

sons claiming western lands under pretext of purchase from Indians.

Under this commission Joseph Speed took depositions and made report of the facts of the celebrated treaty at Watauga in East Tennessee, where Richard Henderson claimed to have purchased that immense territory called by him Transylvania, and including the best lands in Kentucky. It is well known that this project of Henderson was nullified by Virginia.

Joseph Speed wrote a beautiful handwriting, and his composition was excellent. He was evidently a man of fine culture, as well as a man of affairs. He was also a man of shining Christian piety. He was a vestryman in his parish church in Mecklenburg.

Some of his letters have been preserved, and extracts will be here copied. They were written to his brother, Captain James Speed, who had only recently moved from Virginia to Kentucky :

“HILLSBOROUGH, May 8, 1783.

“DEAR BROTHER : I arrived here this morning from Mecklenburg. At my father's, a few days ago, I had the pleasure of reading a letter from you to him, dated November last, informing him of your safe arrival in the back country, on which I most sincerely congratulate you.

“With very great pleasure I embrace an opportunity by Colonel Donelson, to inform you that our father, together with all our brothers and sisters, and the rest of our relatives, are well, as are also our friends and acquaintances, so far as I know. I hope this may find you and your good family in health.

“Mr. Walker Daniel, before he left Halifax county, sold for me a tract of land to Thomas Robins, of said county of Halifax, for 30,000 pounds of tobacco, of which he, the said Daniel, has received of Mr. Robins 10,500 pounds, out of which he has paid me no more than one hogshhead, supposed to contain 1,450 pounds, leaving him in my debt upwards of 9,000 pounds, which I have no chance to get unless it be through your friendship.

“P. S.—On the 3d of December last I was married to Mr. Bignall's eldest daughter, Nancy. My compliments to my sister Polly and all my cousins.

“Your loving brother,

JOSEPH SPEED.”