

SKETCHES

OF

VIRGINIA,

HISTORICAL

AND

BIOGRAPHICAL.

2212
BY THE

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after which he appeared to resume the exercise of silent prayer in which he was previously engaged. To the last moment of his life, the placid expression of his countenance, and the few words he was able occasionally to utter evinced that his joy was uninterrupted and increasing. One of the last sentences he was heard to speak was — “I want to live just so long, as my living will be for the glory of God, but no longer.” On waking from a gentle slumber, on the afternoon of his dying day, his breath grew shorter, his countenance was lighted up with a more joyful expression. In a few moments he calmly folded his arms, closed his eyes and resigned his spirit into the hands of his beloved Lord. Thus went to his rest James Mitchel, on Saturday, Feb. 27th, 1841, aged ninety-four years and one month.

His last sermon was preached at the house of his sister-in-law, Mrs. Margaret Mitchel, on the last Sabbath of December, 1840, from the same text taken by his venerable colleague for his last sermon nearly thirteen years before, Luke's Gospel 2d: 13, 14, And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Three of his sons-in-law, and one grand-son are Presbyterian ministers.

Rev. Samuel Houston.

Mr. Houston was born on Hay's Creek, in the congregation of New Providence. In his letter to Mr. Morrison, he gives a few pleasant facts respecting his ancestry. His parents' names were John Houston and Sally Todd. His father was for many years an elder in New Providence. In his old age he removed to Tennessee, and died at about fourscore years. While an infant, Mr. Samuel Houston was exceedingly feeble; on more than one occasion he was laid down supposed to be dying. As he increased in years he became vigorous; and through a long life enjoyed almost uninterrupted health. In his manhood he was tall, erect, square shouldered, spare and active; particular in his dress, and dignified in his deportment. After he became a minister, he seemed never to forget that he was a minister of the Lord Jesus, and that all parts of his office were honorable. All duties devolving on him by custom, or by the voice of his brethren, he cheerfully performed to the utmost of his ability. From his deference to those of greater acquirements, or more ample endowments of mind, or more maturity of age, and his unobtrusiveness upon the public, strangers might have concluded that he was a timid man. And when called to act, and his line of duty led him to face opposition, in whatever form it might come, his imperturbability might, by a casual observer, have been considered want of feeling. But his kindness and benevolence in the relations of life demonstrated the depth of feeling in his heart; and his acquaintances knew him to be pure in his principles, warm in his affections, and unflinching in his bravery. A man was sure

of a firm friend, if he could convince Samuel Houston it was his duty to stand by him. His whole appearance and bearing were those of an honest man.

His classical education was completed during the troubles and confusions of the American Revolution, and about the time of the removal of Liberty Hall Academy to the neighborhood of Lexington. In 1781 a call came for militia to assist Greene against Cornwallis. The memorable battle of the Cowpens had been fought, and Morgan, under protection of Greene's retreating army, had escaped with the prisoners to Virginia. Cornwallis had encamped at Hillsborough, and Greene was waiting near the Virginia line for reinforcements to drive his pursuer, Cornwallis, back to South Carolina, or overcome him in battle. Samuel Houston was called to go as a private from the congregation of New Providence, in his 23d year. Arrested in his studies preparatory to the ministry, he went cheerfully, with others, to try the labors and exposures of the camp. After his death there was found among his papers a manuscript of foolscap, folded down to sixteen leaves a sheet, on which were memoranda of his campaign, covering about the one half of a sheet of the large size, then in use. He notices all that appeared to him worthy of special mention, and as remembrancers of all that occurred. No better description of a militia force in its weakness and efficiency has been left us from the experience of the Revolution. The beginning is abrupt; no mention being made of the draft, or the officers in command, or the object of the expedition. *

February 26th, '81.

Monday, Feb. 26th. — We marched from Lexington to Grigsby's, and encamped.

Tuesday, 27th. — Marched fifteen miles, and encamped at Purgatory. I saw the cave.

Wednesday, 28th. — Marched from Purgatory to Lunies' Creek, twelve miles.

Thursday, March 1st. — Marched from Lunies' Creek to a mile beyond Howard's; total seventeen miles. Drew liquor in the morning. I paid fifteen dollars for beer to Mrs. Brackinridge.

Friday, 2d. — Marched from near Howard's past Rag Hall, governed by President Slovenly; three or four of our men got drunk in the evening. Our march continued fifteen miles; encamped at Little Otter, Bedford.

Saturday, 3d. — Marched from Little Otter to within two miles of New London; nineteen miles.

Sabbath, 4th. — Marched two miles beyond New London to Mr. Ward's; in which march we pressed a hog, which was served without scraping. On this day I kept guard No. 16. The day's march was twenty miles.

Monday, 5th. — Marched from Major Ward's; crossed Staunton river into Pittsylvania. I was on the fatigue to drive steers, but

happily they had broken out of the pasture. Our march was eight miles, and encamped.

Tuesday, 5th. — Marched from Ward's about fourteen miles. We were searched, and Mr. Ward's goods found with James Berry and John Harris, who were whipped. The same were condemned to ten lashes for disobeying the officer of the day on Monday.

Wednesday, 7th. — Marched from near Shelton's to Col. Williams' mill, about twelve miles; crossed Bannister, into which James McElroy fell; John Harris deserted, and James Berry was taken and sent to prison.

Thursday, 8th. — Marched from Col. Williams' to near three miles from Dan river. Some of the boys set the woods on fire, which the Major put out. Our day's journey nineteen miles.

Friday, 9th. — Marched from beyond Dan to the borders of N. C., six miles; we crossed Dan, where Gilmore's wagon had nearly sunk by the chain of the flat breaking. At this river some mean cowards threatened to return. This morning, Lyle, Hays and Lusk went to Gen. Green and returned. The same day deserted at Dan, Geo. Culwell.

Saturday, 10th. — Marched from near three miles of Dan to head quarters, which we entered at twelve o'clock at night. In the evening we encamped six miles from H. Q. Soon after we decamped. Thirty miles.

Sabbath, 11th. — Lay in camp. In the evening we were ordered to prepare for a march; after we were ordered to stay; after our orders for the future were read out, we cooked two days' provisions.

Monday, 12th. — Marched first S. W. to the end of camp, then turned directly back, and stood some hours; at last we left camp at the High Rock, and marched near six miles. Again we turn back about a mile, and encamp near Haw river.

Tuesday, 13th. — We paraded several times, and at last fired in platoons and battalions; in doing which one of the North Carolina militia was shot through the head; a bullet glancing from a tree, struck Geo. Moore on the head — of our battalion. In the evening we marched from Haw river about three miles, and encamped.

Wednesday, 14th. — Decamped at Reedy Creek, and marched to Guilford Court House, ten miles.

Thursday, 15th. — Was rainy in the morning. We often paraded, and about ten o'clock, lying about our fires, we heard our light infantry and cavalry, who were down near the English lines, begin firing with the enemy. Then we immediately fell into our ranks, and our brigades marched out, at which time the firing was ceased. Col. McDowell's battalion of Gen. Stephens' brigade was ordered on the left wing. When we marched near the ground we charged our guns. Presently our brigade major came, ordering to take trees as we pleased. The men run to choose their trees, but with difficulty, many crowding to one, and some far behind others. But we moved by order of our officers, and stood in suspense. Presently

the Augusta men, and some of Col. Campbell's fell in at right angles to us. Our whole line was composed of Stephens' brigade on the left, Lawson's in the centre, and Butler's, of N. C., on the right. Some distance behind were formed the regulars. Col. Washington's light horse were to flank on the right, and Lee on the left. Standing in readiness, we heard the pickets fire; shortly the English fired a cannon, which was answered; and so on alternately, till the small armed troops came nigh; and then close firing began near the centre, but rather towards the right, and soon spread along the line. Our brigade major, Mr. Williams, fled. Presently came two men to us and informed us the British fled. Soon the enemy appeared to us; we fired on their flank, and that brought down many of them; at which time Capt. Tedford was killed. We pursued them about forty poles, to the top of a hill, where they stood, and we retreated from them back to where we formed. Here we repulsed them again; and they a second time made us retreat back to our first ground, where we were deceived by a reinforcement of Hessians, whom we took for our own, and cried to them to see if they were our friends, and shouted Liberty! Liberty! and advanced up till they let off some guns; then we fired sharply on them, and made them retreat a little. But presently the light horse came on us, and not being defended by our own light horse, nor reinforced, — though firing was long ceased in all other parts, we were obliged to run, and many were sore chased, and some cut down. We lost our major and one captain then, the battle lasting two hours and twenty-five minutes. We all scattered, and some of our party and Campbell's and Moffitt's collected together, and with Capt. Moffitt and Major Pope, we marched for headquarters, and marched across till we, about dark, came to the road we marched up from Reedy Creek to Guilford the day before, and crossing the creek we marched near four miles, and our wounded, Lusk, Allison, and in particular Jas. Mather, who was bad cut, were so sick we stopped, and all being almost wearied out, we marched half a mile, and encamped, where, through darkness and rain, and want of provisions we were in distress. Some parched a little corn. We stretched blankets to shelter some of us from the rain. Our retreat was fourteen miles.

Friday, 16th. — As soon as day appeared, (being wet) we de-camped, and marched through the rain till we arrived at Speedwell furnace, where Green had retreated from Guilfordtown, where the battle was fought, sixteen miles distant; there we met many of our company with great joy, in particular Colonel M'Dowell; where we heard that we lost four pieces of cannon after having retaken them, also the 71st regiment we had captured. After visiting the tents, we eat and hung about in the tents and rain, when frequently we were rejoiced by men coming in we had given out for lost. In the evening we struck tents and encamped on the left, when the orders were read to draw provisions and ammunition, to be in readiness, which order struck a panic on the minds of many. Our march five miles.

Saturday, 17th. — On account of the want of some of our blankets, and some other clothing, many proposed returning home, which was talked of in general in M'Dowell's battalion, till at last they agreed, and many went off; a few were remaining when General Lawson came and raged very much; and about ten o'clock all but M'Dowell came off. We marched twelve miles to the old Surry towns on Dan where we encamped.

Sabbath, 18th. — Crossed Dan, in our march touched on Smith's River on our left, at which place we received a little bacon and a bushel of meal. A little afterward, many went to a tavern where some got drunk and quarrelled. We marched through the lower end of Henry County, and encamped on the borders of Pittsylvania, which evening I opened the clothes in possession of Jo Weir. That same night Robert Wardlaw burned the butt of his gun. Our march was fifteen miles.

Monday, 19th. — Marched into Pittsylvania, and encamped with a Dutchman, where we got some meat. Our mess bought ten quarts of flour and some hoe-cake. The day's journey twenty-two miles. Our sick were lodged in the house, and Dr. Brown took care of them.

Tuesday, 20th. — In the morning Dr. Brown and Captain Alexander disputed about the wagons. Near the middle of the day we left the wagons, and took off the great road under the direction of a pilot, whom some fearing he was leading us into a snare, they charged their guns. We crossed Stanton River, and dined, fifteen of us, at Captain Chiles, from which we marched two miles and encamped. In all fifteen miles.

Wednesday, 21st. — We paid Murphy one dollar a man, for horses to carry us over Goose Creek. Had breakfast with Mr. Butler, and three pints of brandy. In the evening I was sick; came to Mr. Rountrees, where we lodged. I got a little milk and peach-dumpling, the rest a dinner of meat and so on. I lay in a bed with Jas. Blair, and the rest on the floor. Our day's march was twenty-one miles.

Thursday, 22d. — My brother and I hired Mr. Rountrees' horses, and his son came with us to Mr. Lambert's, where, after he received forty-three dollars, he returned. We eat with Mr. Lambert, and paid him ten dollars each. I bought five books from him, and paid him four hundred and twelve dollars and a half. We crossed the mountain, and in the valley saw the wonderful mill without wheels, doors, or floors. In that same valley Jos. Boagle met us with brother's horses, and he with one of them went back for Robert McCormic. We proceeded to Greenlee's, got dinner, and when they came up crossed the river and came to Boagle's, where we lodged. Our day's march was thirty-two miles.

Friday, 23d. — Left Boagle's and came to brother William's. Here I conclude my journal of the expedition under Colonel M'Dowell against Cornwallis, the British General in North Carolina. Rock-bridge County, Virginia, in the year 1781, March 23d.

SAMUEL HOUSTON.

Occasionally in speaking of this battle among his friends he related two circumstances respecting himself; one was that on the morning of the battle, he got an opportunity for private prayer in an old tree top, and with unusual freedom committed himself to the wise and protecting providence of God; the other was that in that battle of two hours and twenty minutes, he discharged his rifle fourteen times, that is once in about ten minutes from the time he heard the first fire of the approaching enemy, till his company joined the retreat of Greene. Others in the battle said — that Mr. Houston was the first in his line to answer the command “fire,” and that he was quite in advance when he discharged his rifle. It is easy to find the position of the Rockbridge militia in the battle from the diagrams and statements in the life of General Greene. Greene with the regulars were at the Court House; some distance in front, crossing at right angles the great Salisbury road, on which the British forces were advancing, were stationed the Virginia militia; some distance in front, and across the same road lay the North Carolina militia. The Virginia line was in the forest; the Carolina partly in the forest and partly on the skirts of the forest, and partly behind a fence inclosing the open space across which the British force was advancing with extended front. According to orders the Carolina line, when the enemy were very near, gave their fire, which on the left of the British line was deadly, and having repeated it retreated; some remained to give a third fire, and some made such haste in retreat as to bring reproach upon themselves as deficient in bravery, while their neighbors behaved like heroes. The right wing of the Virginia line was soon turned by the British regulars pressing on to the position of Greene, and like the Carolina line gave vivid examples both of timidity and heroic courage; the left wing, in which Houston was, maintained its position till Greene retreated, almost constantly engaged, but not pressed so hard as they might have been by the regulars occupied with the main body of the American army.

The greatest loss of the Rockbridge and Augusta forces, was experienced after they commenced their retreat. Lee's light-horse were not ready to cover them, and their retreat became a flight, exposed to the sabres of the British light-horse. Mr. Samuel Steele, that died an old man, near Waynesborough, in that retreat shot one horseman that followed him. Two others came upon him before he reloaded, and he surrendered himself a prisoner — “Give us your gun.” “Oh, no,” said he, “I can't think of that.” “I say, give us your gun!” “Oh, no, I can't think of that.” Bursting into a laugh at his simplicity — “Well, carry it along, then,” motioning him to follow in the rear. He went along some distance, when suddenly springing into the thick top of a fallen tree he commenced loading his gun. The horsemen unable to get at him with their swords, put spurs and rode out of reach of his shot. He took advantage of their disappearance, and was soon out of danger. David Steele, of Medway, where Waddell addressed the militia before their march, was cut down in the retreat, and left for dead. The scar of

a deep wound over one of his eyes, was frightful to strangers, through his long life. Judge Stuart, of Staunton, was in the battle, a messmate of Houston, and retained a friendship for him till his death; excelling in talents, he could not, in the opinion of the soldiers, surpass him in the cool facing of danger. Captain James Tate, of Bethel, was killed in the early part of the battle. Captain Andrew Wallace, from near Lexington, was in the regular service, and had always shown himself a brave man. That morning he expressed a mournful presage that he would fall that day. In the course of the action, he sheltered himself behind a tree with some indications of alarm. Being reproached, he immediately left the shelter, and in a moment received his death wound. A brother of his, Captain Adam Wallace, was with Buford at the terrible massacre on the Waxhaw; after killing many of the enemy with his espartoon, he died bravely fighting. A third brother, Captain Hugh Wallace, in the regular army, died in Philadelphia, of small-pox. Major Alexander Stuart, of whom Mr. Houston says — “We lost our Major,” — was mounted on a beautiful mare. A shot was fatal to her, on the hasty retreat. As she fell, the Major was seized, and surrendered. His captors plundered him, and left him standing in his cocked-hat, shirt, and shoes. He was unwounded. Cornwallis took him and other prisoners with him in his retreat to Wilmington. For a time Greene greatly harassed Cornwallis in his daily marches. Mr. Stuart said, the prisoners suffered severely, particularly from thirst. So great was the haste of flight, and the unkindness of the guard, that the prisoners were not suffered to intermit their speed even to drink in crossing the runs; those that attempted to drink were warned by the bayonet point to go on. He dipped water with his cocked-hat; and others with their shoes. Archibald Stuart was commissary, but at Guilford he took his musket and entered the ranks as a common soldier. Major Stuart said, that Greene afterwards told him, that there was a turn in the battle in which, if he could have reckoned upon the firm stand of the left wing of Virginia militia, he could have annihilated the army of Cornwallis. He knew they were good for a short fight, but was not prepared to see them stand it out as regulars. The defect of the militia system, was apparent. The second day after the battle — when they must either march further from home in pursuit of Cornwallis — “to offer the British force more cannon and another regiment of recaptured prisoners, on the same terms as on the 15th” — or return home; they all, the very men who called those that flinched at the Dan, “cowards;” all, in face of their Colonel, and the displeasure, “the fury” of the General of Brigade, all marched off home. Some, both of the Carolina and the Virginia militia, fled from the battle-ground on the 15th, and never rested till they reached their homes. Some of the Virginia men that fled thus, in the fear lest they should be called to account for their flight retreated into the western ridges of the Allegheny — and even to old age dreaded the approach of a stranger, as perhaps an officer for

their arrest for desertion. The American Generals soon learned to object to short terms of service, and at the same time had full confidence in the courage of their countrymen.

At a meeting of Hanover Presbytery at the Stone meeting house Augusta County, November 1781, Messrs. Samuel Houston, Andrew M'Clure, Samuel Carrick and Adam Rankin, were on examination received as candidates for the ministry. In May 1782, at Timber Ridge, on the 22nd, Mr. Houston read a lecture on Colossians 3d, from the 1st to the 8th verse; and also a presbyterial discourse on 1 Tim. 1. 5, which were sustained as parts of trial. Messrs. Rankin, Carrick and M'Clure, exhibited parts of their trials for licensure. At this Presbytery Mr. John M'Cue was licensed, and on parts of his examination Messrs. Houston and Rankin were associated. October 22d, 1782 at New Providence, the Presbytery was opened with a sermon by Adam Rankin, from 2 Cor. 5. 14, and Samuel Houston John 17. 3; both candidates for licensure. These were sustained. Messrs. Andrew M'Clure and Samuel Carrick, also produced their pieces of trial. And the four candidates having passed acceptably all their trials, were licensed to preach the gospel. At Hall's meeting house May 20th, 1783, Mr. Houston accepted a call from the Providence congregation in Washington County. The third Wednesday of August was fixed for the ordination; Mr. Houston to preach from Col. 3. 4; the ordination services to be performed by Messrs. Cummings, Baleb and Doak, the second to preach the ordination sermon, the third to preside, the first to give the charge. In August 1785, the Presbytery of Abingdon was formed, and Mr. Houston made a constituent part. In May 1786, he took his seat in the Synod as the first in attendance from the Presbytery. In the events of a few succeeding years Mr. Houston in common with his fellow citizens, took an active part. He advocated the formation of a new State to be called Franklin. After some years of commotion, the State of Tennessee was formed and made one of the Union. Unfortunately the Presbyterian ministers were divided in their opinions in the course of the procedure, and suffered, many of them, much uneasiness on a subject the particulars of which it is not necessary to record, except in a history of Tennessee in its settlement and progress. For various reasons Mr. Houston determined to return to Virginia, and on the 24th of October, 1789, he was admitted a member of Lexington Presbytery.

In September 1791, at Augusta Church on the 20th, when A. Alexander opened Presbytery with his trial sermon, he accepted a call from Falling Spring for two-thirds of his time. At this place and High Bridge he performed the duties of a minister of the gospel, faithfully and diligently, till the infirmities of age made it necessary for him to throw the labor on younger men. For many years he taught a classical school with success, mingling firmness and kindness in his discipline. He took great delight in meeting his brethren in the judicatories of the Church. His last attendance on the Virginia Synod was at Lexington, October 1837. Bent with

age, almost blind, his long gray locks falling upon his shoulders, he sedulously attended the sessions and listened to the debates, and finally gave his vote to sustain the action of the Assembly of '37. None that saw him could forget his appearance. Cheerful through life, he was glad when his end came. His works remain. He was one that cherished Washington College in the days of its greatest weakness and depression. When his infirmities came upon him, he resigned his pastoral charges, and employed himself in going out into the highways and hedges.

About two miles from the Natural Bridge, and sixteen from Lexington on the road to Fincastle, is a brick church on a hill, surrounded by a grave-yard. At the western end of the church, is a marble slab inscribed

SACRED
to the memory
of the
REV. SAMUEL HOUSTON,
who in early life was a soldier of the
Revolution,
and for 55 years a faithful minister of the
LORD JESUS CHRIST.
He died on the 20th day of January 1839,
aged 81 years,
in the mature and blessed hope of a
glorious resurrection
and of immortal life, in the kingdom of
his Father and his God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CAPTIVITY AND ESCAPE OF MRS. INGLIS IN 1756.

CAPTIVITY by the Shawanees, or their confederates in Ohio, was not a singular event in the progress of civilization in the Valley and mountains of West Virginia. Commencing in murder, plunder, and the burning of habitations, it was a continued series of exposures, privations and dangers, ending in adoption, ransom, or escape. Sometimes the captive remained cheerfully, to share the joys and sorrows of the barbarians. In all these particulars there is a sameness in the histories of Indian captivities, while each narrative is diversified with some personal display of courage, activity and endurance of suffering. The circumstances of some are so full of thrilling interest and exciting events that the narrative may be a