



About Stephen Holston

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TNSAR

Stephen Holston's parents were pioneers. In the early 1740's, they are recorded in the upper Catawba Valley in Betetourt County, Virginia. His father may have been Henry Holston. The Holston name was of Scandinavian probably Swedish extraction. The names of Holston and Stephen Holston are found in lists of settlers; there was a strong current of migration into the Valley of Virginia from about 1730 to 1745.

Draper's manuscript Life of Daniel Boone appears to have brought him into the Valley that bears his name. Colonel James Patton, of Augusta County VA, claimed to be the first English subject to discover the waters of two rivers south and west of New River prior to 1743. He petitioned the Virginia government for 200,000 acres in 1743. Petition was not granted, it was thought that London would not approve fearing dispute with France. Petition recorded with promise to advise when wishes could be acceded to. Accordingly, April 1745, notice sent to Patton to grant him (1745) only 100,000 acres. On October 10, 1746, Patton gave notice to sell lands for settlers. Stephen Holston manifestly went into the region about or previous to 1746 and may have been in employ of Patton. According to Douglas Brown, Holston had been on a hunting trip over the mountains years before and that he had come

upon a bold spring whose waters flowed southwest. It was the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Holston-Tennessee River. Brown placed the time as between the years 1739-1740.

Holston built his cabin at the headwaters of the Middle Fork, just across the divide of the waters from those of New River. It was about nine miles east of the site chosen by Samuel Stalnaker for his own cabin. In 1790, John Redd wrote in his Reminiscences, that the house was about 30 yards from the headspring of the Holston. This spring has been located about eight and a half miles east of Marion, Virginia. Ten miles east of Marion on Highway 111 is a historical marker. In 1748, Dr. Thomas Walker accompanied Patton, Buchanan, and other on a journey into Holston Valley and entered the Tennessee country (Sullivan County) on what was called Indian River - because it flowed towards and into the Cherokee country to the southwest. Patton and son-in-law John Buchanan surveyed for grants. In 1746 (the first March 14) there were three of these surveyed on Indian River or one of its branches. The following year two grants were laid, and in 1748 six were surveyed on Indian River, by name. However, on March 26, 1747, a tract was surveyed for James Wood on *Holston Creek*, so-called doubtless after the custom of naming a creek for the man first to settle on it. The earliest grant on Holston River, by name, was surveyed on March 14, 1748, for Charles St. Clair, 996 acres.

From what precedes it is fairly inferable that Stephen Holston was on the upper waters of Indian River as early as 1746. He had an occupant claim (corn or cabin rights) to a tract of land on the head branch of the stream's Middle Fork, which tract he sold to James Davis, who gave it the name "Davis' Fancy." Shortly after selling to Davis, Holston and some neighbors determined to explore the lower reaches of the river. It is not known what date this happened. They constructed canoes and passed downstream into Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi as far as Natchez. This adventure led to the Indian River's receiving the name of the daring

Holston. It is believed that it was so dubbed by Dr. Thomas Walker, who had a penchant for naming rivers, mountains, and gaps. If the naming of a creek in 1747 (and river in 1748) is accepted, the first designation of the river as "Holston's River" was by Dr. Walker in his journal of 1748-49. It is probable that Dr. Walker learned of the exploits of Holston on one of his visits, in 1748 and 1750, and thought the adventurer worthy of having his name firmly fixed to the graceful and beautiful stream.

The name of Holston was soon to find its way onto maps. In surveying the boundary between the provinces of Virginia and North Carolina in 1749 westward ninety-four miles, Peter Jefferson, father of President Jefferson, and Joshua Fry stopped the line at Steep Rock Creek west of the Alleghenies - Laurel Fork in Jefferson County, TN. In their map of 1751, they recorded Steep Rock Creek as flowing into Tooley's River, a branch of "Holston's River." Tooley's River is now known as Laurel Fork of the South Fork of the Holston. On the return of Holston and his party from the Natchez region, which Robert Miles of South Carolina sets the date as six years previous to the Revolution, the restless spirit of Holston or rumor of an Indian foray led him to remove with his family to Saluda Old Town on the Little Saluda in upper South Carolina. Somewhere, sometime before this he may have married Lucy Looney, daughter of Robert Looney, Sr. Some records state he married a Judith in South Carolina. He had not escaped Indian trouble. In the summer of 1753, a party of Cherokees raided his premises, nearly killed his wife and baby, and stole his horses and pewter, dishes and a kettle.

About the time of the breaking out of Indian troubles in 1754, Holston removed to Culpepper County, Virginia, where he was still not free from Indians. In 1757 he was captured by them, but making his escape he returned to the waters of the Holston in the bounds of Botetourt County, Virginia. Some records record that he was captured in 1734 and escaped in 1741. He saw service at the battle of Point Pleasant on the Ohio in October 1774, as a member of the company of Captain Henry Pauling of Potetourt. Though somewhat advanced in years, he was in Colonel William Christians' campaign of 1776 against the Cherokees and crossed "his" river over Long Island (Kingsport, TN).

In January 1781, Holston was a captain in the Revolutionary service. His detachment crossed Dan River and joined General Nathaniel Greene at Haw River in NC. It seems fairly certain that Holston was at the battle of Guilford Courthouse, March 15, 1781, as one of the 2253 Virginians who participated. He resigned as Captain of the militia in May, 1782, probably because of old age. Thus in the evening of life Holston vindicated the honor that had been done him in the naming of the river. Descendants of Stephen Holston appear to have settled in eastern Louisiana at about the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century. According to descendants, Holston removed to the Tennessee country, and it is inferable that he settled at first in Sullivan County among the relatives of his wife, who was Lucy Jane Looney, perhaps daughter of Peter Looney. According to family tradition, Holston removed further down the valley and made his last home of Holston River in the present county of Grainger.

The Holston River

Haywood states the Indians called the river "Cootcla;" and elsewhere says that it was known by the Cherokees as "Watauga." J. G. M. Ramsey states that from the Little Tennessee to the French Broad the river was called by the aborigines "Cootla" and above "Hogohegee". The French called it the Cherokee.

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Sources:

1. Stephen Holston and Holston River by Samuel C. Williams Read before the East Tennessee Historical Society on December 6, 1935 East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, Vol. 7-8, 1935-36. 976.805
2. Stephen Holston - Frontiersman, Adventurer, Revolutionary Soldier, Discoverer of the Holston-Tennessee River by Douglas Summers Brown, published by The Historical Society of Washington County, VA. Bulletin, Series II, No 27, 1990.
3. Referenced: John Haywood - brief account - The Civil and Political History of the State of TN, Knoxville, 1823, pg 42.
4. The Annals of Tennessee by J. G. M. Ramsey, published in Charleston in 1853, page 49.

Updated and New information from: *Marilyn S. Arechavala*

The Holstein family story has been documented from 1654 when the Finn Mans Paulson immigrated with family to help establish the Swedish Colony at Crane Hook, Delaware. His grandson Henry was born 1694 to his daughter Katrina and Matthias Holstein at Moyaminsing (Philadelphia). Matts Holstein was a German Dane who was skilled in making all kinds of watercraft and the operation of in whatever water source.

Henry married the first born female to the Welsh Tract Quakers in 1716. Stephen was born ca.1719 named by Sarah after her Quaker father Stephen Evan. When his widowed father remarried a Scot McCluer in the new Irish tract west of the Welsh, his 2nd son Henry Junr was born 1729, 10 year old Stephen became an apprentice under his Cox cousin a 'celebrated hunter' of the Finnish Long Hunter style. They thought nothing of trekking 100 mile distances southwest of the Susquehanna River to Maryland and Virginia.

Somewhere on the trail about 1737 Stephen met William Buchanan who was also a Pennsylvanian, older with a more classical education. They may have worked together when Wm. Was appointed a Wolf bounty hunter. It must be considered that Henry his

father taught his Scot In-Laws how to build log cabins and hunt preparing the Scot-Irish for migration to Virginia. They came from treeless lands whose game all belonged to the crown. Stephen by being a Long Hunter was likely hired as a guide and hunter for these first groups to venture southwest. He certainly was employed by Col. James Patton to assist William Buchanan to survey the Great Warriors Trail south of the James River now known as Highway 11.

Stephen lived on the Holstein branch of the south end of the Catawba River close to the Renfroes who he worked with & married into with Judith. The 1745 Indian River corn & cabin was a hunting satellite camp. I have all the history in between till he died in Natchez, Mississippi West Florida between 1783-1786. His nephew Stephen Holstein II born to his brother Henry 1751 up on Craig's Creek, VA was your Revolutionary War Hero and the man who married Lucy Looney daughter of John Looney just down the road, grandson of Robert Looney of Looney's Ferry (Buchanan).

Stephen Holstein I oldest son John was called a white Indian by the Spanish when he was with the Chickasaws half breed Colbert clan messing up shipping on the Mississippi River 1782-83. Stephen Holstein I had sons named King and Henry who lived down on Sicily Island, Louisiana. Stephen's namesake grandson was a guide & hunter to the Moses-Stephen Austin exploratory parties of Spanish Texas in 1821-22 from Sicily. My ancestor was Henry, John's son who married Lucy Austin of William, they are the Holstons who lived on the Holston River, Grainger Co. Tennessee.

General Campbell wrote Draper that Stephen Holstein/ton was the greatest Long Hunter ever. It should be told that Stephen's successful trips down the Indian River (Holston-Tennessee) were the prototypes used by the Loyal Company members to instill into the boy Thomas Jefferson the dream of his father Peter to reach the Pacific Ocean by river.

Marilyn S. Arechavala

Timelines from the Desert