

# ARTHUR CAMPBELL AND THE ORIGINS OF KENTUCKY: A REASSESSMENT

BY JAMES WILLIAM HAGY\*

Kentucky! In the eighteenth century, the word excited the minds of men who longed to hold the vast, fertile lands there. Intrepid explorers penetrated into the territory from both Virginia and Pennsylvania and returned with glowing accounts of the west. Even a Presbyterian minister such as the Rev. John Brown could lust for Kentucky lands, saying:

What a buzzel is amongst people about Kentuck? To hear people speak of it one would think it was a new found paradise; and I doubt not if it be such a place as represented by ministers will have thin congregations, but what need I fear that? Ministers are moveable goods as well as others and stand in need of good land as any do, for they are bad farmers.<sup>1</sup>

The good land of Kentucky caused many people to settle there before the authorities decided how to deal with the problem. Thus many disputes arose. Arthur Campbell (1743-1811), a political and military leader from southwest Virginia, found himself in the midst of the fray. Historians who have encountered him in his many dealings have, for the most part, misinterpreted his motives and his involvement. The purpose of this article is to clarify his role in the movement to make Kentucky first a county and then a state.

The principal authors who have dealt with Campbell are Thomas Perkins Abernethy in *Western Lands and the American Revolution* (New York, 1937); Patricia Watlington in *The Partisan Spirit: Kentucky Politics, 1779-1792* (New York, 1972); Lillian Stuart Butt, "The Political Career of Arthur Campbell," (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1934), written under the direction of Abernethy; and Hartwell L. Quinn, "Colonel Arthur Campbell, 1743-1811, a Biography," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Georgia, 1972), written under the direction of Melvin Herndon. Abernethy, for the most part, sees western history through the windows of the land office, and he brands Campbell as a speculator in both the Franklin movement in what is now east Tennessee and in the movement for statehood in Kentucky.<sup>2</sup> The other authors have been very

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. John Brown to William Preston, May 5, 1775, Draper MS 4QQ15. For information on Brown, see: Durward T. Stokes, "The Reverend John Brown and His Family," *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, 44 (January, 1970), 19-37.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to *Western Lands and the American Revolution*, see his *From Frontier to Plantation in Tennessee: A Study in Frontier Democracy* (Chapel Hill, 1932). For a different point of view, see: James W. Hagy and Stanley J. Folmsbee, "Arthur Campbell and the

much affected by Abernethy's interpretation of Campbell. But if one reads Abernethy closely he finds that the author at first states Campbell involved himself intimately with the land companies. Then he shows how Campbell opposed the land companies, and apparently he does not realize his contradiction.<sup>3</sup> Abernethy looms as somewhat of a giant among frontier historians, and others accepted his ideas without questioning them. Of the works listed above, the Butt thesis can be dismissed as it contains little information. The Quinn dissertation devotes a chapter to the establishment of Kentucky as a county in which he maintains that Campbell opposed the formation of the county to the bitter end. The dissertation also contains only a sentence or two regarding the statehood movement for Kentucky. Patricia Watlington, who deals with the thirteen years in which statehood was achieved in Kentucky, makes worse errors. What she says is more critical than what Abernethy relates because hers is a much more narrow subject, and reviews have rated her book as "the definitive political history of the formative period of the Bluegrass state"<sup>4</sup> and "by far the best narrative study of politics in an American frontier district in the post Revolutionary period, and as such it must be read by any American historian interested in the political development of the early United States."<sup>5</sup>

The subject involved in this discussion came from Scotch-Irish stock and possessed red hair and a fiery temper. A nephew described him as being an "overbearing" person who "would quarrel about trifles," "whisper slander," and "was not punctual in paying his debts" thus often finding himself in court.<sup>6</sup> He was a physically imposing man who stood nearly six feet tall, walked erectly and toward the end of his life became portly, but his "fine eyes, long chin and nose, and general outline of his face would strike the observer in a moment, and impress upon him that he was looking at no ordinary man."<sup>7</sup> He married Margaret Campbell, a cousin, and she drove him to seek fame since she believed him to be "the great-

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Separate State Movements in Virginia and North Carolina," *The East Tennessee Historical Society, Publications*, No. 42 (1970), 20-46.

<sup>3</sup> He especially discusses Campbell's opposition to the land companies on pp. 191, 222, 256-57 in *Western Lands and the American Revolution*.

<sup>4</sup> See Robert M. Ireland's review in *William and Mary Quarterly*, Series III, XXX (January, 1972), 163-66.

<sup>5</sup> See Van Beck Hall's review in *American Historical Review*, LXXVIII (June, 1973), 727-28.

<sup>6</sup> David Campbell to Draper, February 1, 1843, Draper MS 10DD 34.

<sup>7</sup> David Campbell to Draper, December 12, 1840, Draper MS 10DD6. See also: Hugh Blair Grigsby, *The Virginia Convention of 1776* (Richmond, 1855), p. 202.

est man in the country" and thus sometimes caused him "to make false steps."<sup>8</sup>

The character of this man and his interest in western land resulted, in part, from events that happened during the French and Indian War. In 1757 or 1758, he, along with the members of his family, withdrew to a fort on Cowpasture River in Augusta County, Virginia. The young boy and a few others went to a nearby thicket one day to gather some plums. Indians suddenly made an attack and took the lad prisoner and carried him off to the Great Lakes region. In 1759 he escaped. After travelling eastward about two weeks he met with British forces on their way west. He led them to the Indian settlements; afterwards he travelled to Pittsburgh and then to his family in Virginia which had given him up for dead. For his services he was given £41 by the Virginia government and the right to claim 2000 acres of western land.<sup>9</sup> His captivity made a deep impression on him, gave him knowledge of Indian ways, and turned him into a taciturn youth aged beyond his years.<sup>10</sup>

In 1769 Arthur Campbell, his brother, and sister settled on land that lay within the present corporate limits of Marion, Virginia. Arthur bought the land from his brother who had in turn obtained it from the Loyal Land Company.<sup>11</sup> They called the place Royal Oak until the Revolution broke out at which time it became known as Good Wood. In 1769 this property sat on the outer limits of white settlement, the cutting edge of the frontier.

Settlers on such lands faced many hardships in acquiring clear titles to their lands. This resulted from changing policies of the governments involved. The colonial government of Virginia prior to 1754 encouraged settlement on western lands and granted vast amounts to individuals and companies such as the Loyal Land Company, the Ohio Company, and the Greenbrier Company. Before the French and Indian War broke out, these companies surveyed thousands of acres of land and began to sell them to settlers. The war, however, stopped western development and pushed people back across the Allegheny Mountains. As the war drew to a close the

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<sup>8</sup> David Campbell to Draper, December 12, 1840, Draper MS 10DD6.

<sup>9</sup> James Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Col. James Smith* (Lexington, 1799), p. 50; Arthur Campbell to Gov. Randolph, December 31, 1787, in William P. Palmer, et. al., *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts* (11 Vols.; Richmond, 1875-1883), IV, 375; David Campbell to Draper, June 1843, Draper MS 10DD42; Joseph A. Waddell, *The Annals of Augusta County, Virginia, 1726-1874* (Richmond, 1888) p. 98; William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619* (13 Vols.; Richmond, 1810-1823), VIII, 129.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Virginia* (Charleston, S.C., 1845), p. 504.

<sup>11</sup> Lewis Preston Summers, ed., *Annals of Southwest Virginia, 1796-1800* (Abingdon, Virginia, 1929), pp. 656, 658.

royal government formulated a new land policy. According to royal instructions issued in December 1761, later reinforced by the Proclamation of 1763, the authorities forbade settlements beyond the mountains for an indefinite time. Thus control over western lands passed from the hands of the colonies to the government in London. In Virginia, however, the Loyal and Greenbrier companies continued to survey land and dispose of it. Meanwhile, the treaties of Fort Stanwix and Hard Labor pushed the boundary westward, establishing the frontier at Fort Chiswell in Virginia. Then the Treaty of Lochaber in 1770 allowed settlement to extend to within six miles of Long Island on the Holston River (Kingsport, Tennessee). When Colonel John Donelson ran the Lochaber line in 1772, he managed to change it to run down the Kentucky River to the Ohio, thereby acquiring more territory than had been intended.

Despite the treaties, land titles on the frontier still proved difficult to obtain. In 1773 the Loyal and Greenbrier companies persuaded the colonial council of Virginia to allow the companies to continue making surveys and disposing of land to settlers, although patents for the grants would not be issued by the colony.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, patents could be obtained for military warrants for service in the French and Indian War. As a result of pressure from George Washington, the Virginia government issued a number of military warrants in 1773, and Arthur Campbell was entitled to locate his two thousand acres.<sup>13</sup>

That same year the Board of Trade decided that the western lands, in tracts of at least one hundred acres and not more than one thousand acres, could be granted to private individuals. These lands were sold at auction for at least six pence an acre with a quitrent of a halfpenny an acre a year. In Virginia the royal government did not publish the instructions because Lord Dunmore himself speculated in land and did not want to see his chances of profit vanish.

Lord Dunmore shared his interest in speculation in western lands

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<sup>12</sup> Information on the land policies can be found in the following sources: B. A. Hinsdale, "The Western Land Policy of the British Government from 1763 to 1775," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, I (December, 1887), 207-29; St. George L. Sloussant, "The Breakdown of the Royal Management of Lands in the Southern Provinces, 1773-1775," *Agricultural History*, III (April, 1929), 67-98; Henry Tatter, "State and Federal Land Policy During the Confederation Period," *Agricultural History*, IX (October, 1935), 176-86; Archibald Henderson, "A Pre-Revolutionary Revolt in the Old Southwest," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XVII (September, 1930), 191-212; Archibald Henderson, *Dr. Thomas Walker and the Loyal Land Company* (Worcester, Mass, 1931); *The Loyal Company*, "Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine," IV (October, 1922), 86-95.

<sup>13</sup> Dunmore to Surveyors of Fincastle County, December 15, 1773, Arthur Campbell Papers, The Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky; Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia*, pp. 658, 1415; Dunmore to Campbell, February 9, 1774, Arthur Campbell Papers.

with a number of people. One scheme involved Patrick Henry, William Christian, William Byrd, John Page, Ralph Wormeley, Samuel Overton, and other important persons in Virginia. This group decided to send William Kennedy to the Cherokees to investigate the possibility of acquiring land from them. They contacted Arthur Campbell, asking him to assist Kennedy as they planned "to make a snug little purchase of some of the Cherokees land, to which they had a claim that was not disputed."<sup>14</sup> Despite Kennedy's findings the speculators did not complete the deal.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile Judge Richard Henderson and another group of speculators from North Carolina formed the Louisa Company which soon became known as the Transylvania Company with the purpose of obtaining land from the Indians. The formation of this company may be the reason that the group which included Patrick Henry did not get very far with its plans. Campbell later indicated that Henry wanted to be taken into the Henderson company and had asked Campbell to negotiate with the company for him. Campbell also said, when an investigation took place, that his reason for being involved resulted from his "zeal for the interest" of the company and his anxiety "to have the back country settled"; these reasons may have caused him "to go farther lengths than any instructions he had."<sup>16</sup> Nothing, however, came from these negotiations as Henderson apparently did not want the Virginia interests to dominate his company. Henderson then made a treaty with the Cherokees in March 1775 at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River in what is today east Tennessee. Vast amounts of land, corresponding more or less to the state of Kentucky, passed from the hands of the Indians to the speculators for a few wagons of goods.<sup>17</sup> William Preston notified Lord Dunmore and George Washington of the dealings, and the governor finally issued a proclamation on March 21, 1775 which declared the Henderson purchase void and called for the survey and sale of the western lands.<sup>18</sup> The Henderson speculators, however, ignored the

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<sup>14</sup> Deposition of Arthur Campbell, October 21, 1778, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, I, 303-304.

<sup>15</sup> Deposition of William Christian, June 3, 1777, *ibid.*, I, 288-89; Deposition of Patrick Henry, June 4, 1777, *ibid.*, I, 289-90.

<sup>16</sup> Deposition of Campbell, October 21, 1778, *ibid.*, 303-304.

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Cole Williams, *Dawn of Tennessee Valley and Tennessee History* (Johnson City, Tennessee, 1937), pp. 401, 404, 405; W. S. Lester, *The Transylvania Colony* (Spencer, Indiana, 1935), pp. 29-47.

<sup>18</sup> Preston to Dunmore, March 10, 1775, Draper MS 4QQ7; Proclamation by Dunmore, March 21, 1775, *American Archives, Fourth Series*, II, column 174; Patricia Givens Johnson, *William Preston and the Allegheny Patriots* (Pulaski, Virginia, 1976), p. 159; Lester, *Transylvania Colony*, pp. 39-40; Archibald Henderson, *The Conquest of the Old Southwest: The Romantic Story of the Early Pioneers into Virginia, the Carolinas, Tennessee and Kentucky, 1770-1790* (New York, 1920), pp. 239-42.

governor's proclamation and proceeded with their plans. In Kentucky, or Transylvania as Henderson called it, the company organized a government and asked to be admitted to the Continental Congress as an equal to the other colonies.<sup>19</sup>

Campbell's activities at this time seem to indicate that he was deeply involved with the speculators and this is what Abernethy and others believe about him in his subsequent activities. But his involvement is not that simple. Campbell did cooperate with the Patrick Henry group and assisted William Kennedy. He also negotiated with Henderson for Henry. When Henderson carried on his negotiations with the Indians, Attakullakulla (Little Carpenter), one of the Cherokee chiefs, traveled with Henderson to North Carolina to inspect the gifts for the Indians. Campbell planned to see that the chief got a safe conduct back to the Watauga area,<sup>20</sup> but this would be expected of him as a militia commander. Actually Campbell, always an opportunist, seems at this time to have been working with the land companies, in hopes of some rewards, and against them as well. In fact, in all of these incidents he served only as a middle man — not as an investor.

After Dunmore issued his proclamation, Campbell, William Christian, and William Russell all wrote letters to settlers in Kentucky urging them not to submit to surveys.<sup>21</sup> Campbell also drafted a petition to Lord Dunmore which protested the proclamation. Whether or not this petition of the "inhabitants of Fincastle county" ever got beyond Campbell's desk it does reveal his thinking on the matter. In the petition he expressed himself as being "extremely alarmed" at the purport of the proclamation and asked the governor to intercede on behalf of the inhabitants with the king "in order to avert a dangerous, destructive measure: The proposed mode of disposing of vacant Land in this Colony." Campbell pointed out that the government had usually granted exemptions and advantages to the first settlers because of the problems they faced in developing a new land "bordering on Nations of Savages whose public Faith is seldom to be relied on." But in this case, the settlers were to be burdened "with a heavy annual Quitrent, and a dangerous inequitable Sale of the Land." Campbell concluded that "we wish to avoid being considered a people unwilling to pay his Majesty's dues and to raise objections against every mode proposed for

19 Abernethy, *Western Lands*, pp. 130-31.

20 Campbell to Preston, November 21, 1774, Draper MS 3QQ134.

21 William Madison to Preston, July, 1775, Draper MS 4QQ30; William Russell to Preston, June 12, 1775, Draper MS 4QQ19; John Floyd to Preston, September 1, 1775, Draper MS 33S282.

obtaining Titles on Lands: on the contrary we have been always willing to the utmost of our power to pay for former lawful customary rights and dues, and would rather even now, pay a certain stipulated Sum to the Crown than to any private Person whatever."<sup>22</sup> Thus he opposed Dunmore's proclamation but even more despised the private arrangements of Henderson. Land should be free to the private individuals who settled on it. Yet he was not above trying to work out a deal for himself with a land company if he could profit. Idealism could be scuttled if it got in the way.

William Preston, the county lieutenant, sheriff, and surveyor of Fincastle County, reacted differently than Campbell. He began to survey lands according to the instructions of the royal governor and thus brought down the wrath of Campbell and others. Preston also made a trip to Manchester, Virginia on the James River to visit Dunmore. This made many on the frontier believe that he conspired with the governor. Protests from Fincastle County about Preston caused the Virginia Convention to investigate the situation. While the Convention did not censure Preston, it did demand that the surveying stop; it had by that time.<sup>23</sup> Preston, however, remained under suspicion, especially by Arthur Campbell, and a bitter rivalry between the two families began that lasted for decades.

Campbell angrily attacked Preston and John Floyd, his surveyor in Kentucky. After the Henderson purchase, Floyd became an agent for the Transylvania Company while still a deputy surveyor for Fincastle County. Preston's biographer states that Preston must have known about this beforehand and that "the Earl of Dunmore was not the only double dealer in Virginia."<sup>24</sup> Floyd was thus able to survey land in Kentucky for himself and Preston by working out a deal with Henderson whereby they could claim all the land they wanted without having to buy warrants.<sup>25</sup> In Transylvania Floyd soon heard of the charges being made against Preston and himself. He reported that at first he thought William Christian was responsible for the campaign, but after going through all the correspondence that had been sent to the company he soon discovered that Campbell, or "Long Jaw" as he called him, was the culprit. Floyd related that he "could not imagine that any rational being could be guilty of such deception. . . . I am called through the whole packet one of your creatures who is entirely at your disposal & would not

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<sup>22</sup> The Petition of the Inhabitants of the County of Fincastle, Arthur Campbell Papers.

<sup>23</sup> Johnson, *William Preston*, pp. 168-69.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 170-71.

stop at anything to put any of your oppressive measures in execution." Campbell, according to Floyd, charged Preston with being an "artful, scheming, mercenary, ministerial gentleman."<sup>26</sup>

Campbell's anger resulted from rejection. He had wanted to be appointed to the lucrative position of surveyor of Transylvania, a job that had apparently been promised to him by Henderson. When Henderson went out to Kentucky in November 1775, Campbell who hoped to collect on the "promise which formerly had been made him," accompanied Henderson. But Henderson apparently read the packet of letters which had been accumulating, and the appointment went instead to Floyd. Floyd had the "pleasure of seeing" Campbell "sufficiently mortified without saying any single word."<sup>27</sup> Campbell blamed Floyd for his misfortune and would seek his revenge not only against Floyd but also against the Henderson Company. Indeed, he became a staunch opponent of all land companies.

On December 23, 1775, an incident occurred at the Falls of the Ohio which some historians, such as John Bakeless in his biography of Boone and Hartwell Quinn, believe involved Arthur Campbell.<sup>28</sup> John Williams, an agent for the Transylvania Company, reported that "Col. Campbell with a couple of lads" went out to measure some land but soon "after they parted a gun and a cry of distress was heard and the alarm was given that the Indians had shot Col. Campbell." Campbell, however, escaped and "came running to the landing with one shoe off, and said he was fired on by a couple of Indians."<sup>29</sup> If Arthur Campbell visited the Falls of the Ohio on December 23, 1775, he was probably protecting his military grant of the one thousand acres as the agent for the Transylvania Company had decided that "the several officers, who had claims there may each, on application and complying with our terms, be entitled to a one thousand [acre tract] within his survey."<sup>30</sup> But this may not have been Arthur Campbell for at the time he served as only a major in the militia. A John Campbell from Pennsylvania who speculated heavily in Kentucky may have been the man mentioned.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> John Floyd to William Preston, September 1, 1775, Draper MS 33S282.

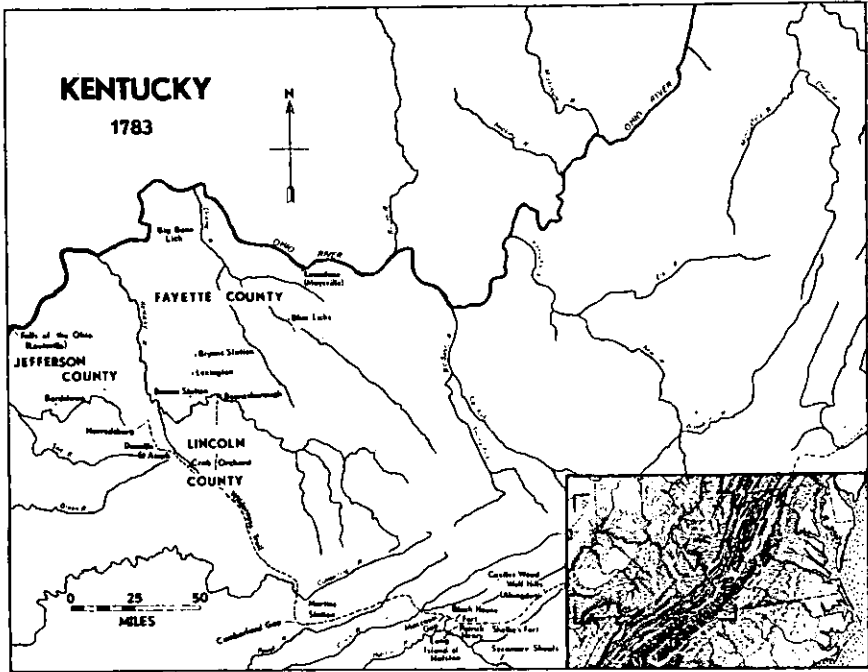
<sup>27</sup> Floyd to Preston, December 1, 1775, Draper MS 33S292.

<sup>28</sup> John Bakeless, *Daniel Boone* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1965), pp. 117-18; Quinn, "Colonel Arthur Campbell," p. 60.

<sup>29</sup> John Williams' Report, January 3, 1776, in George W. Ranck, *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days and Revolutionary Annals* (Louisville, 1901), 232-33; *American Archives, Fourth Series, IV*, col. 560.

<sup>30</sup> John Williams' Report, *Boonesborough*.

<sup>31</sup> John Campbell claimed four thousand acres near the Falls of the Ohio and represented land companies. See Patricia Watlington, *The Partisan Spirit: Kentucky Politics, 1779-1792* (New York, 1972) pp. 50-51; Abernethy, *Western Lands*, pp. 35, 87, 93, 94, 108, 118, 121, 140, 143, 174, 177, 187, 188.



The Transylvania Company apparently made a grant of land to Campbell on December 27, 1775. On the same day entries were made on behalf of Captain William Russell, Captain William Edmondson, and David Campbell, Jr., for one thousand acres each, all on the Barren's River far from the Falls of the Ohio. Nathaniel Henderson made a true copy of the entries and supplied it to Campbell.<sup>32</sup> This may have been a maneuver on the part of the company to placate Campbell for his failure to be appointed surveyor and to buy support from Russell and others in Fincastle County.

Meanwhile Arthur Campbell married, became involved in politics, and advanced in the militia. In 1773 he became a justice of the peace in newly formed Fincastle County, then the westernmost county in Virginia. Campbell served as the presiding justice.<sup>33</sup> Two years later he became a member of the local Committee of Safety and, along with other frontier leaders, signed the Fincastle Resolution which proclaimed that if Great Britain tried to deny them their rights they would "never surrender them to any power upon

<sup>32</sup> This copy is in the Campbell-Preston Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.  
<sup>33</sup> Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia*, p. 589.

earth, but at the expense of our lives."<sup>34</sup> In 1773, he also became a captain in the militia,<sup>35</sup> and as Dunmore's War approached in 1774, his superiors promoted him to the rank of major.<sup>36</sup> Then in the spring of 1776, elections took place in Fincastle County for the Convention of 1776. When John Floyd learned that Campbell might win, he advised Preston, also a candidate, to "Pray, contrive it so that the gent may not sit in the Convention."<sup>37</sup> According to Floyd, Campbell took the opportunity to travel with Henderson from Royal Oak to Seven Mile Ford as Henderson returned to Kentucky. Campbell spent the night with Henderson and once again attacked Floyd and Preston. Despite all that Preston could do, the people elected Campbell and William Russell to sit in the Convention of 1776.<sup>38</sup> Now Campbell could really work against the land companies.

The Convention of 1776 followed up on Dunmore's Proclamation regarding the Henderson claim to Transylvania. Article XXI of the Constitution of 1776 lay claim to the western lands and stated that new states could be laid off west of the Alleghenies only by action of the legislature. Furthermore, no purchase of land could "be made of the *Indian* natives but on behalf of the publick, by authority of the General Assembly."<sup>39</sup> This article clearly sought to stop Henderson. Shortly after the adoption of the Constitution, the Convention created a committee to "collect, take and commit to writing, the evidence on behalf of the Commonwealth," against the Henderson speculators for "pretending to claim Lands within the territory and limits of *Virginia* under deeds and purchases from the *Indians*."<sup>40</sup> Campbell served on this committee with a number of other representatives, some from the western counties, others from the eastern part of the state. The committee took little action because the depositions regarding the Henderson claim were not taken until 1777 in the case of people such as Patrick Henry and William Christian, and not until 1778 for Campbell. Obviously, the Virginia lawmakers opposed the actions taken by the Transylvania purchasers and not only considered them to be illegal but made sure they would prevent such purchases with the Constitution. Campbell probably played a major role in getting this written into the Constitution. Personal revenge, mixed with a certain amount of idealism, determined his action.

34 *American Archives, Fourth Series*, I, cols. 1165-1166; *Purdie's Virginia Gazette*, February 10, 1775.

35 Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia*, p. 74.

36 Campbell to Daniel Smith, August 9, 1774, Draper MS 4X43.

37 Floyd to Preston, May 1, 1776, Draper MS 33S291.

38 Grigsby, *Virginia Convention of 1776*, appendix.

39 Hening, *Statutes*, IX, 118-19.

40 *American Archives, Fourth Series*, VI, col. 1610.

The Constitution of 1776 did not resolve the problem of Transylvania. Both the Convention and the General Assembly of 1776 grappled with this situation. Unrest quickly developed in the colony because the settlers realized that Virginia had strong claims to the land. Their farms might be taken away from them. The increased costs of land and the fact that they were outside the bounds established by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix also bothered them. Therefore, a group of the Transylvanians sent a petition to the Virginia Convention asking the state to look after their interests.<sup>41</sup> Shortly after this, they chose George Rogers Clark and Gabriel John Jones to go to Virginia to represent their interests with the Virginia Convention. Clark and Jones arrived after the Convention adjourned but eventually did get ammunition from the Virginia governor and council which they felt was *de facto* recognition that Transylvania formed a part of Virginia.<sup>42</sup> When the General Assembly met in the fall of 1776 (those elected to the Convention served in the House without elections while Senators had to be elected), Clark returned asking that Kentucky be made into a separate county.

While the General Assembly met, Campbell continued to attack Preston and Floyd. Campbell charged that Preston "was full of Doubts and fears that the British troops would over power" the Americans<sup>43</sup> implying that Preston had Loyalist sentiments. When Floyd passed through southwest Virginia on his way to Williamsburg to lobby for the Transylvania Company, Preston told him of the accusations being made by Campbell, Christian, Russell, and others. At Williamsburg, Floyd had little success in convincing the legislators of the validity of the Henderson claims and also failed to obtain approval from William and Mary College to be a surveyor for the state of Virginia. He accused Campbell of doing "everything in his power to prejudice you & myself, which has added no little to his disgrace."<sup>44</sup> According to one source, Floyd became so angered with Campbell's machinations that he sought him out on the streets of Williamsburg and beat him up.<sup>45</sup>

When Clark arrived at the Capital he found it a difficult task to get Kentucky formed into a separate county. A number of people strongly opposed the idea. For one, Richard Henderson claimed

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41 *Ibid.*, cols. 1528-1529; Lester, *Transylvania Colony*, pp. 127-28.

42 Robert McNutt McElroy, *Kentucky in the Nation's History* (New York, 1909), pp. 57-60; Lester, *Transylvania Colony*, pp. 134-35, 142-44.

43 James McGavock to William Preston, August 14, 1776, Draper MS 4QQ69.

44 John Floyd to William Preston, December 16, 1776, Draper MS 33S308-312.

45 Johnson, *William Preston*, p. 196.

that his company possessed the territory. But Arthur Campbell also opposed the idea. A number of historians have viewed this opposition by Campbell to mean that he worked to protect the interests of the Henderson Company. Nothing could be further from the truth. They base this on a remark of George Rogers Clark who said "Col. Arthur Campbell one of the Members of the General Assembly also was much opposed to our having a new County but wished us to remain annexed to the County on the Frontiers of which we lay and himself Represented." As a result, "this caused it to be late in the session before we got a compleat Establishment of a new county by the name of Kentucky."<sup>46</sup> Campbell loved to govern and hold positions of trust. Therefore the reason stated by Clark seems to be the true one for his opposing the creation of Kentucky: it would take away part of the county he represented. But that is by no means the whole story.

The process of passing legislation to form a county in Kentucky required much time and a lot of political deals. The initial bill called for the division of Fincastle into two counties: Fincastle and Kentucky. After quite a bit of maneuvering the legislature killed this bill, but someone introduced it a second time and the lawmakers sent it to a committee headed by Thomas Jefferson and including Arthur Campbell. The bill then passed the House and went to the Senate, which refused to accept the House bill. John Floyd says that the Senate refused to accept the House bill because Campbell "had a Clause added to the Kentucky Bill to disqualify all persons from holding any place of profit either civil or military who had ever had a commission under Henderson."<sup>47</sup> Certainly he did not seek to protect Henderson's claim. Not until December 7, 1776, did the legislature accept a bill which divided Fincastle County. The final bill split Fincastle not into two but three counties: Montgomery, Washington, and Kentucky.<sup>48</sup>

Initially Campbell opposed the Kentucky bill, but during the haggling he changed. When the House finally passed the bill dividing Fincastle County, Campbell carried the legislation to the Senate, thus indicating he supported it. Bills carried to other houses were not entrusted to opponents. He profited from the creation of three new counties because when Washington County came into existence

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<sup>46</sup> Clark's Memor, 1773-1779, in James Alton James, ed., *George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781*, Collections of the Illinois Historical Library, VIII, Virginia Series, III (Springfield, 1912), p. 214. See also, Temple Bodley, *George Rogers Clark: His Life and Public Service* (Boston, 1926), pp. 32-33.

<sup>47</sup> John Floyd to William Preston, December 16, 1776, Draper MS 33S308-312.

<sup>48</sup> *Journal of the House of Delegates* (October 7-December 21, 1776) (Richmond, 1828), 4, 11, 13, 15, 16, 19, 22, 28, 33, 44, 52, 67, 70, 87, 90; *Hening, Statutes*, IX, 257-61.

he became not only the head of the county court but also the county lieutenant with the rank of colonel, something he could not have done in Fincastle County where Preston served as the militia leader. To separate Kentucky from Fincastle County would not have benefited him but to divide Fincastle into three parts would. Such action would also greatly reduce, or perhaps even eliminate, the military authority of Preston. Campbell, no doubt, agreed to support the bill with the promise of an appointment from Governor Patrick Henry. Meanwhile Preston "experienced uneasy moments" wondering if he would lose his positions because Fincastle ceased to exist. But Henry made him the county lieutenant of Montgomery, and he continued his militia duties.<sup>49</sup>

While Virginia reaffirmed her hold on the west and created Kentucky as a separate county, the question of land ownership by individuals still faced the legislators. Three pieces of legislation temporarily governed settlement on western lands. The Convention on June 24, 1776 ruled that those people in occupation of lands on the western waters to which no prior claim had been made "should have preemption or preference to a grant of such lands."<sup>50</sup> Next the General Assembly in 1777 declared that all persons settled on lands as of June 4, 1776, would have that land by "squatter's rights" of up to four hundred acres a family.<sup>51</sup> In 1778 the legislature granted a tract of two hundred thousand acres of land to Henderson and his company for their "very great expense in making a purchase of the Cherokee Indians," and though the purchase had been voided, the state was "likely to receive great advantages therefrom"; thus, it was "just and reasonable" that the company should be compensated.<sup>52</sup> The lands granted to the company were, however, far removed from settled areas and could not be disposed of immediately. By these actions the state government temporarily satisfied the frontiersmen in their quest for titles to their lands.

Meanwhile, disturbing news reached the frontiersmen that the legislature might validate the claims of the Loyal Company on which many of them now lived. Arthur Campbell drafted a petition for the legislature, and someone else penned the final petition "of sundry Inhabitants of the Counties of Washington and Montgomery." The petitioners claimed that Thomas Walker of the Loyal Company "kept a publick office at William Ingles on New River"

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49 Johnson, *William Preston*, p. 196.

50 Hening, *Statutes*, IX, 355.

51 *Ibid.*, 356.

52 *Ibid.*, 571-72.

in 1769 and encouraged pioneers to settle on lands, saying that "whoever will settle shall have it if I get my grant, and if I do not get it, tis the best way you can secure it by the King's right." The petitioners claimed that according to a decree of council of December 16, 1773, they were promised settlement rights, and many of them thus took up lands only to be informed that the Loyal Company claimed the land. They asked, therefore, that the "Grant so well known by the name of Walker's Grant may be buried in oblivion so that it may not hereafter rise up against us." One hundred and twelve names followed.<sup>53</sup> The legislature soon disappointed them.

The General Assembly enacted permanent land legislation in May 1779. The lawmakers passed two important acts which, at last, provided for an orderly disposition of the western lands of Virginia. The first, "An Act for adjusting and settling the titles of claims of unpatented lands under the present and former government of the commonwealth's land office," validated all claims that had been surveyed before January 24, 1778, including those of land companies. Futhermore, all settlers on western lands who lived on their lands as of January 1, 1778 were to receive four hundred acres of land a family to be known as settlement rights. If the farmer had made improvements on the land, he received preemption rights to the adjoining thousand acres. These lands cost the settler ten shillings a hundred acres. Anyone who settled on his lands after January 1, 1778 did not have settlement rights but had preemption rights to four hundred acres at the price of £40 a hundred acres. Settlers on company lands had to pay the companies the price at which the companies sold the lands plus interest.<sup>54</sup>

The second act, which established the land office, provided for the acquisition of land by military bounties for service in the French and Indian War and in the American Revolution; parcels ranged from fifty acres for privates to five thousand acres for field officers. These were known as military rights. In addition, there were treasury rights, which meant that a person could purchase a land warrant at the rate of £40 a hundred acres. Such warrants first had to be claimed in the land entry book of the county. Then the land had to be surveyed. Anyone could purchase as much land as he wanted.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> The petition is found in the Arthur Campbell Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, X, 35-50.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-65.

The people settled on the western lands resented the concessions made to the land companies, and they soon began sending petitions to the state capital. Joining in the protest, Arthur Campbell drafted two petitions to be presented to the General Assembly. He called one of them "The Memorial of the Inhabitants of Washington County," while he labelled the other as "The Memorial and Remonstrance of Kentucky."<sup>56</sup> In the Washington County Memorial, Campbell protested that the "good people" on the "western waters" had flattered themselves that the vacant lands would be disposed of in a manner so that those of "inconsiderable Fortune" might have been able to acquire them as compensation for their "Distresses and Losses" resulting from defending their country. After that point, the draft is so faded that it becomes largely illegible. The Kentucky Petition, now torn and faded, contained a similar line of reasoning. Here Campbell argued that the people had been encouraged by the acts of the Convention of 1776 and the assemblies of 1777 and 1778 regarding land laws, but the law of 1779 renewed the claims of the companies which had long been rejected. Here he referred to the fact that the land act recognized the surveys by the land company subject to the final decision of the court of appeals on the matter. For the settlers on company lands, this meant that they had to pay the prices demanded by the companies rather than the lower costs of settlement on preemption lands. Since the Loyal Company had surveyed large areas of southwest Virginia, generally in the most desirable locations, the legislation affected many settlers, including Arthur Campbell.

These torn and faded petitions clearly represent Campbell's views. He protested the benefits to the land companies and talked of their "undue influence." He also called for the act to be amended in order to remove the claims of the companies. Campbell did not think the companies had a right to these lands, and he seems not to have paid his debt as he still owed money to the Loyal Company in 1793.<sup>57</sup>

Unfortunately, Campbell did not put a date on the complaints regarding the land act of 1779. The act passed in the late spring of 1779, and some time would have lapsed before copies became available to him. He then would have taken more time to digest this law and draw up his remonstrances. Then, if he wanted to send his petition to Kentucky to be circulated, more time would have

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<sup>56</sup> The manuscripts are found in the Campbell-Preston Papers.

<sup>57</sup> Memorandum of Bonds Returned to Mr. Francis Preston which was put into his hands to collect on acct. of the Loyal Company, November 8, 1793, Campbell-Preston Papers.

been necessary. The archivists at the Library of Congress have placed the petition among the 1780 Campbell-Preston Papers, but it is possible that the petitions were not drawn up until the fall of 1781. At that time, Campbell received correspondence from Colonel Harry Innes, a member of a commission of three appointed to settle land titles in Montgomery and Washington counties. Innes complained about the surveyors for the Loyal Company imposing on people in the west and suggested that Congress should be petitioned.<sup>58</sup> As a result of this letter, Campbell wrote Colonel William Edmondson that he hoped to petition the assembly regarding the land laws.<sup>59</sup> A draft petition from Montgomery is also found in the Campbell-Preston Papers and on December 1 and 14, 1781, the General Assembly received two petitions from Washington County on this matter.<sup>60</sup> As will be seen shortly, the drafting of these petitions is important.

Meanwhile, Thomas Walker took the case of the Loyal Company to the courts in December 1779 to have the claims validated for his organization. The Court of Appeals finally decided on May 2, 1783 that "all surveys made by a county surveyor, or his deputy, properly qualified, according to law, previous to the year, 1776 . . . ought to be confirmed; and that the register be directed to issue patents upon all such surveys as shall be returned."<sup>61</sup> That finally resolved the land issue.

All of this involves Arthur Campbell and the attempt to gain statehood for Kentucky. Patricia Watlington traces the origin of the movement to the land laws of 1779. With discontent being expressed in Washington and Montgomery counties, Kentucky County would be expected to show dissatisfaction as well. This was especially true since many of those in Kentucky had only recently arrived and could not obtain land through settlement rights. They would have to purchase treasury warrants for their land. Even then they had difficulty in locating land since those with military and settlement rights had priority. The fact that people with money to invest could take over large blocks of land for speculative purposes compounded their difficulties. The ordinary settler thus faced many problems in acquiring land at a cheap rate. The businessmen also disliked the laws since Virginia would no longer give large grants to land companies. They could possibly profit more if Ken-

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58 Col. Harry Innes to Campbell, September 17, 1781, Draper MS 9DD29.

59 Campbell to Edmondson, September 22, 1781, Draper MS 9DD30.

60 Abernethy, *Western Lands*, p. 255.

61 Quoted in Henderson, *Dr. Thomas Walker and the Loyal Land Company*, p. 41.

tucky became a state with its own land laws. According to Watlington, these "Land speculators who backed the congressional claim to Kentucky were quick to encourage" the discontent of the other residents.<sup>62</sup>

Up to this point Watlington's interpretation of the events seems sound, but she goes astray when she says that "The separation movement began in obscurity in 1779. Apparently directed from Virginia by Arthur Campbell, it was encouraged by his friends who lived in Kentucky or who went there on business."<sup>63</sup> At another point she states that "Arthur Campbell, the most enterprising of the individual speculators, originated the anti-Virginia petition circulated in Kentucky during 1779."<sup>64</sup> Thus, she ascribes to Campbell the role of originating the statehood movement with an "anti-Virginia" petition and claims that he was one of the most important speculators in Kentucky.

Watlington mistakenly interprets the 1779 petition as "anti-Virginia." It is, instead, a protest against the benefits accruing to the land companies as a result of the land law of 1779. Nothing is said about separation from Virginia. The petition, furthermore, is undated, but Watlington places it in the summer of 1779;<sup>65</sup> however, she offers no proof that it was written in 1779, nor that it was circulated in Kentucky. These are no more than assumptions on her part. As pointed out earlier, this petition may have been written as late as 1781. In light of this, it is extremely doubtful that the origins of the statehood movement can be attributed to Campbell in 1779. Since no petition for separate statehood appears until 1780,<sup>66</sup> this is probably a more appropriate date.

Watlington indicates that Campbell's motivation in proposing Kentucky's separation resulted from his desire to profit from land transactions, something he could and did do under the Virginia land law of 1779. In fact, he acquired twenty-one tracts of land in Washington County which totalled 11,277 acres. Of these tracts of land fifteen were purchased by treasury warrants, two were bequests, and four were acquired by purchasing grants originally made to others.<sup>67</sup>

Watlington offers no proof that Campbell speculated in Kentucky land, nor does she define a "speculator." Then, after stating

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62 Watlington, *Partisan Spirit*, p. 47.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

64 *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 240.

66 *Ibid.*

67 Washington County, Virginia Land Survey Book I, 2, 5, 9, 152, 178, 196, 264, 306, 308, 309, 337, 365, 371, 411.

that Campbell was one of the greatest speculators in Kentucky, she says: "Exactly how Campbell hoped to benefit by these activities is not clear. Motives of personal pique and political ambition have been suggested, as well as his hope of financial profit."<sup>68</sup> As proof for this, she cites Abernethy,<sup>69</sup> but he does not include the charge of financial profit.

Arthur Campbell always wanted to acquire lands, but he did not speculate in Kentucky lands on a grand scale. A speculator is one who acquires land with the hope of selling it for a rather quick and easy profit. Campbell does not fit this definition in Kentucky. As best as can be reconstructed, he acquired only 2,600 acres of land in Kentucky during his life. His first land came as the result of his grant of 2,000 acres for service in the French and Indian War.<sup>70</sup> Before the surveyors from Fincastle County went out to locate lands for people such as George Washington, Patrick Henry, William Christian, William Russell, Evan Shelby, and William Byrd, Arthur Campbell wrote the surveyor asking that a survey of 1,000 acres be made for him at Gasper's Lick.<sup>71</sup> The surveyors departed William Preston's house on April 9, 1774 and were in Kentucky when Lord Dunmore's War broke out. William Russell had to send Michael Stoner and Daniel Boone out to warn them to return to the settlements.<sup>72</sup> As a result, the surveyors failed to complete their work. They did survey one thousand acres for Campbell on June 3, 1774 on Beargrass Creek, which flows into the Ohio River just above the Falls of the Ohio (Louisville).<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Watlington, *Partisan Spirit*, p. 48.

<sup>69</sup> Abernethy, *Western Lands*, p. 222. Abernethy says: "The activities of this man are very strange. He was closely affiliated with the powerful Valley group which was led by Preston, Christian, Fleming, William Russell, Stephen Trigg, and others of Scotch-Irish strain. . . . But Arthur Campbell, though he held lands under the Loyal Company and was still on good terms with several of this group, had already given evidence of hostility to that organization. He was to give much more evidence of it in the future, and his method was to stir up the simple settlers against its claim. It has been alleged that his stand was due to personal pique, but it seems more probable that it was due to political ambition."

<sup>70</sup> Governor Dunmore, Warrant to the Surveyor of Fincastle County, December 15, 1773, Arthur Campbell Papers; Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia*, pp. 658, 1415. Soon after the award was made, Campbell wrote the governor asking how the land was to be located and if it could be subdivided. The governor responded that the land had to be taken out in one thousand acre lots for each survey but could afterwards be subdivided into smaller plots as the settler might wish. See Dunmore to Campbell, February 4, 1774, Arthur Campbell Papers.

<sup>71</sup> Memorandum by Arthur Campbell to Surveyor of Fincastle County, March 1, 1774, Draper MS 3QQ10.

<sup>72</sup> William Russell to William Preston, June 26, 1774, Draper MS 3QQ46; R. S. Cotterill, "Kentucky in 1774," *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, I (October, 1926), 24-34.

<sup>73</sup> Willard Rouse Jillson, *The Kentucky Land Grants: A Systematic Index to all the Land Grants Recorded in the State Land Office at Frankfort, Kentucky, 1782-1924* (Louisville, 1925), p. 32; Joan Brookes-Smith, *Master Index: Virginia Surveys and Grants, 1774-1791* (Frankfort, 1976), p. 31. Campbell's military grant was located in what is now downtown Louisville, south of Broadway and between Fourth and Shelby streets. See Neal O. Hammon, "The Fincastle Surveyors at the Falls of the Ohio, 1774," *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, 47 (January, 1973), 14-28.

After that, Dunmore's War and the early years of the Revolution prevented any further developments for Campbell on his Kentucky lands. When the land act of 1779 passed, he gained clear title to his thousand-acre tract,<sup>74</sup> but no record of the other thousand acres exists, and he did not have another block of land claimed by right of service in the French and Indian War of that size in Kentucky.

Under the 1779 legislation Campbell claimed 400 acres on the Ohio River, 460 on the Green River, 600 on Flat Creek, and 600 on Buck Lick Creek, all in Jefferson County. Two other tracts of 600 acres each were claimed in Lincoln County but they seem to be the same as in Jefferson County. Apparently some doubt existed about where the boundary line lay, and Campbell claimed the lands in both counties.<sup>75</sup> No surveys were made at this time, and thus no grant resulted. Campbell's holdings therefore amounted to his original thousand acres during the time that Kentucky sought to win statehood.

No records of other deeds for land in Kentucky for Campbell appear until 1795 by which time Kentucky had become a state. In that year, the 600 acre tract on Buck Lick Creek was surveyed, and the grant to him was approved the following year. Also in 1796, he had surveyed and had granted to him the 600 acres on Flat Creek and 500 acres on the Ohio River.<sup>76</sup> In 1796 Campbell paid taxes on 1000 acres in Jefferson County near the Falls of the Ohio, on 600 acres in Lincoln County on Yellow Creek, on 600 acres on Buck Creek, and on 400 acres in Hardin County near the mouth of Yellow Bank Creek.<sup>77</sup> At least twice, Campbell thought of selling his land near the Falls of the Ohio,<sup>78</sup> but he held on to it despite growing financial difficulties in his last years. His will, which he wrote in 1811, does not list all his Kentucky lands, but he does mention the 1000 acre tract near the Falls of the Ohio and

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74 Brookes-Smith, *Master Index*, p. 30.

75 Willard Rouse Jillson, *Old Kentucky Entries and Deeds: A Complete Index to all of the Earliest Land Entries, Military Warrants, Deeds and Wills of the Commonwealth of Kentucky* (Louisville, 1926), p. 20

76 Joan Brookes-Smith, *Index for Old Kentucky Surveys and Grants* (Frankfort, 1975), p. 28.

77 George Madson, Auditor's Office, Receipt to Arthur Campbell, October 20, 1796, Arthur Campbell Papers. The taxes were for the years 1792-1795 and were in arrears because Campbell had to pay interest. Although he did not have title to some of his lands until 1795-1796, the lands listed on the receipt appear to be identical with these plots. Another puzzling piece of evidence is a "List of Certificates left with the Marshal of the State of Kentucky for him to make out Deeds, before my return next Sept." dated June 9, 1806 in the Arthur Campbell Papers. In this he lists the name of Richard Bibbs and has 400 after it, Henry Harrison, 600, and Richard Barber, 10,000 for a total of 11,000. Below this is the name of Joab Champion, 1000. Quite possibly Campbell was acting for someone else in these transactions.

78 Articles of Agreement between Arthur Campbell and Andrew Vance, April 19, 1792, Arthur Campbell Papers; Valentine Merriweather to Campbell, [1802], Arthur Campbell Papers.

says it should be sold when the price reached \$20.00 an acre. Also the 600 acres on Yellow Creek were to be sold. The rest of his Kentucky lands, he left to two of his sons. Apparently he had about 2600 acres in Kentucky when he died. The conclusion must be, therefore, that Campbell did acquire some land in Kentucky, but he did not obtain it in order to make a profit. Watlington's characterization of him as "the most enterprising of the individual speculators" in Kentucky is thus unwarranted.

Since several authors assume Campbell's motive in the Franklin movement and Kentucky statehood movement was to profit from land speculations it seems appropriate to discuss all his land holdings. One block of land that he owned was Royal Oak. The Fincastle County records show that three tracts of land were surveyed for him in 1774 and 1775. These were parcels of 293, 279, and 1,215 acres.<sup>79</sup> This land was originally obtained from the Loyal Company, but when the Land Act of 1779 passed, Campbell had part of this land surveyed, and he claimed it by virtue of a treasury warrant, apparently with the aim of paying the state's price rather than that of the company. The total acreage was surveyed in 1781 as 1,140 acres. This was the first land surveyed in Washington under the new land legislation.<sup>80</sup> Due to the vagueness of the surveys and conflicting totals, it is difficult to know just how much land Campbell held in the vicinity of Royal Oak; however, if the highest amount is assumed to be correct, he controlled 1,787 acres. Most of the land he owned lay east of Cumberland Gap in what is now Lee County, Virginia. As noted above he acquired 11,277 acres there. In addition, there are indications from other sources that Campbell owned six other tracts of land in Lee County which totaled more than 1,436 acres. The exact amount cannot be determined since the acreage for one parcel is not given. Four of these were acquired by purchase from other people, and two were grants to Campbell.<sup>81</sup> The sum of his holdings that were obtained after the Land Act of 1779 was in excess of 13,713 acres. In 1803 Campbell made a list of his land in Lee County and totaled it up to be 13,817 acres.<sup>82</sup> In addition, he held at least 1,665 acres in Tennessee.<sup>83</sup> All of his property thus amounted to about 21,000 acres.

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<sup>79</sup> Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia*, pp. 656, 658.

<sup>80</sup> Washington County Land Survey Book I, 1.

<sup>81</sup> Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia*, pp. 656, 658; Washington County Deed Book I, 3.

<sup>82</sup> The list is found in the Arthur Campbell Papers.

<sup>83</sup> Land Grant from Gov. Richard Caswell of North Carolina, 1787, to Arthur Campbell,

Despite the fact that Campbell acquired control of thousands of acres of land, he, strictly speaking, should not be termed a speculator because the records reveal that he gave up very little land and when he did, he gave it to members of his family or sold it to ease his own financial difficulties. He deeded away so little land that it can be easily listed. In 1772, he sold a tract of 340 acres on a creek running into the James River.<sup>84</sup> Obviously this property, on the other side of the mountains, could not be easily used by him. Not until 1781 did he sell more property, a total of 600 acres known as Campbell's Choice, which actually belonged to his wife.<sup>85</sup> In 1785 he sold 120 acres for £120. The next land sold consisted of 50 acres which he transferred to the town of Abingdon.<sup>86</sup> About the turn of the century, Campbell began to dispose of more land. One tract of 400 acres, he deeded to his daughter Elizabeth and her husband, while he turned over to his son William another tract of 773 acres.<sup>87</sup> Then Campbell appears to have run into serious financial difficulties and began to sell land to settle his debts. In 1802, he sold 500 acres on Cove Creek to Thomas Gate for \$930.00,<sup>88</sup> and turned over three tracts of land in Lee County, the amount not being specified, to Daniel Sheffey for the benefit of Adam Douglas, to whom Campbell owed \$1,270.00. The transaction was to be voided if Campbell should be able to pay the debt,<sup>89</sup> but there is no indication that he did so. The amount which Campbell figured he had to pay taxes on in 1803 probably included these tracts. Then Campbell had to give up 280 acres to Jacob Blessings in return for a debt of \$1,400.00. Blessings gave Campbell until August 1, 1803 to pay the debt, but he lost the parcel of land which included his home of Royal Oak or Goodwood.<sup>90</sup> After this Campbell spent some time wandering about in Kentucky and Lee County, finally settling down on his land on Yellow Creek west of Cumberland Gap (Middlesboro, Kentucky). The last land sold by Campbell was in 1806 when he transferred 185 acres to Henry Wood for \$100.00.<sup>91</sup> His will indicated that he gave his son James a tract of

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Notes of Survey, Plat and Survey of Land in Clalborne County, Tennessee, September 19, 1809, Arthur Campbell Papers.

84 Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia*, p. 546.

85 Washington County Deed Book I, 3.

86 *Ibid.*, I, 22, 205.

87 Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia*, p. 1340; Washington County Deed Book I, 333.

88 Washington County Deed Book III, 17.

89 Lyman Chalkley, ed., *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia, Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1745-1800* (3 Vols.; Rosslyn, Virginia, 1912), II, 137; Washington County Deed Book III, 50.

90 Washington County Deed Book III, 53; Mortgage in Arthur Campbell Papers.

91 Deed in Arthur Campbell Papers.

land, probably 750 acres. Therefore out of a total acreage of about 21,000 acres, he disposed of only approximately 4,000 acres plus the three tracts for which the acreage was not given. And he seems to have been reluctant to give up any of his land except to his children. He was acquisitive, even grasping, but not a speculator who planned to get rich quickly. He built his own little empire and held on to it as long as he could, evidently with the idea of creating a heritage for his children.

Just how Campbell made his living cannot be determined. Very few surviving records deal with economic matters, and they are relatively unimportant. This puzzled the Duke of Orléans, the future Louis-Philippe, king of the French. George Washington arranged a tour for him and two of his brothers while the Revolution raged in France. Louis-Philippe and his brothers spent a night at the Campbells. He remarked:

He lives on the left bank of the Holstein river, in a setting that would be lovely if the land were cleared; but, although he has six sons and several Negroes, he settles for what he cleared when he first arrived. . . . I do not know what he and his sons do all day, and because he seems such a fine fellow I asked him point blank. He answered that because he owns property in other parts he is always on the go and never at home.<sup>92</sup>

The duke also did not like the food since they had to wait "three hours for a terrible breakfast" which they did not receive until eleven o'clock.<sup>93</sup> Campbell's financial situation was so bad in 1810 the year before he died that he had to borrow \$10.00 from his son Arthur Lee in order to buy some pork for the winter.<sup>94</sup> Despite all his lands he never made a fortune; in fact the longer he held the land, the worse off he became financially.

Watlington further misrepresents her sources of information by saying of Campbell:

A Virginian, he was apparently more interested in making western areas independent than in establishing Congress's control. He sometimes urged the congressional claim and at other times encouraged westerners to separate from Congress as well as from the mother state. He actually created an independent state in western North Carolina and nearly created one in western Virginia. As early as 1780 a Kentuckian wrote to him "to return our thanks in behalf of the Kentucky Inhabitants for your attention shown to their distresses."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Louis-Philippe, *Diary of My Travels in America* (New York, 1977), pp. 52-53.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>94</sup> Arthur Campbell to Arthur Lee Campbell, February 7, 1811, Campbell Family Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

<sup>95</sup> Watlington, *Partisan Spirit*, p. 48.

As her source for claiming that Campbell was interested in making western areas independent of Congress, Watlington uses Abernethy, but the pages she quotes do not support this idea. In fact, no such evidence exists.<sup>96</sup>

The question of Campbell's involvement in creating new western states will be discussed later. Let it suffice here to say he did not create the state of Franklin and had less success in southwest Virginia than he expected.

Furthermore, the letter Watlington refers to which thanked Campbell for his help to the Kentucky inhabitants apparently had nothing to do with the political development there. John Todd,<sup>97</sup> a militia commander, wrote this letter in order to thank Campbell for aid during a recent military emergency in Kentucky. Colonel John Bowman reported Kentucky's distress to Campbell by express in June, 1780, informing him that British regulars numbering six hundred, accompanied by one hundred Indians were on their way to attack the fort at the Falls of the Ohio.<sup>98</sup> Campbell assembled supplies and received approval from Governor Thomas Jefferson to send three companies to the relief of Kentucky under the command of William Edmondson.<sup>99</sup> Todd, a member of the General Assembly in Richmond at the time, knew of these preparations and thus wrote Campbell to thank him for helping Kentucky in her distress. Apparently these measures helped Kentucky, which the legislature that year divided into the counties of Jefferson, Lincoln, and Fayette, with Todd appointed the county lieutenant of Fayette.<sup>100</sup> Working on the false assumption that Campbell led the separatist movement in Kentucky, Watlington tends to see confirmation in a letter that does not deal with that subject.

Professor Watlington also makes the mistake of assuming that if the people in Kentucky who favored separation from Virginia corresponded with Campbell telling him what happened that he directed the events. This says far too much for the ability of Campbell to control people and far too little for the men in Kentucky who participated in the movement. Watlington even attaches importance to the fact that John Kincaid, who was early involved in the separatist movement, had been "befriended in 1779"<sup>101</sup> by Campbell. In reality, the letter she quotes may be from

<sup>96</sup> She cites Abernethy, *Western Lands*, *in passim*, but especially pp. 123-35, 258-73, 288-310.

<sup>97</sup> John Todd, Jr., to Arthur Campbell, July 2, 1780, Arthur Campbell Papers.

<sup>98</sup> Arthur Campbell to William Preston, June 7, 1780, "Preston Papers," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, XXVII (January, 1919), 46-47.

<sup>99</sup> Campbell to Preston, June 23, 1780, *ibid.*, 47-48.

<sup>100</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, X, 315-17; Abernethy, *Western Lands*, p. 249.

<sup>101</sup> Watlington, *Partisan Spirit*, p. 61.

a Joseph Kinkead (the spelling of the last name does vary) rather than John Kincaid; it asks Campbell to lend his son \$100.00. The son was on his way to pick up some prisoners.<sup>102</sup> Whether this was John Kincaid or Joseph Kinkead, no political significance should be attached to this correspondence. It is even likely that Campbell could not lend the money and thus made an enemy.

Another person whom Watlington sees as a tool of Campbell in Kentucky is Ebenezer Brooks. Brooks, a restless man, studied at the University of Pennsylvania where he received his degree in 1771.<sup>103</sup> Four years later the Presbyterian Church licensed him to preach in New Castle, Pennsylvania.<sup>104</sup> The following year he remained in Pennsylvania,<sup>105</sup> but by 1781, he resided in Washington County, Virginia, where he and the Rev. Charles Cummings applied to and were certified by the court to solemnize marriages.<sup>106</sup> Arthur Campbell operated a school at his home, and he might have hired Brooks as a teacher as Brooks is known to have later run a school in Kentucky.<sup>107</sup> But Brooks soon became involved in a religious controversy<sup>108</sup> and then suddenly appears in the records as Dr. Ebenezer Brooks.<sup>109</sup> He apparently simply decided to become a doctor and began the practice of medicine. Sometime, perhaps in 1782, he went to Kentucky. Without doubt, he did have a close relationship with Arthur Campbell, but Campbell possibly looked to him for ideas rather than the reverse. After his adventures in Kentucky, Brooks returned to live with the Campbells and wrote a book on shorthand and a reply to Paine's *Age of Reason*. Campbell spent a great deal of his time promoting his friend, seeking positions for him, and attempting to get his book published.<sup>110</sup> He appears not to have been an inferior man to Arthur Campbell and does not seem to have been his tool.

Campbell's actual role in the statehood movement in Kentucky seems to have begun in 1782 not 1779. Instead of Campbell's instigating the separatist movement, the movement there may have been responsible for some of his ideas regarding a large western

102 Jo[seph]? Kinkead to Campbell, July 8, 1779, Arthur Campbell Papers.

103 Information supplied by Registrar, University of Pennsylvania.

104 *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1706-1788* (Philadelphia, 1904), p. 462.

105 *Ibid.*, pp. 472, 476.

106 Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia*, p. 1075.

107 "Henderson Company Ledger," *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, 21 (1947), 46.

108 Gordon Aronhime, "Ebenezer Brooks: Forgotten Genius of the Holston Frontier," *Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia Publications, Series II, Number 8* (July, 1970), 8-9. This article contains many errors.

109 Washington County, Virginia Survey Book entry of March 1, 1782 refers to him as Dr. Brooks.

110 There are numerous letters in the Timothy Pickering Papers seeking support for the publication of Brooks' book and positions for him in the government.

state which he called Frankland. An even greater source of inspiration was probably the writings of Thomas Paine whose works Campbell greatly admired until Paine wrote his *Age of Reason*. During the midst of the Frankland controversy, he advised a friend to "get Dr. Price's observations on civil liberty together with all the writings of Mr. Paine. These will be sufficient library for a farmer, and they will cost but a trifle. It is a great thing for every freeman to learn justly to judge aright for himself."<sup>111</sup> Campbell's ideas of a western state quite possibly resulted from reading Paine's *Public Good: Being an Examination into the Claims of Virginia to the Vacant Western Territory, and the Right of the United States to the Same*" to which is added proposals for laying off a New State, to be applied as a Fund for Carrying on the War, or Redeeming the National Debt. This pamphlet appeared on December 30, 1780, and in it Paine attacked Virginia's claim to her western territory pointing out that the Proclamation of 1763 limited her to the area east of the Allegheny Mountains. Paine then discussed the problems that Virginia would encounter in attempting to retain this area and the advantages for the Old Dominion should she give up her claims and allow a new state to be created. As he saw it, the boundaries of the new state should extend from the Alleghenies northward to the Pennsylvania line, then to the Ohio River at the Falls of the Ohio, then southward to the North Carolina line, and then east to the Allegheny Mountains.

Shortly before Paine's *Public Good* appeared, the Confederation Congress passed a resolution concerning the western lands. The Congress declared that if the states of Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia should cede their western lands, this territory would be organized into "separate . . . states at such times and in such manner as congress shall hereafter direct."<sup>112</sup> Thus Congress clearly sought jurisdiction over western lands and aimed toward an orderly development of new governments in the west.

Early in 1782, Campbell sent out letters to a number of frontier leaders about establishing a new western state whose boundaries would be virtually those as proposed by Paine. A letter to John Sevier, a resident of North Carolina (now Tennessee) was written on January 21, and a letter to William Christian was dated February 9. About the same time, Campbell wrote John Donelson in Lincoln County, in Kentucky. Sevier, in his reply, mentioned re-

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<sup>111</sup> Campbell to Edmiston, August 26, 1785, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, IV, 100-101.

<sup>112</sup> Gallard Hunt and Worthington C. Ford, eds., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, (34 vols.; Washington, 1904-1937), XVII, 808.



Congress by a Mr. Rees and another to the General Assembly of Virginia. Donelson stated that, "We shall think ourselves happy if the measures shall nearly correspond with such measures as you may take."<sup>116</sup> Thus Campbell sought to organize meetings throughout the west for the purpose of establishing a separate western state, but he soon found there was strong opposition in Kentucky as there was in Virginia to this idea.

In western North Carolina, John Sevier and others had more success. They led a movement to establish what they called the state of Franklin. Despite the fact that Watlington says that Campbell created a separate state in western North Carolina, he did not. He originated the idea, but John Sevier and others soon went their own way. She is also incorrect in saying that he nearly created an independent state in Virginia because he faced tremendous opposition there led by William Russell. In 1784 and 1785 a lot of separatist activity took place in and around Abingdon, but in 1785 Governor Patrick Henry suspended Arthur Campbell as the county lieutenant of Washington County and replaced him with Russell. Campbell also lost his position of Justice of the peace. Then the General Assembly passed an act making it "highly criminal in any person to alienate the citizens of the state from their attachment and allegiance to the same" and provided that any person who attempted to form another state without the consent of the Virginia legislature or who took part in the affairs of any such state would be guilty of high treason and would be punished in the same way as other traitors.

The "treason act," as it was known, stunned Campbell and he immediately stopped his demands for a new state. In 1786 he ran for the legislature again, and the people sent him back to Richmond while turning down William Russell. By that time the governor had reappointed him as county lieutenant and after years of legal battles he regained his position as justice of the peace.<sup>117</sup>

While Virginia officials tried to contain Campbell, he sought his revenge for those in Kentucky who opposed his great western dream. On August 19, 1782, some Kentucky forces caught up with enemy soldiers and Indians at Blue Licks. Major Hugh McGary insisted on pressing an attack rather than waiting for reinforcements. In the battle that followed, John Todd and Stephen Trigg were killed, and the Kentuckians were routed.<sup>118</sup> Campbell seized

<sup>116</sup> Donelson to Campbell, April 20, 1782, Draper MS 9DD34.

<sup>117</sup> See Hagy and Folmsbee, "Arthur Campbell and the Separate State Movements in Virginia and North Carolina." Also Hening, *Statutes*, XII, 41-42.

<sup>118</sup> Bodley, *History of Kentucky*, I, 203.

on this opportunity to attack almost everyone involved but singled out especially his opponents McGary, who had broken up the spring meeting, and George Rogers Clark, who also opposed statehood but was not at Blue Licks. According to Campbell, "Never was the lives of so many valuable men lost more shamefully than in the late action on the 19th of August, and that not a little thro the vain and seditious expressions of a Major McGeary. How much more harm than good can one fool do?" Todd and Trigg, he said, "had capacity but wanted experience," while other commanders such as Boone, Harlin, and Lindsay "had experience but were defective in capacity." Had their advice been followed, however, the incident would have turned out well. Logan, on the other hand, was "a dull, narrow body from whom nothing clever need be expected." Then Campbell attacked Clark by saying, "Genl. Clarke is in that country, but he has lost the confidence of the people, and it is said become a Sot: perhaps something worse."<sup>119</sup> Clark's reputation in Richmond suffered from this charge,<sup>120</sup> and he seems to have been greatly harmed by the attack.

The next step in the movement for statehood in Kentucky came with a meeting in November 1784 at Danville. The gathering was supposed to be for the purpose of dealing with the military situation, but Colonel Benjamin Logan, who called the meeting, may have had political objectives from the beginning. A report had arrived that the Cherokees and the Chickamaugas were about to launch an invasion. One of the grievances of the Kentuckians against Virginia was that they could not adequately respond to military emergencies since they had to obtain permission from the Virginia executive before taking action.<sup>121</sup> The main source of information on this meeting comes from Ebenezer Brooks who attended and wrote an account of the proceedings to Arthur Campbell. In the discussions that lasted two days, some of those attending opposed sending an expedition against the Indians, as Logan wanted, since it would be illegal. Then Brooks, "an obscure little man, whom you may conceive to be your humble servant, arose and discussed the point, both with respect to law and order." Brooks succeeded in getting approval for the expedition only to learn, from a letter from Colonel Joseph Martin, that the Indians were peaceful and that no offensive was needed. Brooks remained undaunted, however, and proceeded to propose that the time had arrived to "demand what the constitution had promised us, — a

<sup>119</sup> Campbell to Davies, October 3, 1782, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, III, 37.

<sup>120</sup> Bodley, *Clark*, pp. 212-13.

<sup>121</sup> Watlington, *Partisan Spirit*, pp. 75-76.

separate government." The group then agreed to call for an election to be held in the militia companies, whereby delegates could be elected for a meeting to be held the following month.<sup>122</sup>

Brooks' smug letter claims for himself the real beginning of steps toward separate statehood for Kentucky.<sup>123</sup> No doubt, he discussed with Arthur Campbell his ideas about the western country, but the fact that he calls himself Campbell's "humble servant" has no significance since such flowery comments often appear in letters of that time.

The first of many conventions concerning the status of Kentucky met on December 27, 1784. At the meeting Brooks proposed that the district should immediately separate from Virginia, but others favored a slower constitutional process and, in the end, decided to call another convention for May 1785.<sup>124</sup> By this time, many people who had favored separation now favored staying with Virginia, while some of those who had been pro-Virginian now wanted separation.<sup>125</sup> To a large extent, this seems to have had a great deal to do with who would be in power. Convention after convention met; not until 1792 did Kentucky win statehood.<sup>126</sup>

During the time that Kentuckians sought statehood, Arthur Campbell kept abreast of what was happening. During 1782 and 1783, and again in 1786 and 1787, he served in the General Assembly and thus dealt with the petitions from Kentucky. Professor Watlington makes much of the fact that a number of those who favored separation in Kentucky corresponded with him, and this "strongly suggests that they looked to him in support in planning an absolute and violent separation for Kentucky;"<sup>127</sup> however, Campbell himself seems to have had an open mind on the subject and nowhere in his many surviving letters does he suggest the use of violence.<sup>128</sup> In a letter to Thomas Madison, written while Camp-

<sup>122</sup> Brooks to Campbell, November 9, 1784, Draper MS 11J37-38, printed in Bodley, *Kentucky*, I, 354-56.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Watlington, *Partisan Spirit*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>126</sup> A number of other statements about Campbell's activities in the Kentucky statehood movement are made by Watlington, all based on the assumption that he initiated the movement and was deeply involved in it from the beginning. For example, she states on page 63: "The articulate center tended to ignore Arthur Campbell's activities, perhaps because he was a Virginian like themselves and related by marriage to John Floyd, the Breckinridges, and Caleb Wallace or possibly because his friends were ineffectual at their worse and at their best were willing to support the district court." For proof that Campbell was related to these people by marriage, her footnote reads, "Ebenezer Brooks signed a petition supporting the district court. Petition to Virginia, spring, 1782, Va. State Lib., also No. 24 in Robertson, ed., *Petitions*, 78-79." This writer has seen no evidence that Campbell was related to any of these people.

<sup>127</sup> Watlington, *Partisan Spirit*, p. 121.

<sup>128</sup> Only once did his enemies in the State of Frankland movement charge him with being willing to use force to defend Franklin. See Deposition of James Kincannon, March 10, 1786, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, IV, 98.

bell attended the General Assembly in 1786, he stated, "We seem grasping in the dark about the Kentucky affairs and that takes up a good deal of time, the members from there differing among themselves what measure is best."<sup>129</sup> Campbell probably favored the cause of the separatists, but their letters do not recognize any leadership from him. For the most part the correspondence from the separatists merely informs him of what was happening in Kentucky regarding separation along with other bits of public and private news.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, Campbell would have been very much of a fool to advocate "absolute and violent separations" since the Treason Law had been passed in October 1785 specifically against him. He had ceased his activities concerning the state of Frankland. He certainly would not have taken the risk of being accused of treason for the Kentuckians, especially when he was at that time still trying to regain his position of justice of the peace for Washington County.<sup>131</sup>

Once statehood arrived, his correspondence with some of the major figures in Kentucky continued. In fact, Samuel McDowell wrote to him in 1792 to report that Isaac Shelby had been elected governor and named the eleven senators, most of whom he assumed that Campbell knew. He also asked Campbell to examine the new state constitution and note any objectionable features he might find.<sup>132</sup> While McDowell obviously valued Campbell's opinion, this letter certainly does not mean that Campbell was dictating policy to the new state. He did not dictate to the state-makers either.

Thus Arthur Campbell played an important role in the early development of Kentucky. While he at first opposed Kentucky's separation from Fincastle County, he went along with the idea and probably lobbied earnestly for it when he found a middle county would be formed where he could have greater civil and military influence. He was always an ambitious man. His role in the statehood movement is less direct and as has been pointed out, his idea for the great state of Franklin, or Frankland as he called it, may have resulted from the activities in Kentucky, the actions of the Confederate Congress, and the writings of Thomas Paine in 1781. He certainly did not direct events from afar and before the movement developed to a great extent he was under the danger of being accused of treason if he promoted such an idea. While the Virginia

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<sup>129</sup> Campbell to Madison, December 23, 1786, Draper MS 5ZZ83.

<sup>130</sup> Benjamin Logan to Campbell, May 18, 1787, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, IV, 287.

<sup>131</sup> Campbell and Robert Craig to Gov. Randolph, December 22, 1786, Arthur Campbell Papers.

<sup>132</sup> Samuel McDowell to Campbell, May 21, 1792, MS 9DD69.

Declaration of Rights (Article 9) forbade "cruel and unjust punishments" the punishment for treason in Virginia was according to common law "that the person be dragged to the place of execution, there hanged by the neck, cut down alive, his entrails taken out and burnt before his face, his head cut off, his body divided into four quarters, &c."<sup>133</sup> Even the "irate Arthur Campbell,"<sup>134</sup> as Frederick Jackson Turner called him, did not want to test that law.

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<sup>133</sup> William Waller Hening, *The New Virginia Justice, Comprising the Office and Authority of a Justice of the Peace* (Richmond, 1799), p. 456. One of the examples that Hening gives for treason is the act passed against Campbell.

<sup>134</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, "Western State-Making in the Revolutionary Era," *American Historical Review*, I (October, 1896), 260.