Virginia and beyond. The matter of salt presented a grave problem to the Wataugans; there were no salt springs or licks in the valley where they were located. Fortunately there was such a lick above the settlements and there about 1773 salt was made from water impregnated by a sub-surface deposit of solid rock salt.[5] This was at the present Saltville, in Virginia, and not far from the main road above described.

Mills for the grinding of grain also began to appear. That of Baptist McNabb on Buffalo Creek of Watauga seems to have been the first; but it was soon followed by that of John Sharp, Jr., near the mouth of one of the creeks of Holston, in the limits of the present county of Sullivan.

The markets from which the merchants in the settlements obtained stocks of goods were Philadelphia, Baltimore and the towns in the lower (northern part) of the Shenandoah Valley, Winchester, Strasburg, and Staunton. It is probable that these Virginia towns were chief sources, as dealers there had closer touch with the western folk.[6] Goods were hauled to Winchester and Strasburg by wagons from ports on Chesapeake Bay, the distance from which to Winchester was about eighty miles, through Ashby's Gap of the Blue Ridge and across Ashby's Ferry of the Shenandoah.

Late in September or early in October, 1773, Daniel Boone with his own and five other families passed

[5] Said by an early writer to be more than 175 feet thick. Wells 200 feet deep were later sunk, tapping the salt water. This event meant much to the people of the Upper Old Southwest; and the salt works figured large in the development of Tennessee's commerce in succeeding generations.

[6] Among these were Alexander Machir of Strasburg, with whom Andrew Greer and Wm. Bean dealt, 1775: Consult, Malone, "Falmouth and the Shenandoh Trade" in *Am. Hist. Review*, XL, 693–703.

⊕ Now (1989) Buffalo Creek runs north from Unicoi city to the Watauga River in Carter County, Tenn., just west of Elizabethton, Tenn.

through the settlements, on the way to the Kentucky country to form a small colony in those dangerous wilds. As the party was approaching Cumberland Gap, on October 10th a group in the rear was attacked by Indians, jealous of the white invasion of their hunting grounds. Five men were killed, including Boone's eldest son, James. This so discouraged the adventurers that they gave over the attempt and fell back to Clinch River, where Boone resided for some time. To the frustrated party it seemed that the attack and slaughter was by Shawnees, and was precursor of a general uprising by that and other western tribes.

Indeed, throughout 1773 the dread of such an uprising had hung like a pall over the inhabitants on the western frontiers of Virginia, and this unprovoked massacre was to them a harbinger of evil. The western tribes were sullen, and at Detroit were trading their peltry for powder and ball.

The fore-gleam of war did not, however, give pause to the land-hungry and alert leaders of Virginia. They continued active in efforts to secure choice lands in the Tennessee region. Patrick Henry, Wm. Byrd, III[7] John Page and Colonel William Christian, brother-in-law of Henry, planned to purchase of the Cherokees a large boundary in that region, and Christian sent William Kennedy of the Valley of Virginia to treat with the Indians. Nothing came of the scheme.[8] Colonel John Donelson, of Pittsylvania county, after running the ministerial line set about to acquire lands in the neighborhood of the line, and in June, 1774, he ran the Virginia-North Carolina boundary line due

[7] The persistence of Byrd in efforts to secure Tennessee lands is to be remarked.

[8] *Calendar Va. St. Papers*, I, 208, 288, 303.