

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

[Although not a pension application, it is felt that some of the memoirs compiled by veterans should be included in this database in order to make those resources more readily available to researchers. The following is the memoir compiled by William Hill.]

Transcribed by Will Graves

For near 30 years, I have been waiting with hopes that some person fitly qualified both in abilities and knowledge of facts, would have undertaken to rectify some great mistakes, which have been made by the historians who have wrote on the revolution in So-Ca-. Charity will oblige me to suppose that the misrepresentations that have been made was owing to correct information being wanted, and not by design; but whatever was the cause, the fact is that great misrepresentations have been made and one in particular of the action of Kings Mountain in this State, and as the result of that battle, was one grand link in the great chain of Providence & events that broke the plans of the enemy, to hold the Southern states as British provinces, it ought to be handed down to posterity, and more especially as we are now engaged in war, to support our independence — it is the design of the author to rectify the mistakes that have unhappily been made: and I do declare to the readers, that it is not from any peculiar motive or design of the author to be known as a historian (as I am conscious I am not qualified for the task) — I can relate facts (which I know of my own certain knowledge) in the naked dress of truth — and it hath so happened that there is not now alive any other person, that can write so fully of so many facts as I can — and as no other has undertaken the task, that hath the same knowledge, I have with reluctance taken it upon myself — In the reading of both military & Civil, or Legislative transactions the designing eye (and more especially these who are yet alive that had any agency in the transactions) will see that there was a Providence that overruled the actions of men, who brought forth means to carry forth the great work — It will be seen that Gen^l Sumter who had the merit of first, gen^l officer, that made any opposition to the enemy after the fall of Charleston, they having overrun the Country; and all So. Ca. had submitted to their power except the new acquisition, now York district, — that Gen^l Sumter was prevented from being with the party at Kings Mountain, and having then the chief command, that he was necessarily absent by reason of the treacherous conduct of an officer, that is the only one of So. Co. that is named by the historians, and at the same time the only officers that was instrumental to bring about that great event, is not mentioned — and altho' it is disagreeable to state facts that may hurt the character of the dead or wound the feelings of the living yet it is the duty of the Historian: — and the duty of the living, if their friends acted improperly, is for them not to follow their example — That the present generation may copy after the laudable example of their forefathers and make use of all the means which God & nature hath given them: — and to hold that independence purchased so so dearly by their fathers, and have a proper trust in that Power who governs the affairs of nations, is the Prayer and wish of the author —

(Signed) W^m. Hill

Feb^y. 1815 —

Shortly after the fall of Charleston which happened the 12th- of May 1780 the British had advanced above Camden to the Waxsaw & fixed a post at Rocky Mount, and Granby, on the Congarees, Orangeburg & &^c. At that time all the upper division of the State was commanded by Gen^l Pickens as Gen^l Williamson that had the chief command previous to that time, turned a traitor to his country. & went to the enemy then in Savannah, & made his peace with them — Previous to the fall of Charleston, at that time there being a considerable quantity of arms & ammunition deposited at a fort in Ninety Six District, the British commander Earl Cornwallis, commissioned a certain Cap^t Parris, that commanded about 80 Tories, to go ahead of his troops to take the submissions of all the Americans that was dispos^d to become British subjects. to this Parriss & his small party of Tories. did Gen^l Pickens submit & surrender the beforementioned fort. together with all the military stores. And likewise marched several hundred men with their arms. & surrendered to the said Parriss — When these events came to be known, to the citizens in the new acquisition, now Y^k. D^t the two Co^{ls}. commanding that dis^t namely Watson & Bratton, as it was then the custom to have two Co^{ls}. to a Regiment, they then appointed a meeting of the Reg^t at a place called Bullocks creek meeting house. At this meeting, they did not encourage the men, but much the reverse, by telling them that they had hitherto done their duty. But it appeared to them that any further opposition to the British would not avail & as for their parts could have nothing more to say to them

as officers but to advise each of them to do the best they could for themselves — Upon this the meeting broke up, but it was generally rumored about, that a commissioner was sent to Lord Rawdon then in the Waxaw, so it was that a man of a respectable character that had represented the District in the Gen^l Assembly (did go) but whether employed by the officers or not, the author cannot say — The anxiety of the citizens to know the result of this mission was great & they met at the Iron works, at which place the person from Lord Rawdon met them & exhibited his commission from under the great seal of Lord Rawdon that he was empowered to take their submissions & give paroles & protections to all that choose to become British Subjects — he, the said commis^r took his stand & proceeded to read a proclamation of his Lordships that begun by asserting that Congress has given up the two Southern states. & would not contend further for them that as Gen^l Washington's army was reduced to a small number of men. & that he, with that small army had fled to the mountains — Y^r author then stopped the commis^r from reading more of the proclamation and took the stand himself, & addressed the citizens in the following language

that he was happy to have it in his power to inform them that both the facts stated in the s^d proclamation was false and that it was in order to intimidate & deceive the citizens, so far from being a fact that Congress had come to a resolution not to give up any of the States, and that Gen^l Washington was in a more prosperous way than he had been in for some time, that he had actually appointed an officer with a considerable army. and was then on their march to the relief of the Southern States, and that we had all taken an oath to defend & maintain the Independence of the state to the utmost of our power and that if we could not raise a force to meet the foe, we had one open side, we c^d keep in a body, go into No. Ca. meet our friends & return with them to recover our State —

After saying this and much more not necessary to relate, there was a visible animation in the countenances of the citizens and their former state of despondency visibly reversed, and the poor commis^r was obliged to disappear with his proclamation & protections for fear of the resentment of the audience

And here your Author wishes to remark that he by no means wishes to arrogate any thing to himself or to have it be supposed that he had or possessed more public virtue or firmness than other men who acted differently. And after these things took place the men appeared very anxious to keep in a body but they had no officers. — I then advised them to Ballot for two Colonels and they did so and it appeared their choice fell upon a young man by the name of Neel and your Author we then proceeded to further arrangements and that was for the men to choose all other of their officers to form into companies &c — we then formed a camp and erected the American Standard. And as soon as this was known there were men both of the states of Georgia and South Carolina adding daily to our numbers that we soon became a respectable body and a few days after these things happened we received information that there was a tory colonel by the name of Floyd in the western part of the District who much distressed the Inhabitants and was collecting men to go to the British post at Rocky Mount, upon this Col- Neel with all the men but about 12 or 15- that was left to keep the camp went in persuit of that party of Tories but unfortunately before he got to their settlement they had marched to Rocky Mount. — And from there a certain captain Hook with a company of Horse and about 500 Tories came to the Iron works, destroyed all the property they could not carry away. Burned the forge furnace, grist and saw mills together with all other buildings even to the negro huts, & bore away about 90 negroes all which was done before Col. Niel returned with the army to camp — About this time I was informed that Col. Sumter was then in Salisbury with a few men waiting for a reinforcement — I then wrote to him, informing him of our situation & that there was a probability of our making a handsome stand — and that we were about to form a junction with Gen^l Rutherford^d in N. Car^a. that we were going to attack a large body of Tories that had collected at a place called Ramsour's Mill — But so it was that a detached party of about 300 horse from Gen^l Ruth^d attacked the Tory camp said to be upwards of a 1000 men,

killed & dispers^d the whole — and then it was that Col. Sumter met with us from So. Ca. He then got authority from the civil & military authority of that State to impress or take waggons horses, provisions of all kinds, from the enemy that was in that action — & to give a receipt to that state for the same — This being done we returned to So. Ca. & formed a camp on the East side of Catawba River at the place called Clem's Branch — from this out all our proceedings of importance, was done by a convention of the whole — a commission of captains appointed to take notice of all the property taken either from the enemy or friends. & a commissioner to supply us With provisions &c.

After we had been some time at this camp as before mentioned. in order to prepare for actual service a number of men together with y^r. author. being desirous to go into their own settlements on the west side of the River, in order to get a reinforce as well as other necessaries to enable us to keep the field — shortly after we crossed the River we were informed by our friends. that Capt. Hook the same that had a few weeks before destroyed the Iron works had sent to most of the houses in the settlement. to notify the aged men, the young being in Camp, to meet him at a certain place, that he desired to make terms with them, & that he would put them in the King's peace accordingly they met him, he undertook to harrangue them, on the certainty of his majesty^s. reducing all the Colonies. to obedience, and he far exceeded the Assyrian Gen^{ls} who we read of in ancient writ in blasphemy by saying that God almighty had become a Rebel, but if there were 20 Gods on that side, they would all be conquered, was his expression — Whilst he was employed in this impious blasphemy he had his officers & men taking all the horses fit for his purpose, so that many of the aged men had to walk many miles home afoot — This ill behaviour of the enemy made an impression on the minds of the most serious men in this little band and raised their courage under the belief that they would be made instruments in the hand of Heaven to punish this enemy for his wickedness and blasphemy — and no doubt the recent injuries that many of their families received from the said Hook and his party had an effect to stimulate this little band to a proper courage — The number of the Americans was 133, and many of them without arms Capⁿ. Hook had about 100 horse & Col. Ferguson, at this time commander of the Tory Militia, had about 300 men: they were encamp^d in a Lane — a strong fence on each side — the Horse picketed in the inside of a field next to the lane, with their furniture on the officers in a mansion house in the field, in which was a number of women, which the said Hook had brought there. and at the moment the action commenced, he was then flourishing his sword over the head of these unfortunate women. & threatening them with death if they would not get their husbands & sons to come in — and marching all night, we made the attack about the break of day — The plan was to attack both ends of the Lane at the same time, but unfortunately the party sent to make the attack on the east end of the lane met with some embarrassments, by fences, brush, briars &c. that they could not get to the end of the lane until the firing commenced at the west end — The probability is that if that party had made good their march in time very few of them w^d. have escaped — However Cap. Hook was killed, and also Col. Ferguson of the Tory Militia — Hook's Luit^t was wounded & died afterwards; considerable number of privates the number not known, as there were many of their carcasses found in the woods some days after — This happened about the 10th. of July 1780 at Williamsons Plantation in Y^k. D^t., and it was the first check the enemy had received after the fall of Charleston; and was of greater consequence to the American cause than can be well supposed from an affair of small a magnitude — as it had the tendency to inspire the Americans with courage & fortitude & to teach them that the enemy was not invincible — And here in order to shew the present generation, what a set of unprincipled officers, with a few exceptions, their fathers had to deal with — Two very valuable young negroes, belonging to yr. author were taken by the wounded Leu^t already mentioned, and were kept to wait upon him. He requested of me to grant him a guard & a waggon to take him to the post at Rocky Mount — Which request was granted to him. & while I was making arrangements to send the guard the two negroes disappear^d. I then told the Liu^t. that I knew that they were gone to Rocky Mount. & that I s^d. should expect him to send them back with the guard, he appeared to be very warm that I should have any doubt of his doing so, and said, that he would be a D——n scoundrel to keep my property, after

receiving such human treatment from me — But so it was, it turned out that he shewed himself to be the person he mentioned: for the Cap^l of the guard, knew the negroes, & found that he the said Liu^t had them again in his service, and when he was ready to leave the place applied to him for the negroes: but he threatened him and the rest of the guard with confinement, if he would say any thing about them, & it was with a great difficulty he obtained a pass to return back to me — These two negroes have never been recovered by me by any other for me

Shortly after this, being the 13th. July 1780. Gen^l Sumter made an unsuccessful attempt to reduce the British post at Rocky M^t. This was made under the impression that the Enemy was in a large framed house: the walls of which were only thin clap boards, and we supposed that our balls w^d have the desired effect by shooting through the wall. but so it was, that from the time we rec^d. this information until the time the attack was made the Enemy had wrought day & night and had placed small logs about a foot from the inside of the wall and rammed the cavity with clay, and under this delusion we made the attack —; but soon found that we c^d. injure them no way, but by shooting, in their port-holes And here the brave Col. Neil was killed & 7 privates; upon this we were forced to retreat behind a ledge of Rocks about a hundred y^{ds}. from the house — Here the officers held a council & it was discovered that there was a large rock, and between this rock and the fort, stood a small house which might be fired by throwing fire brands over the rock, & that this house w^d. communicate the fire to the house the Enemy was in and as we had the command of the water they could not possibly extinguish the flames — From this ledge of Rocks where the army lay, to the rock near the house was about 100 y^{ds}. free of any obstructions; & it is well known that when any object is going from or coming to a marksman, the marksman had near as good a chance as if the object was stationary it was then proposed by the Gen^l & other officers for 2 men to endeavor to fire that small house. but the undertaking appeared so hazardous, that no two men of the army could be found to undertake it — After some considerable time was spent, y^r. author proposed that if any other man w^d. go with him he w^d. make the attempt, at length a young man, brother to the Johnsons now living in Fairfield D^t proposed to undertake with me — and we had every assistance that c^d. be obtained — Rich lightwood split & bound with cords to cover the most vital parts of our bodies, as well as a large bundle of the same wood to carry in our arms, being thus equiped we run the 100 y^{ds}. to the rock; Mr. Johnson was to manage the fire & y^r. author was to watch the enemys sallying out of the house — but before the fire was sufficiently kindled the enemy did sally out with fixed bayonets; the same race was run again, to where the army lay, & under a heavy fire, not only from those who had sallied out, but like wise from a large number of Port holes in that end of the house — It was then proposed that the whole of our riflemen sh^d. direct their fire to that space between the small & great house, which was about 15 ft.; we being equipt as before mentioned, made the 2^d. attempt. & the plan already mentioned, prevented the Enemy from sallying a 2^d. time We then had an opportunity of making a large fire behind the rock, & throwing fire brands on the roof of the little house & we staid until that roof was in flames. & the heat of it had caused the wall of the great house to smoke — We then concluded the work, was done, & undertook the 4th. race, which was much more hazardous than the former ones, as the Enemy during the interval, had opened a great many more port-holes in that end of the building — And here I beg leave to remark that Providence so protected us both, that neither of us lost a drop of blood, altho' locks of hair was cut from our heads and our garments riddled with balls — & Scarcily had we time to look back from behind the rock where our men lay, in hopes to see the fire progressing, but to our great mortification, when the great house was beginning to flame — as heavy a storm of rain fell, as hath fallen from that time to the present, & which extinguished the flames — We were then forced to retreat under as great mortification, as ever any number of men endured

About the 21st., of July 1780. Gen^l Sumter made a successful attack on the British post at the Hanging Rock at which place were about 500 Regulars & about 800 Tories from N. Ca. commanded by Col. Bryan — Gen^l Sumter had about 600 So Carolinians — Gen^l Sumter's men were so short of ammunition, that when they began this attack generally, no one of them had more than 5 bullets — In

the latter part of the action the arms & ammunition, which were taken from the British & Tories, who fell in the commencement of it, were turned against their associates. In this attack there was a number of men from Mecklenburg County in No. Ca. commanded by Col. Ervin; the number not known; & likewise about 80 horse commanded by Col. Davie — these men behaved well, and are entitled to equal merit with the So. Car.^s. This action commenced under many very unfavorable circumstances to the Americans, as they had to march across a water course & climb a steep cliff, being all this time under the enemys fire & could not injure them until they got around the side of their camp — But as soon as they got to their ground they instantly drove them out of their camp & pursued them a considerable distance — In the mean time the British camp being about one quarter of a mile from this Tory camp, advanced firing in platoons before the one half of the Americans c^d. be brought off from the pursuit of the Tories; these few took to trees & rocks; whilst the British were advancing firing in platoons, and they fell so fast by their unseen enemy that their officers were obliged to push them forward by their sabers — The loss of the British in the action, was great in killed & wounded — The Prince of Wales' Regiment was almost annihilated — The Tories lost & killed was considerable The Americans had about 40 killed, & two Captains and your author wounded

		Here is a great
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—		{ was lost by G ^l Gates, & the battle
—————		{ of Fishing Creek was lost by G ^l
—		Sumter

About the 12th November following Major Weymis was sent by Earl Cornwallis to surprise Gen^l Sumter who was encamped near Broad River — The detachment by Weymis consisted of dragoons & infantry, the whole about three times the number that were with Gen^l Sumter — The attack was made in the night when most of the men were asleep; and two of the dragoons entered the Gen^ls. markey, while he made his escape out of the back of the markey & got under the bank of the River — The Americans retreated in the dark to a commanding ground, (within Shot of their fires) where they waited until the enemy collected in great numbers around their fires, & began to plunder, not supposing that they would meet with any interruption, & while they were in this position around the fires, the Americans, having the advantage of the light, poured on them such a fire that they killed & wounded a great many — they then made a very rapid retreat & were pursued by the Americans some distance = Major Weymis wounded & taken prisoner, altho' he had in his pocket, the evidence of his having in cold blood hanged several of the Americans, likewise a list of a number of a number of the houses he had burned on Black River

On the 20th — of the same month a battle was fought — at Black stocks on Tiger River, and here let me remark that there was no battle fought during the revolutionary war where was so much disparity between the two different combatants. The number of Americans did not exceed 600 and many of that number very indifferently armed. Col Tarlton who made this attack on Gen^l Sumter had 1200 horse and Infantry together with a field piece. The Americans were encamped on the bank of Tiger River. There were a number of houses between the River and a large open field from the American Camp, about a quarter of a mile there was a very large and strong fence not made with common rails but with small trees notched one on the other. On the west side of this Lane was a thick wood and at the mouth of this Lane was placed a strong Picket. The Americans having been pursued for 2 days and nights took this ground under the firm determination to defend it & not to retreat further — The action commenced by an attack on our Picket at the end of the Lane, they having the advantage of this strong fence above mentioned. They kept the Cavalry from entering the Lane the number in the houses mentioned joining the clear field kept the Infantry from advancing and those men from the

houses were still dropping some of them though at the distance of 200 yards. The enemy being thus kept back gave time for as many men who had horses and accoutrements fit for action to advance to the West side of the Lane through the thick wood these men were headed by Col. Lacy, he very judiciously advanced within fire of them undiscovered, as they were then on horse back near the end of the Lane, he then gave them a fire so well directed that upwards of 20 of them fell from their horses as well as a number of their horses killed, the woods being so thick that the regular horse dare not penetrate it — and a number of the men dismounted occasionally crept up so as to kill many of them in their ranks — the action commenced at one o'clock and neither horse nor foot advanced to our camp between the Lane & the River until the going down of the Sun their horse then advanced in the Lane to attack our body of reserve that stood between the Lane & the River where the charge was made by their horse The Americans having the advantage of the before mentioned fence together with the thick wood just by the fence that before they got through the Lane their front both men & horse fell so fast that the way was nearly stopt up — a retreat was then ordered which was a pleasing sight for the Americans to behold — so many falling either by wounds or stumbling over the dead horses or men. They were pursued by the Americans with loud shouts of victory — at the time this happened to the horse the Infantry advanced to the houses before mentioned and there they received such a heavy fire from those in the houses as well as from a number of the reserve that had got round to that quarter they then made their retreat in as great confusion as the horse — and were pursued a considerable way and many of them suffered in their retreat.

The British had three officers killed (viz) Maj^r-Money - Lieu^{ts}- Gibson & Cope their loss of privates very considerable the number not exactly known but supposed not short of 100 — The Americans had but two killed General Sumter severely wounded which for several months interrupted his gallant Enterprise in behalf of the State, his zeal and activity in animating the American Militia when they were discouraged by repeated defeats and the bravery & good conduct he displayed in sundry attacks on the British Detachments procured him the applause of his countrymen & the thanks of congress— And here I must break through the order of time by relating some circumstances that happened some months before the battle at Kings Mountain by which the reader will see the reason why Gen^l-Sumter was not at that action & likewise the reason why the chief command devolved on another — He will likewise see that the Historians who have heretofore written on that brilliant action have been very badly informed. In there omitting the names of the Officers that deserved the greatest merit & was instrumental by the aid of Providence to bring about that memorable event. & likewise giving merit to those that had laid a wicked & treacherous plan to prevent it, which they had nearly accomplished A short time after Gen^l-Sumter had formed his camp in South Carolina as before mentioned, a Colonel Williams of ninety six District with a few of his friends. or neighbours had been Northwardly securing some of the most valuable property — came to camp & being better acquainted with your Author than any other officer, he informed me that as he had no men he could not expect any command, but that he wished to do something to serve his country — I Informed him that a person was wanted to act as commisary to supply the army with provisions — Upon this I informed Gen^l Sumter — a convention was immediately called & a commission made out & given to the said Williams to act as commisary to supply the Army — And under his command was put a Maj^r-Miles with 25 men & Horses — together with 4 wagons & teams, he continued to act in this capacity for some time & until after the battle at the hanging rock when our camp was at a place called Cane Creek, and on a certain morning it was discovered that our commisary & a col Brannon had eloped & had taken a great number of the public horses a considerable quantity of provisions with the camp equipage & a number of men — Upon this Gen^l Sumter sent Col Lacy with a small guard after them with a view at least to recover the public property — he overtook them encamped on the west side of the Cattawba River & finding their number too great for him to do any thing by coercive measures he then got the said Williams to walk with him out of the camp, he then presented a pistol to his breast & informed him that if he made any noise to call for assistance he was then a dead man, & after exposturating with him on the baseness

of his conduct he the said Williams gave his word of honor that he would take back all the public property & as many of the men as he could persuade to go back — Upon this Col Lacy not confiding in his word exacted an oath to the same purpose.

But so it was that neither the one or the other had the desired effect, as he took the public property & the men to a place called the Cherokee ford where there were a number of North Carolinians encamped commanded by Maj McDowel — Shortly after they were joined by Col Clark & Col Shellby — this army made an attack on a British post at Muskgrove's mill South Carolina this post was reduced & a number of British prisoners taken. Shortly after this news of Gen^l-Gates' defeat near Camden induced Col Clark & Col Shelby to retreat to the Mountains leaving the prisoners in the hands of the said Williams to take on to Hillsborough which he did, who arrogated the whole honour to himself of commanding the action in which they were captured Gen^l-Gates after his defeat being at Hillsborough collecting his men. Governor Rutledge of South Carolina also was there on his return from Congress soliciting aid in behalf of the Southern States — Upon his showing his prisoners to the Governor & deceiving him by taking the whole merit to himself as before mentioned and likewise the governor not knowing that Gen^l-Sumter had the command of all the South Carolinians then in arms in defence of their country under this delusion he gave the said Williams a General's Commission, he had the assurance to march into Sumter's Camp which was then on the Indian Land on the East side of the Catawba River, he had his commission publicly read & required all the officers & men to fall under his immediate command, but much to his well deserved mortification they all to a man knowing his recent conduct in deserting his post & embezzeling the public property as before mentioned refused to have any thing to do with him or his commission & if he had not immediately left the camp he would have been stoned out of it — he then went up to the settlement in North Carolina on the Yadkin River where he engaged about 70 men — such as did not choose to do duty under their own officers by promising them that if they would go with him to South Carolina they could get as many negroes & horses as they chose to take from the Tories — This happened a short time before Earl Cornwallis took post at Charlotte North Carolina & that he the said Cornwallis detached Rawdon & Tarlton with a number of horse & foot to five times the number that Gen^l-Sumter had then in camp in order to surprise him but fortunately he got news of their intentions & crossed the River to the west side at Bigers' (now called Masons ferry) & there encamped. Your author then as chairman of the Convention called it together in order to deliberate on some plan respecting Gen^l-Sumter's commission as it was protested by Williams, but before any progress was made in the business the firing commenced across the River between our guard & Rawdon's men this soon broke up the convention & the army marched up the River & encamped that night in an uncommon thick wood, where we supposed we were safe from the horse of the enemy. In this place the convention again was called & five men chosen to go to governor Rutledge whose names were Gen^l-Richard Winn, Col Henry Hampton, Col Thomas, and Col Middleton, was four of those chosen the other name not recollected, these commissioners was to go to Hillsborough to the governor and Gen^l-Sumter was not to make his appearance until the business was decided — the command of the troops then devolved on Col Lacy & your Author — We then marched up the River & crossed it at the Tuckasegee ford our Intention being to form a junction with Gen^l-Davidson the same that was killed when the British crossed the River at Cowan's ford after sending an express to the said Davidson of our intentions he informed us that there was a considerable number of men from the west as well as from the East side of the mountain — Marching with an intention to fight col Ferguson & upon receiving this information we again crossed the River at Baty's ford, the evening after crossing the River. Williams & Brannon with their men engaged in the manner already mentioned came into our camp & Williams with an air of authority read his commission & required us to submit to his authority, your Author then informed him that there was not an officer or man in the whole army that would submit to his command as his recent conduct was such that no officer or sett of men would submit to such an officer & that we had sent commissioners to governor Rutledge that would soon return with full proof of the baseness of his conduct — upon this for fear of being worse treated by our men he

thought fit to make good his retreat & formed his camp at a distance from ours — the night following I had a conversation with Col Lacy stating that there was a probability of our having to fight a superior force in a short time — though notwithstanding Williams' number was but small we would endeavour to bring them in to an action as it was probable by this measure that some of them would meet a fate they so well merited — Col Lacy approving my sentiments if any way could be devised without paying respect to Williams' commission. I then proposed as Cols Grimes & Hamright had that day joined us with a small party of North Carolinians, we would suppose the army to be in three divisions, the North Carolinians one, Williams' & Brannon's men one, & the South Carolinians the third & that we would choose a Maj^r-Gen^l over the whole & that all orders should be assigned by all the Officers the following morning those propositions were offered to Williams but he spurned them & intimated that by virtue of his commission he would command the whole — upon this he was told to absent himself & not attempt to march with us or the North Carolinians, as the consequences would be serious, he then agreed to the proposition, accordingly we elected the officer that was to act as before mentioned, that day our spies came in & informed us that the mountain men were marching in a valley between a large & smaller Mountain — The next day in the morning an old gentleman well known to many of us to be a man of veracity gave us the following information — that he had been some days with Col Ferguson & that he had the address to make him believe that he was a great friend to the Royal cause that Ferguson the evening before had sent an express to Cornwallis then camped in Charlotte Noth-Ca^{na} that he had pitched his camp on the top of a mountain & that he was so well pleased with the goodness of his position as well as the courage & skill of his men, that he had been training for some time with great success & that he defied God Almighty & all the rebels that could be collected to drive him from that camp — However as he had nearly compleated the business of collecting & training all the friends to the Royal government that could be collected in that part of the country, & that he could then add to the Royal army upwards of 1000 men but as he had to march upwards of 40 miles through a D—rebel settlement though he was not afraid of any serious loss happening in his forming the junction with his Lordship — but as the Rebels were such Dam—d cowardly rascals that they would ambuscade him & he would not have it in his power to retaliate for those reasons he requested his Lordship to send Tarlton with his horse & Infantry to escort him to his Lordship — But strange to relate, that the very same day on the morning of which we had this information, your author missed Williams & Brannon out of the line of march & being informed that they had taken a pathway that led to the mountain — Nothing more was heard of them until evening after sunset — your Author being on the water we then discovered them coming to the camp — he then enquired of them which way they had been as they had not been with the army the greater part of the day — They appeared unwilling to give the Information I desired however upon insisting further Williams replied that they had been with the mountain men & that they were a set of fine men & well armed, upon being questioned where we were to form a junction with them, the answer was at Lawsons fork at the old Iron works, I then remarked that would be marching directly from Ferguson & that undoubtedly the design of these men was to fight Ferguson, that he had sent to Cornwallis at Charlotte for Tarleton with his horse and infantry and that this reinforcement might be expected in a day or two which would enable him to form a junction with the grand Army and that if this battle was not fought before the reinforcement came the certain probability was that it never would be fought — and that he was now in So Ca. & had been a bitter & cruel enemy, that it appeared as if Heaven had sent those men from the mountains to punish so great & cruel Enemy; & he the said Williams, appeared by these remarks to be for some moments embarrassed, but when he came to his speech, he acknowledged, that He had made use of deception to get them to go to Ninety Six — I inquired of him if they had any cannon with them — his answer was in the negative. & added that such men with their Rifles would soon reduce that Post — I then used the freedom to tell him that I plainly saw his design was to get that Army in his own settlement as well as to get some of his property (and plunder the Tories) from thence. In the course of the conversation he said with a considerable degree of warmth, that the No. Ca^{ns} might fight Ferguson or let it alone, & that our business was to

fight for our own country — I then informed him that notwithstanding he had used such unwarrantable means to avoid an action that I hoped under Providence that I would prevent his design — I then left him & informed Col. Lacey what Williams had done, that to use the huntsman's phrase he had put our friends on the wrong scent, & that if they did not get better information before the next day, that Ferguson would undoubtedly escape — As I was unable to ride without my arm in a sling, being not recovered from the wound I re^{cd} at the Hanging Rock, I immediately procured a pilot, gave him my own horse he being better to travel in the night than his, he started with this pilot about 8 o'clock — & in crossing the spur of the mountain they lost the path, and he Col. Lacey was so suspicious that he was taking him to the enemy, which was so very strong that he cocked his gun twice to kill him; but Providence prevented it. They then found their way & got to the camp of the mountain men before day — he Lacy then enquired of the officers if two men the day preceeding from So. Ca. had not visited them — they answered him in the affirmative — & further said that they had informed them that Forg^{sn} had gone to 96, & that they the mountaineers were to form a junction with the So. Ca^s at Lawsons fork, at the old iron works. the evening following — Co^l Lacey then gave our friends information that Ferguson was encamped on Kings Mⁿ & that he had sent to Earl Cornwallis for the reinforcement as already mentioned, & he Col Lacey with the Officers of the mountain men agreed to march to a place called the Cowpens where the So- Carolinians were to form a junction with them — And here let me remark that when the officers found themselves thus deceived by Williams in the manner already mentioned they expressed the Highest degree of Indignation, as they had come so far with an intention to fight Ferguson & that they were so near being prevented of their intention by this supposed friend — The next morning before Col Lacy returned to Camp there was a likelihood of there being a mutiny in the army for Col Williams went the rounds & ordered the Officers & men to march his way. Your author went the same rounds & informed those Officers & men of his wicked designs & requested them to wait Col Lacy' return.as until then we did not know where we were to form a junction with our friends. In this state of business my Officers & men appeared determined to bide by my advice & directions, & thus began to threaten the others, & I at this stage of the business had the presence of mind to parade the army in such a position as more fully to inform them of the base & injudicious design of Williams, & that it was very impolitic to march into So- Carolina leaving the enemy behind, & load themselves with plunder, & that Ferguson without doubt was a man of military talents & that he would embrace such a favorable opportunity to attack them on their return, & that the greatest part of the Tories with him were well acquainted with every gap of the mountain, every ford of the rivers or creeks, & many of them would lose their lives or plunder. After mentioning, these things & much more to work on their patriotism or fears I made the following proclamation —

All of you that love your Country & wish to fight for your country, your friends & posterity, & not to plunder your country in a day of distress, you will parade to the right; And all you that are of a different disposition & intend to plunder — not to fight you will parade to the left —

I am happy to say that to my great surprise the greatest part of the army paraded to the right — leaving but a very small number to the left — Upon this I ordered them to repair to their camp & make preparations for a march, which would commence as soon as Col. Lacey returned which he did about 10 oclock & informed us that we were to march to a place called the Cowpens; where we were to form a junction with these mountaineers, when we took the line of march & placed our front & rear guards we discovered that Col Williams having so few men that adhered to him, that he thought it rather hazardous to March by himself but hung in our rear, he was thus obliged to keep at such a distance as required by our rear guard, who held him & his men in such unfavorable light that they were throwing stones & otherwise affronting them the whole day — We arrived at the Cowpens at about sun sett & in a few moments our friends arrived also — The Officers of each army then convened together, the proceedings that took place was to give Col Campbell a nominal command over the whole this was

done in courtesy as he & his men had come the greatest distance & from over the mountains. It also being known that Col Tarlton with his reinforcement would in at least 2 days, join Col Ferguson. This induced the Officers to select 933 men & mounted them on their fleetest horses, leaving about an equal number of foot & horse in the camp, they began their march about 9 o'clock but it proved a very dark & raining night the path being small & the woods very thick, the troop got scattered & dispersed through the woods thus wondering the whole night, that when morning appeared the rear of them was but 5 miles from the Cowpens, this caused them to march uncommonly hard which caused many of the horses to give out as but few of them were shod, a small halt was made near the mountain in which the Officers planned the manner of attack — The officers that conducted this enterprise was Col^s-Campbell, Cleveland, Shelby, Lacy, Hamrite, & Hawthorne, he being my Lieutenant. myself being with the rear guard & not being well of my wounds as before mentioned; there was very little military subordination as all that was required or expected was that every Officer & man should ascend the mountain so as to surround the enemy on all quarters which was promptly executed, this being the 7th-day of October 1780 commencing at one O'clock — And here let me remark that notwithstanding Col Ferguson was a brave military character it appeared that he was infatuated & brought to his own ruin by chosing this spot of ground on which he had to fight under every disadvantage as it will appear from the following relation. — (viz) there being a small flat of ground where he had pitched his camp on, the sides of the mountain being very Rocky & steep as well as a great number of fallen & standing trees so that the Americans could attack his camp on all quarters, & their shot went over the americans without effect, his infatuation would more fully appear when it is known that he trusted much to the bayonet, as a proof of this he had trained his men to that purpose & those which he could not furnish with this weapon he had contrived a substitute by getting the Blacksmiths to make long knives to answer this purpose with a tang put in a piece of wood to fit the calibre of the gun & a button to rest on the muzzle of the piece, In the commencement of the action he ordered a charge on the Americans, but the ground was so rough as before mentioned that they were not able to overtake the americans to injure them, in this way, & when they had went a certain distance they had orders to retreat to their camp. & then it was that the americans had every advantage required. In this manner four different charges was made & with the same success — By this time the Americans were within shot of the whole of their camp chiefly under cover of rocks & trees Col Ferguson being killed the second in command sued for peace. about this time Col Williams with his small party came up the side of the mountain, at which time a number of white handkerchiefs were seen holding up in the camp & yet a number of men not knowing the intention of this signal continued their fire & it was some time before the officers could get them to cease firing — At this moment this Col Williams was killed It is generally supposed & believed that it was done by some of the Americans, as many of them had been heard to promise on oath that they would do it when they had an opportunity which promises were made at the time the dispute took place before mentioned, so that the Historians that have hitherto written of these transactions must have had very incorrect information — as it is a fact that after the attempt to deceive Col Campbell & the other Officers he dare not appear before them neither at the council of Officers at the Cowpens nor at the other near the mountain. In this action the americans had but few killed or wounded the number not exactly ascertained — Though generally believed the few that were killed & wounded was by the Americans after they had enclosed the camp by firing across. The loss of the enemy in killed & taken was about 1200, about 100 of those was regulars. 9 of those who surrendered were hanged by their conquerors they were provoked to this by severity of the British who had lately hanged a great number of americans at Camden, Ninety six, Augusta & & — But a much better reason that each individual of them was guilty of crimes for which their lives were forfeited by the Laws of the State & one in particular had taken a number of Indians to a small fort on the frontiers & murdered a number of women & children the men being absent from the fort. — .

There was an action fought at Muskgroves Mill Enoree river on the 19th- of August 1780. which it appears that none of the Historians which have written on the revolution of the Southern States have

noticed — It was fought by a number of brave Officers & men who had volunteered their services, I think it proper that posterity should know something of it — I do not give the information of my own knowledge but give it from an Officer of high standing who was present at the action — Gen^l- McDowell continued to manœver on the North side of Broad river, not being in force to attempt an action with Ferguson until the 18th- of August 1780 at which time he received information that 500 Tories were encamped at Muskgroves mill on the bank of Enoree river — Col Shelby & Lieut Col- Clarke were selected by Gen^l- McDowell to head the detachment destined to cut up that party of Tories — McDowell's camp was then at Smiths ford on Broad river 40 miles or upwards from the Tories Encamped at Muskgroves — Maj^r. Ferguson lay about half way with all his force and only two or three miles from the route our party had to travel. They commenced their march from Smiths ford at sun about one hour high in the evening of the 18th of Aug^t. 1780 with 700 picked men well mounted, among whom were several of the field officers of M^cDowal's army who had volunteered their services. & they were joined by Col. Williams with a few of his followers the whole army amounting to between 700 & 800 men. They travelled through the woods until nearly dark then took the road, & traveled fast all the night, a great part of the way in a canter, never stopped even to let their horses drink, & arrived within ½ mile of the enemy camp just at break of day, when they were met by a strong patrol party of the enemy coming out to reconnoitre — A sharp fire commenced in which several of the enemy fell — and they gave back to their camp at this juncture, a countryman who lived in sight came up & informed Col Shelby that the enemy had been strongly reinforced the evening before with 600 regulars from 96 & the Queen's American Reg^t from N. York — commanded by Col. Innis. The Americans after a hard travel all night of 40 miles, or upwards were too much broke down to retreat — they prepared for action as fast as possible by making a breast work of logs and brush, which they completed in half an hour, when the enemys whole force appeared in full view, their lines lay across the road upwards of half a mile in length — a small party had been sent under Cap^t Shadrack Inman to scrimmage with the enemy, as soon as they crossed the River, for their camp was on the south side of Muskgrove's plantation Cap^t Inman had orders to give way as the enemy advanced When they came within 70 yards of our breastworks a heavy & destructive fire commenced on them — .

The action was bloody & obstinate for upwards of an hour & a half. The enemy had got within a few yards of our works; at that juncture Col- Innis who commanded the Enemy was badly wounded & carried back, & every other regular Officer except one Lieutenant of the British were either killed or wounded when the enemy began to give way just at that moment also Cap^t- Hawsey an Officer of considerable distinction among the Tories was shot down near our lines while making the greatest efforts to animate his men — The Tories upon the fall of Cap^t- Hawsey broke in great confusion, the slaughter from thence to the Enoree river about half a mile was very great, dead men lay thick on the ground over which our men pursued the enemy. In this pursuit Cap^t Inman was killed while pressing the enemy close in his rear great merit was due to Cap^t- Inman for the manner in which he brought on the action & to which the success of the day was greatly to be attributed — This action was one of the hardest ever fought in the United States with small arms — the smoke was so thick as to hide a man at the distance of 20 yards — Our men took 200 prisoners during the action & could have improved the victory to great advantage — their object was to be in 96 that night, distant 25 or 30 miles & weak & defenceless. But just after the close of the action an express arrived from Gen^l- McDowell with a letter to him from Governor Caswell, informing of the defeat on the 16th- of our grand army under Gen^l- Gates near Camden — In this situation to secure a safe retreat was a most difficult task — our small party broke down with fatigue, 200 British prisoners in charge upwards of 40 miles advance of Gen^l- McDowell who retreated immediately & dispersed upon the receipt of the news of Gates' defeat — Ferguson with 3000 men almost directly in their rear — It required all the vigilance & exertion which human nature was capable of, to avoid being cut to pieces by Ferguson's light parties — It was known to Col Shelby that he had a body of dragoons & mounted men that would endeavour to intercept them which caused him to bear up toward the mountains — the enemy pursued as was expected 50 or 60

miles until their horses broke down & could follow no further — It is to be remarked that during the advance of upwards of 40 miles, & the retreat of 50 or 60 miles, the Americans never stopped to eat but made use of peaches & green corn for their support the excessive fatigue to which they were subjected — two nights & two days effectually broke down every officer so that their faces & eyes swelled & became so bloated in appearance as scarcely to be able to see — This action happened at the most gloomy period of the revolution, just after the defeat & dispersion of the American Army & is not known in the history of the revolution. After our party had retreated into No- Ca- clear of their pursuers Col Shelby crossed the mountains to his own country & left the prisoners taken in the action in the possession of Col Clarke to carry them on to the North until they could be safely secured he gave them up shortly afterwards to Col Williams to conduct them to Hillsborough No- Ca- at this period there was not the appearance of a corps of americans embodied any where to the Southward of Virginia — In this action the American loss was small in comparison with that of the enemy who over shot them as they lay concealed behind their breastworks — The loss of Cap^l- Inman was much regretted he fell gloriously fighting for his country, on the 19th- of August 1780 — with many other brave spirits who volunteered their services on that occasion & defeated an enemy far superior in force to their own — The defeat of Gen^l- Gates, the surprise & complete dispersion of Gen^l- Sumter- & dispersion of Gen^l- M^cDowell's army, no appearance of an american army existed to the Southward of Virginia, & many of the Whigs from the Carolinas & Georgia with Gen^l- M^cDowell at their head retreated to the west side of the Alleghany Mountains for refuge from a pursuing foe — It was at this gloomy period of the revolution that Cols Shelby, Sevier, Campbell & Gen^l- M^cDowell who fled to their country began to concert plans for collecting a force & making a forced march to surprise Maj^r- Ferguson who had advanced up to the foot of the mountains on the East side & threatened to cross over & lay waste the country on that side for their opposition to his Majesty's Arms —

Although David Ramsey the historian has given a pretty full account of the affairs of South Carolina, of their first measures taken to oppose the arbitrary demands of Great Britain, yet there are a number of matters & things omitted, that may be useful to the present generation, & especially as it is probable that a number of new states will yet be formed in the great American empire — And as there is a number of the old that are looking for a reformation in their constitutions, more especially to their representative system — I have therefore thought proper to give a short history of the proceedings of the people of South Carolina in their first forming the constitution. The South Carolinians took a very determined stand to oppose the measures of Great Britain, for as soon as the Boston port bill, & the other oppressive acts of the British parliament were known to them, the people, of Charleston & its vicinity convened under the shade of a tree in the commons, & then & there they entered into several resolves to oppose the arbitrary measures of that government. & they elected & sent a delegation to the first Congress that met in Philadelphia in the years 1774-75 at the same time they formed what is called a provincial Congress & assumed all the powers of government by emitting money or bills of credit, raising troops for the defence of the Province The Legislative power they held, but the executive was placed in what was called a council of safety & in committees in different parts — The resolutions of this Congress & the recommendations of the council of safety were generally complied with — as they had been laws enacted by all necessary power & authority. This first Congress as already mentioned was chiefly composed of citizens from the lower division of the province, but they found a very judicious plan to get all the people in the interior & upper parts of the province engaged with them, which was to depute two very influential characters, one a clergyman the other a Lawyer, the name of the former Tennent the latter Drayton. They were to go to the interior & upper country & explain to the people the nature of the dispute between this country & Great Britain — & likewise to lay off the country into Districts as places of general musters & to hold Elections The commissioners merit much for the care & pains they took in the discharge of their commission, they had the whole of the State laid off in elective districts not by surveyors who could not be had at that time but by such natural lines as rivers, creeks, roads &c — for under the old government there was not a county or district for the

whole of the province was purchased from the Ocean to the mountains. by this arrangement the three districts (Richland-Fairfield & Chester) were called the districts between Broad & Cattawba Rivers, their place of meeting at Winnsborough — the district then called the new acquisition (now York) was left by itself the other parts of the State was laid out in a similar way as most agreeable to the people — Each of the districts were to send members to the provincial Congress, but no limit as to numbers, many or few, the constitution formed by the provincials was nearly such as before under the old government — The first magistrate was stiled President & commander in chief he was to have a privy council — the general assembly was to elect out of its own body 13 members 7 of whom should be a quorum, the members were called a Legislative council these were as a house of Lords. The President or commander was to have his veto or negative on all bills — Under these arrangements the State progressed in making many defensive arrangements still looking forward with a sincere hope that a reconciliation with great Britain would be effected — For at that time there was very few if any of the citizens who had any wish for independence But when the Continental Congress declared the 13 states Independent of great Britain & recommended to the different states to form State constitutions agreeable to free & independent States, then it was this Provincial congress invited the different Districts to send members to that convention; and it was left to the People the number to be sent — About this time the citizens of the new acquisition met & sent five men to the convention, but these men were not chosen by Ballot, as but very few of the citizens had any knowledge of that mode of proceeding, but they were named by such as pleased to give their assent — A short time after they had gone to Charleston & had taken their seats, a number of the citizens came to the Iron works of the Author and expressed great disapprobation at the course which had been taken, notwithstanding they seemed to have a wish to preserve both Church & State, as one of the men sent was a ruling Elder of the church another a Dutchman, he was to take care of money matters; the other being lately from Pennsylvania where the mode of choosing their Representatives was by ballot — His advice was to convene the Citizens, on a certain day & elect them by Ballot — They accordingly met & elected five other men — they immediately set out for Charleston, & were allowed their seats with the other five — This will account for the new Acquisition having 10 members for a number of years when the three districts between Broad & Catawba River had only the same number — Previous to the meeting of this convention that was to form a constitution upon the principles of Independence, the public mind was much agitated upon the grand question, whether there was to be any Religious establishment of one denomination of Christians over the other & as most of the southern provinces had been under the church of England there was fear that if any denomination had any preference over the other it would in a great measure prevent that Harmony amongst the Citizens which was necessary to oppose the measures of the British government — About this time a number of the principle citizens of Charleston had a number of memorials or petitions printed & distributed through the different parts of the State — the memorial stated the bad policy either in a Religious or political point of view in establishing any one religious denomination over another. One of these memorials was sent to the Author & he in order to get as many names as possible — (& not believing in the doctrine of the turks that women have no souls) he got the women to sign their names with the men — this memorial when presented was a novelty & matter of surprise but when the principle was properly examined it was declared to be correct — happily for the state when the business was brought forward in the Convention even those who had been brought up adherents of the established church of England voted & spoke in favour of the memorial so that there was a very small minority thus happily that business which had for a length of time filled the minds of the Citizens with fearful forebodings was settled — In this place I shall observe, that Being who created all things He who hath the hearts of the human under his control & that it was owing to His agency that this matter terminated so happily — By the constitution established by the convention, the Legislative Power was vested in a Senate & House of Representatives — The Executive power was vested in a Governor & Commander in chief. he had no Legislative power — The judiciary with the the other officers were elected by the Gen^l Assembly —

When that part of the Constitution Which respects the Representation (was debated?) a proposition was made by one of the most influential members, that Charleston should have 30 members, in the H. of Rep^s & two in the Senate The other districts in the State might choose as many as they thought proper — The proposition was agreed to by a very large majority — and the members at a given time were to give in the numbers they wished, & this was done without adopting any principle of population wealth, or any thing else — Whilst this business was pending your Author took great pains, to induce the members to send such a number as would, be a proper balance to the great number from Charleston — And amongst a number of things, the following ideas

That the 32 members from Charleston would have a great advantage over the other from their local situation, having it in their power to arrange all the plans they wished for: that in a short time we would find we lived under an aristocratical & not a free representative government — that as we had the loaf to cut, we should take such a cut as w^d. prevent the evils to be feared —

But as if some fate had attended the business, not one of them would be brought to see as I did, although numbers of them were far superior in abilities to myself — By this contracted policy, the now three districts of Richland, Fairfield & Chester were content to send one senator & 10 Representatives; the most of the upper districts adopted a similar policy, but the most of the lower districts had 6 Representatives and one Senator, until some time after the peace — No great evil was felt, but in a few years the great emigration from the other States, and the other districts remaining stationary caused the inequality to be felt —

A large tract of country was purchased of the Cherokee Indians & was soon thick settled so the inequality became in time between the upper & lower divisions of the State as 16 to one & although the defect in the constitution was evident to every impartial eye yet so is power that however improper they are not for giving it up — & so it happened — in this case for notwithstanding the most vigorous efforts every meeting of the Legislature — the system still remained for about 20 years & then it was granted [only when] until the members of the upper division came to a determination no longer to submit but to apply to the general assembly that had promised to guarantee to each State a republican form of government. About 6 years past a reform took place & now each district has one Senator & representatives in proportion to the population & the amount of taxes paid to the support of government. I now go back breaking the order of time to relate that some time after the peace took place the meeting & sitting of the Legislature was in Charleston it being in the corner of the State & a commercial city these & [other] reasons induced the Legislature to purchase a tract a land now Columbia & to build a state house but this arrangement not being fixed by the constitution a convention was called to have it fixed when this convention [met] at Columbia there was much of what may be called parliamentary joking — there was a large number of members from Charleston & its vicinity who were for keeping it in Cha^{-ton} — & in order to divide the votes three places were proposed (viz) at the High Hills, one near Col Thompson, & one at Columbia. but the sagacity of the country members prevented the fate of the plan that was laid for [them], notwithstanding the members from Charleston & all the lower members who voted for it with the exception of a few men — yet the votes were for Columbia & only by one — this trial of strength gave encouragement for the members of Char^{ton} — to threaten its removal at a future period — this threat induced the country members to have in the constitution another clause (viz) that no alteration should take place but by two thirds of both the branches of the Legislature at one meeting and then after a new election by the same vote — this had the good effect to prevent any further attempt to remove the government to Charleston. But as most good things have their alloy of evil this was a great bar in the way of having the representation fixed upon a proper principle, let it be observed there is a power who governs the fate of nations as that of individuals & this power often makes use of means that may be thought by the human eye to be weak & contemptible weak instrument as I was had I acted upon the policy which other men of superior

abilities did as has been already stated & had I been content with two or three representatives instead of ten & a Senator — when the votes were taken as before said that instead of one in favour there would have been five or six against it — Upon this the most probable result would have been that the great & essential benefits of having the State government permanently fixed would not have been as early by many years & most probably not before the Reform which took place about six years ago. ——

23 of January 1835

This is a true copy, including corrections, of a manuscript which I received from my father written in the year 1815 by Co^l-W^m. Hill and which never has been out of his possession or mine since it was received from the author except in that of M^r. J. W. Brownfield who made this copy & of Tho^s. D. Sumter who assisted me in examining & correcting the same from the original which I this day deliver to Francis B Sumter by the desire of Co^l Hill son of the author to be delivered into his hands — taking a receipt therefore —

S/ Tho. Sumter