abandonment in 1776.

17th. Martain's fort was on martain's creek. the fort was located on the North side of the Creek, there was some five or six cabins, these were built some twenty feet apart with strong stockade between, in these stockades there were port holes. the station contained about half an acre of ground, the shape was a parallelogram, there were two fine springs near the station which afforded plenty of water, the Woodland came near the station on its North side. the station was not reoccupied after 1776 or during the revolutionary war.

18th. In 1775, Brice Martain made an entry at the beaverdam spring—there was no settlement made there previous to that time. there must be some mistake about his making a settle-
ment there in 1769, for in that year he accompanied his brother Joseph out to the valley in his attempted settlement and they
only remained there one day. the bever dam springs are six miles below Martain's station and on Indian Creek. Brice Martain died on his plantation on Smith river in henry county near where I now reside, he died, I think, in the year 1817 or 1818, he was tall, muscular and active, dark hair. he had only two children and they were sons, both emigrated to the West many years ago. William the youngest son died about the time of his father. Joseph was living in Tennessee some five or six years ago.

19. Mordecai Hoard made an entry in 1775 on Indian Creek four miles below Brice Martain's entry. Hoard's entry included a large Indian field which he planted in corn, and built a small cabin, in which he occasionally slept, and made his home at Martain's station, which was 10 miles from where he made his entry. Mordecai Hoard was waggon Master in Braddock's defeat in 1755. he toock no part in the revolutionary war on account of his age, although he was a great patriot. he was not called Col. his son William must be the one that you allude to. Col. Wm. Hoard emigrated to tennessee manny years ago and became a man of some distinction. Mordecai Hoard died in smith's river in the county of henry, Va., where he had lived many years. Hoard was vary fleshy, weighed 200 pounds or more, fine personal appearance, strong natural mind; he raised six children four sons and two daughters, all of whom have been dead for many years. Col. Wm. Hoard, son of Mordecai Hoard, has a son Eldridge Hoard now living in tennessee near the holston & six or eight miles from King's fort: Mordecai Hoard died in 1786.

20th I know nothing of the attack made by the Indians on Boon at Twitty's fort nor who Twitty was.

21. I know nothing of Darce's camp being attacked by the Indians in 1775.

22. I do not reckollect wheather or not Boon had anny female in his party he carried out to Kentucky in the Spring of 1775. I am certain that Henderson had no female with him that Spring for he staid at Martain's station several days when he was on his way to Kentucky.

23rd. I suppose that I was mistaken when I said that Boon went to North Carolina in the fall of 1775 or spring of 1776. I must have been led in into the error by knowing that Boon was
originally from North Carolina and I did not know at that time that he had removed his family to Clinch. I reckollect very well that Boon staid at Martain station a day or two in the fall of 1775 or spring of ’76, while on his way into the settlement and I suppose that you are correct in saying that he went to the yeadkin, I cannot say with sertainty what year it was that I saw Boon in richmond, but from several circumstances I think it was in 1780. as you say in your letter the legislature did not enact the law for the removal of the seat of government from williamsburg to Richmond until 1779, when I saw Boon in the legislature the Capitol was not compleated and the legislature occupied a large building near shocko Weare House. if I am not mistaken this house was only occupied by the legislature one yeare and if so it must have been in the year 1780, besides this I reckollect that I saw Boon in Richmond shortly after I returned on a trip from kentucky. this trip from several circumstances must have been made in 1780. I cannot give you the precise date of my seeing Boon in richmond, but I think it must have been in the latter part of August or first September, 1780. I do not know any thing of Boon’s being robed of money while on his way in from kentucky. I do not know of any busyness transactions that Boon had while he was in richmond or how he succeeded as a member, he was dressed in real backwoods stile, I do not reckon who his colleague was. 24th. Gen. Clark is evidently mistaken in a portion of his manuscript in regard to his tripe from kentucky to Va. in 1776. Clark must have taken the name of Mumpses fort, for Martain’s fort was 18 miles from cumberland gap and there was no forte between his and the gap. Gen. Clark passed Martain’s fort some four or five days after wee had thined out our corn, he next passed Priest’s fort where we had also thined out the corne and following our trace he over took us at Mump’s fort where wee were thining out the last corn and remained there one day and then I left with Clark & Jones. Will observe that Martains, Priests & Mumps forts were all abandoned and at Blackymore’s fort we raised a company composed of men who had formerly occupied Martains, Priests, and Mumps forts, and returned and thinned out the corn commencing at Martains, and at Mumps my first acquaintaince with Gen. Clarke commenced. I suppose wee
were some 10 days engaged in thining out our corn. Parks was killed some two weeks before Col. Clark arrived at Mumps fort. Clarke was dressed in ordinary back woods stile, with buckskin leggins. I have no reckollection of his servises on Dunmore campaign or in Kentucky or elsewhere. Jones, Clarke’s companion was apparently about 30 years of age, rather small statue, weighed about 150 pounds, a lawyer by profeshion, very fluent in conversation & fine general information. Clark was some six feet high, very straight (I think), blue eyes, hair inclined to be red. He and Jones had onely one horse each when I saw them at Mumps fort.

25th. I dont no the precise number of men that Calloway had with him when he emigrated to Kentucky, but as wel as my reckollecktion serves me there were about thirty. I cannot say with certainty wheather this trip of Calloway was made in the latter part of the fall or winter of 1775 or spring of ’76. I have no reckollecktion of any of Calloway’s familys being in company with him except his daughter Betsy.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

NOTES.

1 Stephen Holston, prior to 1748, had discovered the river named after him. At a later period he, with a few companions, made a canoe voyage down to Tennessee, Ohio and Mississippi, as far as Natches. For a notice of him see Wither’s Border Warfare, new edition, p. 59.

2 Fort Chiswell, built by Colonel William Byrd, between the present Wytheville and New river, was named for Colonel John Chiswell. The latter gentleman was the chief owner of the lead mines near by, which furnished such large supplies to Virginia during the Revolution, and to the Confederacy.

2 Ambrose Powell, of Culpeper county, was a surveyor. In 1752, “Ambrose Powell, Gent.,” was a vestryman of Bromfield Parish, Culpeper. He accompanied Dr. Thomas Walker in his Western expedition. It appears from the will of William Bledsoe, of Culpeper, that Ambrose Powell married his daughter Mary. Ambrose Powell was the great grandfather of General
A. P. Hill, C. S. A., and also has descendants in Jackson, Boyle and Mercer counties, Kentucky. See Journal of Dr. Thomas Walker, Filson Club, pub., p. 33.

"Colby Chew, son of Colonel Thomas and Martha (Taylor) Chew, of Orange county, is stated by Mr. Draper (Border Warfare), to have served in the "Sandy Creek Voyage," against the Shawnees, in the spring of 1756. He was commissioned ensign in Washington's regiment, October 1, 1757. It appears from a petition to the General Assembly of Virginia, in response to which a grant of land was made, that in 1758, during Grant's expedition, Colby Chew was wounded near Fort Duquesne, and falling into the river was drowned, and that his brother and heir Larken Chew, who was afterwards a lieutenant in the 2nd Virginia regiment, had his arm shattered by a ball, in an action in May, 1754. They were sons of Colonel Thomas Chew (who was sheriff of Spotsylvania in 1724, and of Orange in 1745) and his wife Martha Taylor, who, as a family record states correctly, was the "sister of President Madison's grandmother, and great grand aunt of President Taylor."

*Powell's Valley is in the southern part of Wise county.

*Abraham and Isaac Bledsoe, were hunters and explorers in South West Virginia, Tennessee, &c., 1769-70 (Collin's Kentucky). The earliest of this name whom we can find, was George Bledsoe, whose will was dated July 23, 1704-5, and proved in Northumberland county, August 15, 1705, names his daughter Elizabeth, and sons John, William, Abraham and Thomas. These sons appear to have removed to what was Spotsylvania county (including Orange, &c.) There is recorded in Spotsylvania, a suit in 1722, John Richardson vs. Abraham Bledsoe. In the same county, August, 1727, Elizabeth, wife of William Bledsoe and formerly widow of Charles Stevens, executed a bond. William Bledsoe was sheriff of Spotsylvania in 1723. There are also in Spotsylvania, in 1759-60, deed from William Bledsoe of that county, to his sons "Moses and Joseph." It is probable that the father was the William Bledsoe whose will, dated December 27, 1769, was proved in Culpeper, April 19, 1770. He names his wife Elizabeth, sons George and Aaron; daughter Mary and Ambrose Powell, her husband, son William,
daughter Hannah Cave [she was the wife of Benjamin Cave, burgess for Orange, 1756, &c., and ancestor of Vice President R. M. Johnson], the children of his deceased son Moses; daughter Mills Wetherell (wife of George W.) and Munford. Joseph who was not named in the will, was probably Rev. Joseph Bledsoe, father of Hon. Jesse Bledsoe, United States Senator from Kentucky.

Hancock and Richard Taylor, sons of Zachary Taylor, of Orange county, were among the first Americans to descend the Ohio and Mississippi. They made this trip from Pittsburgh to New Orleans in 1769. The first named was mortally wounded by an Indian in 1774. The latter served in the Revolution as lieutenant-colonel, 9th Virginia regiment; removed to Kentucky in 1785, and was the father of President Zachary Taylor.

This was probably General Joseph Martin.

Mordecai Hord, a native of Caroline county, and son of John Hord, the emigrant of the family to Virginia, removed to southwest Virginia. He married Miss Carr. The son, Colonel William Hord, was member of the Tennessee legislature from Hawkins county.

The Will of Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd, of Westover, 1813, with a List of the Westover Portraits.

[Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd, whose will is here printed, was born in 1740, and died in 1814. She was the daughter of Charles and Anne (Shippen) Willing, of Philadelphia. She married January 29, 1761, Colonel William Byrd, of "Westover," Charles City county, Virginia, being his second wife. His first was Elizabeth Hill daughter of John Carter, of "Shirley." During the Revolution, the British forces were several times at Westover, and as Mrs. Byrd had acquaintances in the English army, and was nearly related to Benedict Arnold's wife, various communications passed between her and the enemy, which were at the time thought to be treasonable. Whether Mrs. Byrd exceeded the bounds of friendly intercourse, and if so, to what