

Arthur Campbell, Letter to the Governor About Militia Attacks Against Indians, 1781 (page 1 of 6)

Washington County Jan: 15: 1781

Sir

The Militia of this, and the two Western N Carolina Counties, have been fortunate enough to frustrate the design of the Cherokee. — On my reaching the frontier, I found the Indians meant to annoy us by small parties and carry off Horser. To resist them effectually, the apparently best measure was to transfer the War without delay to their own borders. To raise a force sufficient, and provide them with provisions and other necessaries, seemed to be a work of time, that would be accompanied with uncommon difficulties, especially in the Winter season; our situation was critical, and — nothing but an extraordinary effort could save us, and disappoint the views of the enemy. All the miseries of 1776, came fresh in remembrance, and to avoid a like scene, — men flew to their arms, and went to the field. The Watauga men under Lieut Col Sevier first marched, to the amount of about 300, the Militia of this, with that of Sullivan County, made 400 more. The place of rendezvous was to be on this side the French-River. Col: Sevier with his men got on the path before the others, and by means of some discoveries made by his Scouts, he was induced to cross the River in pursuit of a party of Indians, that had been coming towards our settlements. — On the 16th of December, he fell in with the party, since found to consist of 70 Indians, mostly from the Town of Chote, out of which was killed 19, and took all their baggage &c. in which were some of Clintons Proclamations and other documents expressive of their hostile designs against us. — After this action, the Watauga Corps, that proper to retire into an Island of the River. The 22^d I crossed the French River and found the Watauga Men in great want of provisions, we gave them a supply from our small stock, and the next day made a forced march towards the Tennessee. The success of the enterprise, seemed to rest on our safely reaching the further bank of that River.

* called also French Broad, or the Equum property of main branch of the Cherokee River

Citation: Arthur Campbell, Washington County, to Gov. Thomas Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1781, Executive Papers of Governor Thomas Jefferson, 1779–1781, Record Group 3, Accession 44393, State Records Collection, Library of Virginia.

Arthur Campbell, Letter to the Governor About Militia Attacks Against Indians, 1781 (page 2 of 6)

as we had information that the Indians had obstructed the common fording places, and had a force ready there to oppose our crossing. The morning of the 24th I made a feint towards the Island Town and with the main Body passed ^{the} River without resistance at Timothee. — We were now discovered, such of the Indians we saw, seemed to be flying in consternation. Here I divided my force, sending a part to attack the Town below, and with the other, I proceeded towards their principal Town Chote. Just as I passed a defile above Tague, I observed the Indians in force stretching along the Hills below Chote with an apparent design to attack our Van then within their view; but the main body too soon, came in sight for me to succeed in decoying them off the Hills, so they quietly let us pass on in order, without firing a gun, except a few scattering shot at our Rear, at a great distance from the Gleebe. We soon were in possession of their beloved Town, in which we found a welcome supply of provisions. — The 25th Major Martin went with a Detachment, to discover the rout the enemy were flying off by; he surprised a party of Indians, took one Scalp, and seventeen Horses loaded with Cloath ing, Skins, and House furniture, he discovered that most of the fugitives, were making towards Tellico, and the Hiwassee. The same day Cap^t Crabtree of the Virginia Reg^t was detached with 60 Men to burn the Town of Chilhowee, he succeeded in setting fire to that part of the Town it situated on the South side the river, altho in the time, he was attacked by a superior force. He made his retreat good. — The 26th Major Tipton of the Carolina Corps, were detached with 750 mounted Infantry, with orders to cross the River, dislodge the enemy on that side, and destroy the Town of Telafsee; at the same time, Major Gilbert Christian with 150 foot, were to patrol the Hills on the South side

** or crossing between Town & lower part of it.*

Citation: Arthur Campbell, Washington County, to Gov. Thomas Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1781, Executive Papers of Governor Thomas Jefferson, 1779–1781, Record Group 3, Accession 44393, State Records Collection, Library of Virginia.

Arthur Campbell, Letter to the Governor About Militia Attacks Against Indians, 1781 (page 3 of 6)

Chilhowee, and burn the remaining part of that to
This party did their duty well, killed three Indians,
and took nine prisoners. The Officer of the Horse, in
an unmilitary behaviour, failed in crossing the
River. This trip took two days, in the time the famous
Indian Woman Nancy Ward came to Camp, she gave
us various intelligence, and made an overture, in
behalf of some of the Chiefs for Peace, to which I then
evaded giving an explicit answer, as I wished first,
to visit the vindictive part of the nation, mostly
settled at Hiwassee and Chistowee, and to distress the
whole, as much as possible, by destroying their
habitations and provisions. The 28th we set fire
to Chole, Leitigo, and Little-Tuskego, and moved our
whole force to a Town on Tellico River called Hai-a-tue,
where I intended a Post, for to secure a Retreat, and to
lay up provisions in. This evening Major Martin
on returning from a patrol, attacked a party of
Indians, killed two, and drove several into the River.
The same evening in another skirmish, we lost Capt.
James Elliott, a gallant young Officer, being the first,
and only man the enemy had power to hurt, on
the Expedition, the Indians lost three men on the
occasion. The 29th I set out for Hiwassee, distant about
forty miles, leaving at Hai-a-tue, under Major Christian
a Garrison of 150 Men. — The 30th we arrived at the
Hiwassee, and found the Town of the same name
abandoned, in patrolling the environs, we took a sensible
young warrior, who informed us, that a Body of Indians
with McDonald the British Agent, and some Tories,
were at Chistowee, twelve miles distant, waiting to
receive us. — I had reason to believe the enemy had
viewed us from the Hills above Hiwassee, for which
reason, I ordered our Camp to be laid off, fire kindled,
and other shews made as if we intended to stay all
night. At dark we set out with about 300 Men (the Watauga
Men refusing to go farther) crossing the River at an un-
expected Ford, and that night got near the Town. Early

Citation: Arthur Campbell, Washington County, to Gov. Thomas Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1781, Executive Papers of Governor Thomas Jefferson, 1779–1781, Record Group 3, Accession 44393, State Records Collection, Library of Virginia.

Arthur Campbell, Letter to the Governor About Militia Attacks Against Indians, 1781 (page 4 of 6)

in the morning of the 31st we found that the enemy had fled
haste the evening before, leaving behind them, as they
had done at the other Towns, almost all their Corn and
their provisions, together with many of their utensils for
agriculture, and all their heavy household furniture
with part of their Stock of Horses, Cattle, and Hogs. —
These Towns I expected would have been contended for with
obstinacy, as most of the Chickhamogga People had
removed hence, after their visitation in 1779. —
Our Troops becoming impatient, and no other object
of importance being in view, it was resolved to return
homewards. Major Martin with a detachment were
ordered by Sattaga, and the other Towns on Telica-Tin
in his rout, he took four prisoners, from whom he
learnt, that several of the Chiefs, had met a few days
before in order to consult on means to propose a
Treaty for Peace. As I found the enemy were humbled,
and to gain time, I took the liberty to send the Chiefs
a message, a Copy of which I send herewith, as the ful-
filment thereof will require your Excellencies further
Instructions, and in which I expect N. Carolina will
assist, or that Congress will take upon themselves the
whole. I believe advantageous promises of Peace —
may easily be obtained, with a surrender of such an
extent of Country that will defray the Expences of
the War, but such terms will be best ensured, by plac-
ing a Garrison of two hundred Men, under an active
Officer, on the banks of the Tenasee.
Our whole loss on this Expedition, was one Man killed by the
Indians, and two wounded by accident. It would have been
very pleasing to the Troops, to have met the whole force of the
nation at once, on equal grounds, but so great was the panic
that seized them, after seeing us in order over the Tenasee,
that they never ventured themselves in sight of the Army,
but on rocky clefts, or other inaccessible ground to our Mount-
Infantry. By the Returns of the Officers of different detachments
we killed 29 Men, and took 17 Prisoners, mostly Women
and Children, the number of wounded is uncertain.
besides these we brought in the Family of Nancy Ward
who

Citation: Arthur Campbell, Washington County, to Gov. Thomas Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1781, Executive Papers of Governor Thomas Jefferson, 1779–1781, Record Group 3, Accession 44393, State Records Collection, Library of Virginia.

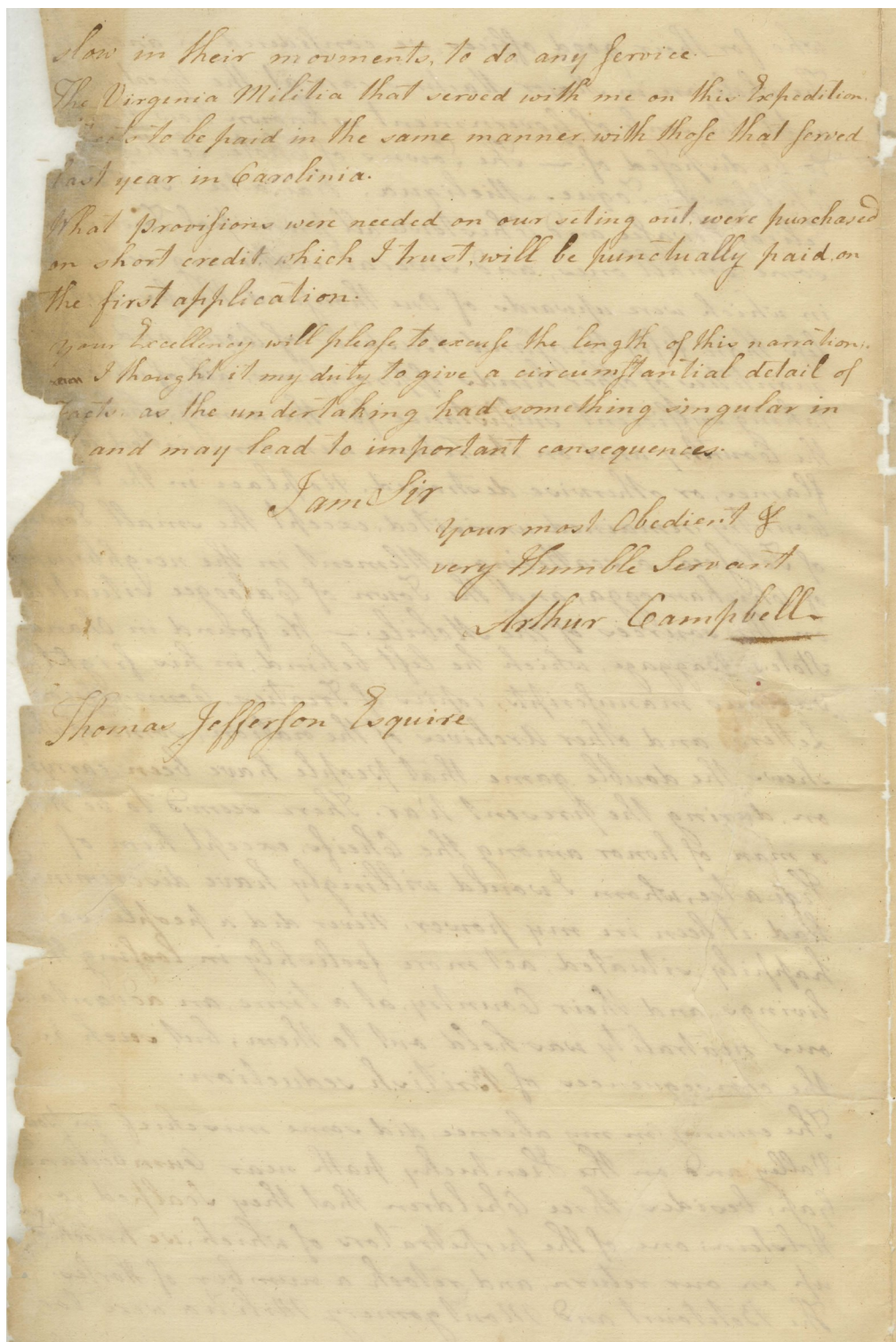
Arthur Campbell, Letter to the Governor About Militia Attacks Against Indians, 1781 (page 5 of 6)

who for their good offices, we considered in another. The whole are in Major Martins care at the Great Island until the sense of Government is known how they are to be disposed of. — The Towns of Chote, Scittigo, Chilhowee, Toque, Mieliqua, Hai-a-tee, Sathoogo, Telico, Hiwassee and Chictowee all principal Towns, be some small ones, and several scattering settlements in which were upwards of One thousand Houses, and no less than fifty thousand Bushels of Corn and large quantities of other kinds of Provisions, all of which, after taking sufficient subsistence for the army, whilst in the Country and on its return, were committed to flames, or otherwise destroyed. No place in the Over Country remained unvisited, except the small Town of Telassee, a scattering settlement, in the neighbourhood of Chichamogga, and the Town of Caloogee situated on the sources of the Mobile. — We found in Othana-Stotes, Baggage, which he left behind, in his flight, various manuscripts, copies of Treaties, Commission Letters, and other Archives of the nation, some of which shews the double game that people have been carrying on, during the present War. There seemed to be not a man of honor among the Chiefs, except him of — Hai-a-tee, whom I would willingly have discriminated had it been in my power. Never did a people so happily situated, act more foolishly in losing their livings, and their Country, at a time, an advantageous neutrality was held out to them, but such is the consequences of British seduction.

The enemy in my absence, did some mischief in New Valley and on the Kentucky path near Cumberland Gap, besides three Children that they Scalped on Holsteins; one of the perpetrators of which, we knocked up on our return, and retook a number of Horses. The Botetourt and Montgomery Militia were too slow.

Citation: Arthur Campbell, Washington County, to Gov. Thomas Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1781, Executive Papers of Governor Thomas Jefferson, 1779–1781, Record Group 3, Accession 44393, State Records Collection, Library of Virginia.

Arthur Campbell, Letter to the Governor About Militia Attacks Against Indians, 1781 (page 6 of 6)



slow in their movements, to do any service.
The Virginia Militia that served with me on this Expedition,
ought to be paid in the same manner with those that served
last year in Carolina.
What provisions were needed on our setting out, were purchased
on short credit, which I trust, will be punctually paid, on
the first application.
Your Excellency will please to excuse the length of this narration,
as I thought it my duty to give a circumstantial detail of
facts, as the undertaking had something singular in
it, and may lead to important consequences.

I am Sir
Your most Obedient &
very Humble Servant
Arthur Campbell

Thomas Jefferson Esquire

Citation: Arthur Campbell, Washington County, to Gov. Thomas Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1781, Executive Papers of Governor Thomas Jefferson, 1779-1781, Record Group 3, Accession 44393, State Records Collection, Library of Virginia.