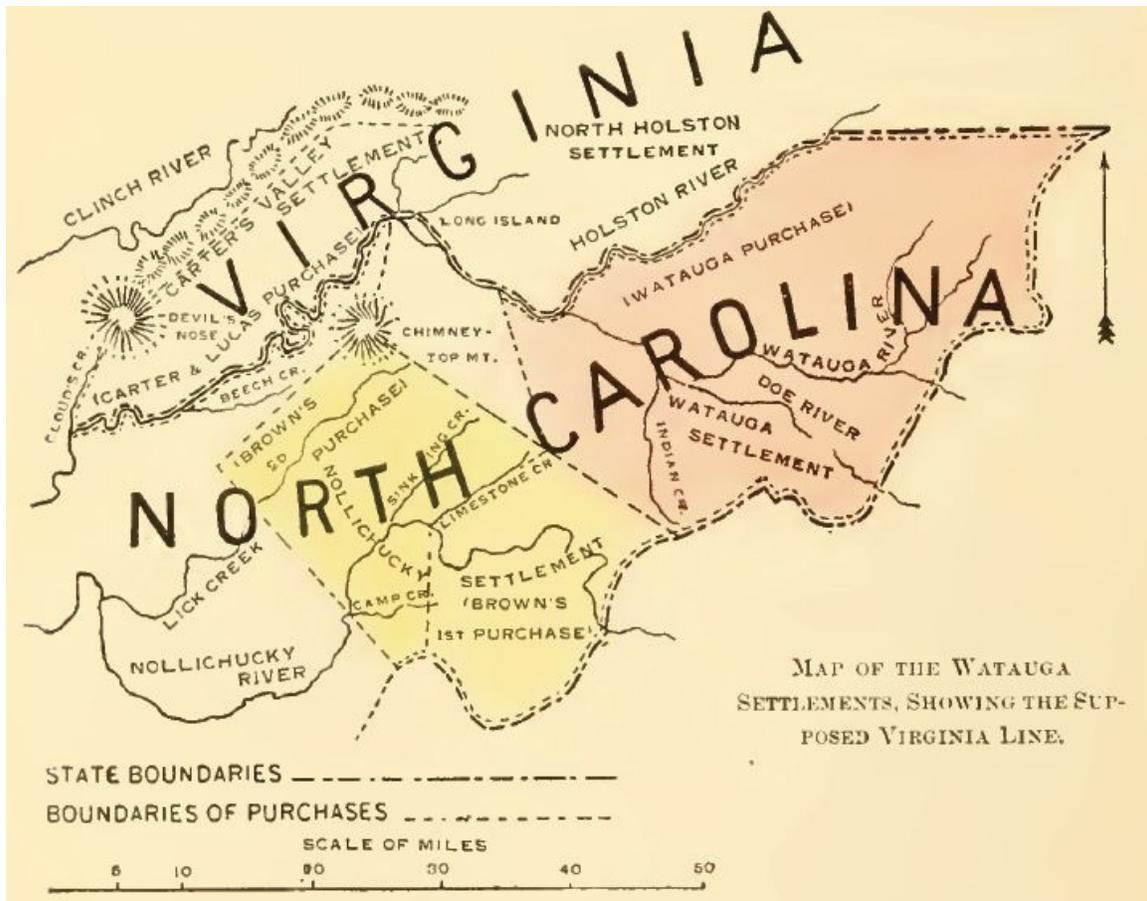


## Holston Settlers: Last Battle of Cherokees in Western Virginia (became Sullivan County, Tennessee)



July 20, 1776. The last battle of the Cherokee Indians fought to save their beloved hunting grounds on the Holston, was fought on July 20, 1776 on Long Island. It occurred only two weeks after the Declaration of Independence and the last Indian depredations at Abingdon.

It was considered to be the last grand Cherokee rally to overrun the whole Holston county (in the Alleghany and Blue Ridge Mountains) and to exterminate the scattered inhabitants.

Interestingly, runners had been sent to all of the Indian towns then in

Eastern Georgia, Middle and East Tennessee and Western North Carolina which was the territory of the great Cherokee Nation.

About 700 to 1500 painted warriors were assembled at a common rendezvous point where arrangements were agreed upon for the bloody expedition.

The principal Chief of the tribe was Dragging-Canoe, a savage of more than common bravery and skill, who was thought to equal to Tecumseh and whose hatred of the "pale face" amounted to a mania. They met at Long Island in the South Fork of the Hulson River, which was a short distance above the present-day Kingsport, Tennessee. It was here that Dragging-Canoe divided his forces into three divisions, one to go up the bank of the North Fork (now Abington), another to kee the South Fork, and the third to proceed up the immediate valley to Black's Fort (now Abingdon) which was the principal settlement in the Cherokee hunting-grounds.

The Chief went with the latter division (the largest) while anticipating the most formidable resistance. There was a fort on each of the routes selected; one on the Watauga River, a tributary of the South Fork; another in the Fleenor settlement on the North Fork, and the third at the base of Eden's Ridge at the juncture of what is now Blountsville. These forts were to be attacked first and destroyed, and with this accomplished, the massacre was thought to be an easy task, owing to the fact that the Cherokees had a force nearly equaly to the whole white population. However, the Holston settlers fought bravely causing Dragging-Canoe to finally cause his divisions to retreat and the loss of the Holston hunting-grounds! Sources: