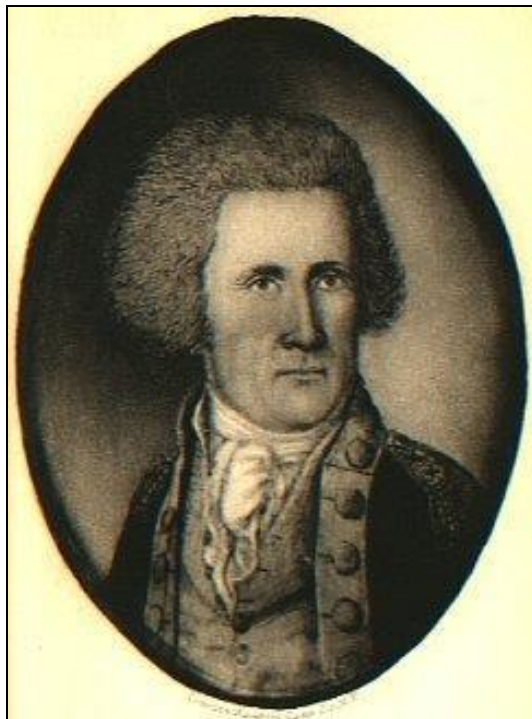


COLONEL JOHN SEVIER
Hero of the Battle of Kings Mountain
First Governor of Tennessee



GOVERNOR JOHN SEVIER AND 2ND WIFE, BONNIE KATE SHERRILL SEVIER



"Nolichucky Jack"



Courtesy of Bonny Kate Chapter,
NSDAR Knoxville, Tennessee

INTRODUCTION
The Sevier Family
From A Story Board Researched and Prepared by Earl Fletcher

Nathanael Greene Museum
John Sevier's Laurel Connection
May 17, 2014

Don Juan Xavier, a French Huguenot, (French Protestant) moved to London, England in 1685 to escape religious persecution, where his name was Anglicized to John Sevier.

In 1740, Valentine Sevier II, moved to the new country because religious persecution was still not what he wanted it to be. He married Joanna Goode and settled in Augusta County (now Rockingham County), Virginia.

John Sevier, oldest of the seven children and future soldier, politician and statesman, was born on September 23, 1745. John married Sarah Rebecca Hawkins, born in 1746, in the year 1761. They moved to and established the town of New Market, Virginia.

John & Sarah Sevier had a total of ten children; Joseph, James, John, Elizabeth, Sarah, Mary Ann, Valentine, Rebecca, Richard and Nancy.

John, Sarah & family moved to the Watauga Settlement in 1773; in 1776 John was elected to the Watauga Court.

John was appointed Colonel in the militia and on September 25, 1780 led 230 men from Watauga to the battle of King's Mountain on

October 7, 1780. Some maintain that this battle was the turning point of the Revolutionary War. It was, at least, the turning point in the Southern Command.

Unfortunately, in 1780, Sarah Rebecca Sevier died and is buried (according to tradition) behind the Elihue Embrey stone house at Telford, Tennessee.

John married Catherine (Bonnie Kate) Sherrill in 1780 (he had young children) and they had a total of eight children; Catherine, Ruthe, George Washington, Samuel, Polly, Eliza, Joanna and Robert.

In June of 1784, North Carolina ceded their western land (future Tennessee) to the Federal Government to pay their war debt. The “Overmountain People” opted to form the 14th state of Franklin. In October of 1784, North Carolina rescinded their cession, which created heavy friction between North Carolina and the Franklinites.

The Franklinites elected John Sevier as the only Governor of the ill-fated “Lost State of Franklin.”

In 1786 no one showed any interest in becoming the second Governor of Franklin and John automatically retained the position. After Congress voted (by two votes) not to accept Franklin as the 14th state, the Governor of Spain tried to persuade Sevier to become an independent Republic and accept Spain as an ally, which Sevier refused.

In October of 1788, while John Sevier was in Jonesborough, John Tipton had him arrested and sent to Morganton, North Carolina to stand trial for treason. Fortunately for Sevier, the sheriff of Burke County, William Morrison, fought with him at King's Mountain and told him, "Johnny, go home" and released him. At the end of 1788, John Sevier refused to serve again as the Governor; Evan Shelby was elected as Governor, however refused to take the seat and Franklin quietly expired.

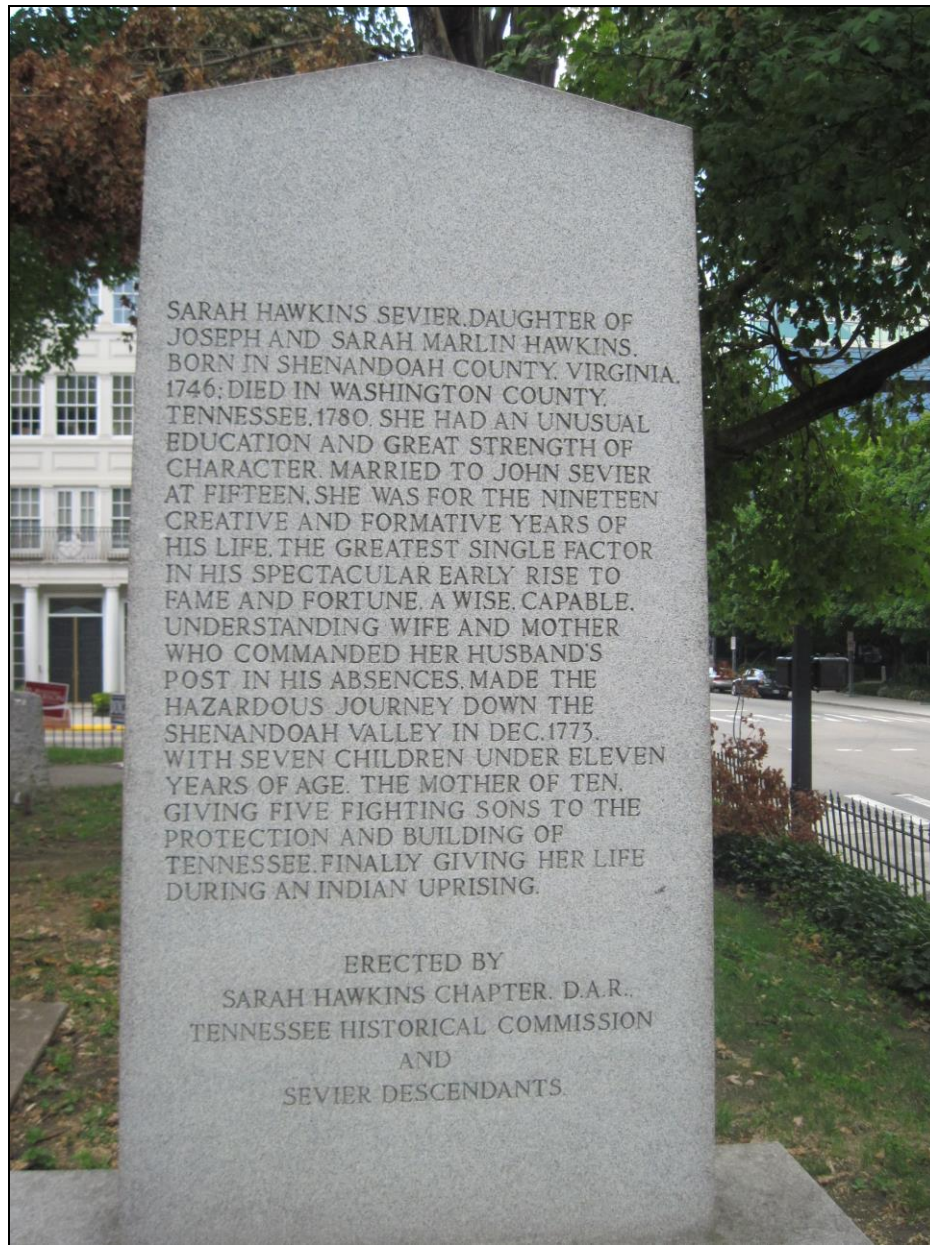
John Sevier was elected the first Governor of Tennessee and served three consecutive two-year terms, sat out one term and was elected to three more consecutive terms. In 1809 he was elected as a State Senator. In 1811 he was elected to the US Congress. John Sevier died on September 24, 1815, (one day after his 70th birthday) while surveying the Tennessee/Alabama border-line.



**[Photo courtesy of
Dr. Bob
Schneider]**

Col. John Sevier (1744-1815) and 2nd wife, Katherine Sherrill 'Bonny Kate' (1754-1836) are buried on the grounds of the Old Knoxville Courthouse.





First Wife, Sarah Hawkins (1746--1780) is buried in the Sevier Cemetery in Washington County, Tennessee

John Sevier Founded Village of New Market

New Market, the village in Shenandoah County that VMI cadets glorified, was founded by a frontiersman who loomed large on the Southwestern horizon. His statue, along with Andrew Jackson's, represents Tennessee in Statuary Hall of the National Capitol. His nickname was "Nolichucky Jack." His real name was John Sevier.

A tall shaft in Knoxville erected to his memory has this inscription:

"Pioneer, soldier, statesman, and one of the founders of the Republic; Governor of the State of Franklin; six times Governor of Tennessee; four times elected to Congress; the typical pioneer who conquered the wilderness and fashioned the state; a protector and hero of King's Mountain; 35 battles, 35 victories; his Indian war-cry, "Here they are! Come on, boys, come on!"

A feature story about him in a Richmond paper of June 12, 1912, says: "As an Indian fighter he was the greatest America has ever known."

The family name in France was Xavier. When John's grandfather fled to England to escape religious persecution the name was Anglicized to Sevier.

Valentine Sevier, John's father, and a brother ran off from home and came to Pennsylvania where he married Joanna Goade and later moved to the part of Augusta that became Rockingham and prospered. John was born in



Southwest Corner

By Goodridge Wilson

what is now Rockingham County, Sept. 23, 1745. In 1761, before he was 17, he married Sarah Hawkins.

The young couple bought a tract of good land across the Frederick County line from his father, who had bought it from Lord Fairfax. John paid for it, in part, by money borrowed on a mortgage.

John built a log house on it, in which he and Sarah made their home. He operated a store, trading with Indians for pelts and other saleable items.

Indians attacked, expecting to overcome the young couple and steal what was in the store. John ran them off, raised a posse, and went after them, beat them in a battle and recovered his stolen goods. That was his first Indian fight.

His log store was the only market in that vicinity. He called it the New Market. He laid off village lots around his store and sold them to homesteaders.

John was popular, capable and industrious. In a few years he had paid off his mortgage and was known as a man of property.

In 1771 and 1772 he made business trips through Southwest Virginia trading with settlers. In 1773 he moved from the Shenandoah to the Holston country, and later from Holston waters to the Nolichucky River.

Indians were troublesome. A stockade fort was built on the Watauga River. One morning, while women were milking cows outside the stockade, Indians attacked. The women ran to the gate and all escaped the Indians. A teen-age girl named Katherine Sherrill was the last to reach the gate. It was closed. She climbed over it and when she fell inside, John Sevier caught her in his arms. After Sarah had died he married Katherine Sherrill.

approach of Cornstalk's army and thereby saved the sleeping whites from being surprised and slaughtered.

At that time the part of Tennessee where they lived was thought to be in Southwest Virginia. It was in North Carolina, and when that colony organized Sullivan and Washington Counties, Isaac Shelby was made commander-in-chief with rank of colonel in Sullivan County, and John Sevier in Washington County. They enlisted in the Washington County Virginia Militia under Col. William Campbell and marched to King's Mountain to win that complete and immortal victory.

John Sevier, a lieutenant, and his younger brother Valentine, a private, fought in the Battle of Point Pleasant in October, 1774. Valentine was one of the early morning hunters who discovered the

Roanoke Times - Sunday, May 24, 1970
(From the Doris Sue Spence Fontaine Genealogy Collectio)