

setting forth that certain persons on the line of the Counties of Edgecombe, Nash, Johnston, and in the upper end of Dobbs had assembled together and assigned Articles of Association or Inlistment, wherein they had obliged themselves to prevent the Militia from being drafted and, if drafted into the service of their country and apprehended, to release such drafts; that they defected thereby several of the Inhabitants from their duty, threatened others with desolation or destruction; that several warrants had issued from the Civil Magistrates which had been treated with the utmost contempt, and the officers or justices grossly insulted or abused; that they had lately shot at and wounded several persons who were apprehending and conveying to justice Deserters and Harbourers of Deserters from the Continental Army; and that Samuel Godwin, Thomas Davis, Enoch Horn, [and . . .] Braswell were the Ringleaders and Promoters of said defection.

The Board, taking the same into consideration,

Resolved, the Governor be advised to direct the Colonel to order a detachment from the Dobbs Regiment of Militia to apprehend the said Godwin, Davis, Horn, and Braswell, and all other of the Associators who may be thought dangerous, and to require the Officer Commanding the detachment to search all suspected places for the aforesaid Associators' Inlistments; and that the aforesaid detachment, while performing the aforesaid Service, be entitled to pay for the same.²⁶

Hardly had this action been undertaken when word arrived from Washington, N. C., disclosing that certain people of Hyde, Beaufort and Martin counties, engaged in resisting the draft, were plotting to attack Kinston and seize the powder magazine there.²⁷

At the same time, a trouble spot had developed in southwestern Dobbs County as is indicated by the following letter to Governor Caswell from Stephen Cobb who resided near where the present town of Goldsboro stands:

26th July 1779

Dear Sir:

Mr. John Barefoot informed me yesterday that he saw one Stanly that was confined in Kingston to a bar of lead, and has since been two or three days and nights with the Bass's in the woods. He told Mr. Barefoot that Moses Bass told him that while he was confined in Kingston, he watched several days for an opportunity to get a loaded

²⁶ *State Records*, Vol. XIV, p. 319.

²⁷ *State Records*, Vol. XIV, p. 184. Letter from Col. Thomas Bonner to Governor Caswell dated August 3, 1779.

gun, and said if he could get one he would be damned to hell if he did not waylay the road from your house to Kingston and kill you as you passed, for you passed every day that way. If you can see Stanly you can inform yourself of their behavior while he was with them. I am informed that they are determined to kill me and Jas. Simms and every other person that attempts to take them, if they can, and are determined to fight as long as life subsists. I have tried everything and way in my power to take them without killing them, but to no purpose. I have lived sometime in expectation of the State Regiment coming up and Captain Harrison appointed to be up last Saturday to try to take them, but he failed to come. If neither the State Regiment nor Captain Harrison²⁸ will not come up, I wish if in your power you'll send me a warrant to take them dead or alive, and to destroy what they have if they will not surrender themselves; and I will endeavor to get some men in whom I can confide and encamp myself in the woods where they pass and try lives with them, as I cannot be satisfied to live so; and I do not believe they will surrender till some of them are killed, tho' I had much rather that a part of the State Regiment or Captain Harrison would come up and do something with them as I expect every time I go out of sight of my house to be shot from behind some log, bush or thick place.

I am, Dear Sir, Your Most Obedient Servant,
Stephen Cobb²⁹

The Bass family was an old and prominent one in that section. It will be recalled that Nathaniel Bass was the first permanent white settler of North Carolina so far as the records show. The spirit of individualism and independence had been long engrained in the generations of frontiersmen of the family. It seems from the records that they were not *for* the British but against *anyone* making demands upon them. The family split down the middle. Andrew Bass and his family joined heartily in the Revolution. Andrew's kinsman, Aaron Bass, and Aaron's family here mentioned, resisted all comers, whether British or American. It was with considerable difficulty that the Americans forced by draft the services of two of Aaron's sons and his son-in-law. Divisions of sympathy among members of the same family are always common in civil wars.

²⁸ Probably Captain John Oxley Harrison, Company commander of the militia unit for the district lying north of Neuse River from Falling Creek to Bear Creek and extending northward to about where the village of Arba stands in Greene County. This district was under the command of Captain John Kennedy in the latter part of 1780.

²⁹ *State Records*, Vol. XIV, pp. 176-177.