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The Life and Times

OF

Judge Caleb Wallace

SOME TIME A JUSTICE OF THE

Court of Appeals of Kentucky



By

William H. Whitsitt

LIFE AND TIMES

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JUDGE CALEB WALLACE

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A JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS OF THE
STATE OF KENTUCKY.

BY WILLIAM H. WHITSITT.

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It is hardly likely that James Caldwell quitted Virginia on this occasion without paying his respects to his kindred at Cub Creek. Wallace is believed to have encountered him on this journey and to have felt his enthusiasm excited by the wonderful discourses of the young man. In 1761 Mr. Caldwell was installed as pastor of the famous church in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, over which Jonathan Dickinson had once presided (Alexander, p. 57), but the impression he had produced in Virginia was so decided that in 1762 an effort seems to have been made to induce him to remove to that colony and become a member of Hanover Presbytery. (Foote, 1, 353.)

Another circumstance that excited the interest of young Wallace was the calling of his former pastor and earliest friend, the Rev. Samuel Davies, from Virginia, to be the President of the College of New Jersey; he preached his parting sermon to his affectionate friends in Virginia on the first of July, 1759. (Foote, 1, 298.) It was natural for Caleb to communicate his aspirations both to Davies and to Caldwell, but there were several years of delay before his wishes could be fulfilled. It can not now be known what kind of appeals were made to Samuel Wallace; possibly Caleb Baker, the grandfather, came forward with a pecuniary contribution, and aided thereby to earn the large share of admiration which his grandson ever accorded to his memory.

Owing to the fact that his circumstances and remote situation had not permitted him to prepare for college it was arranged that this labor should be performed at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, where was established a Grammar School that was adapted for the purpose. The guiding hand of the Rev. James Caldwell, it is believed, may be perceived in that arrangement.

On the eve of Caleb's departure from Charlotte, recourse was had to the Rev. Robert Henry, who, for a period of fifteen years, had been the pastor of Cub Creek church; according to the custom of the times Mr. Henry supplied the youthful Wallace with a letter of recommendation to carry with him on his journey. Following is a copy of that document:

"These are to certifie all Christian People to whom these Presents shall come, that I have been acquainted with Caleb Wallace, the bearer hereof since he was a Boy, and he hath always Sustained a moral Character, & is going from home Free from any publick Scandal or liable to any Church Censure known to me, and hath been a Partaker of Sealing Ordinances, and may therefore be received as a Member into any Christian Congregation or Society where Providence shall Order his Lot.

"Dated at Cub Creek in Charlotte County, Virginia, April 6th, 1767.

"ROBERT HENRY."

The above is possibly the last piece of writing of any sort that Mr. Henry ever composed; he died on the 8th of May, 1767, just one and thirty days after it was dated and delivered. (Foote, 2, 52.) It was preserved with religious care by Mr. Wallace as long as he lived, and is now in possession of the Hon. Henry C. Wallace, of Lexington, Missouri. The chirography is of interest, because it is believed to be in keeping with the character that is assigned to Mr. Henry by the historians who have recorded his deeds and virtues.

Arrived in Elizabethtown it is likely that Wallace found a home in the house of his friend, the Rev. James Caldwell, to whom he would be the bearer of kindly greetings