

Captain Samuel Stalnaker Colonial Soldier and Early Pioneer

Captain Samuel Stalnaker Colonial Soldier and Early Pioneer and Some of His Descendants
An Illustrated History of the Early Stalnaker Pioneers Compiled by: Leo Stalnaker 1938

According to the early tradition of the Stalnaker family, four Stalnaker brothers came from Holland and settled at Charleston, South Carolina, among the first settlers there. Later they were driven away by Indians and scattered, and one or more of the brothers went North to Virginia and perhaps as far as Pennsylvania.

One of these was doubtless Samuel Stalnaker, explorer, Indian trader, colonial soldier, early pioneer, and frontiersman who discovered Cumberland Gap. One theory is that Samuel Stalnaker went first to Pennsylvania, and then he went to Charleston. He settled in Virginia in 1732 (the year George Washington was born, under whom Samuel Stalnaker later served as Captain in the Virginia militia).

According to Chalkley's Record of Augusta County, "Capt. Samuel Stalnaker was, as his name indicates, one of the early pioneers from the Lower Shenandoah Valley or from Pennsylvania, of German descent, the family having numerous representatives in the valley. Settled in Virginia in 1732. His house was chosen as a meeting place for treating with the Indians by his Majesties Commissioners at the request of the Chief of the Cherokees at a meeting held at Catawba Town and Broad River in March 1756."

"There is no more interesting character in the history of pioneer life in Virginia than the brave old Indian fighter and explorer, Capt. Samuel Stalnaker. Contemporary travelers as well as the official correspondence of Governor Dinwiddie prove him one of the most interesting and important men of his day." (Baltimore American, Sunday, Aug. 25, 1907)

He was living in Augusta County in Southwest Virginia in November 1746, when he was ordered, with several others, to make a road from Reedy Creek to Eagle Bottom and from there "to the top of the ridge that parts the waters of New River and the South Fork of the Roanoke". Patrick Calhoun, great grandfather of John C. Calhoun, was ordered to work on this road at the same time.

Two years later, Dr. Thomas Walker, surveyor and wanderer, who had been persuaded by the Loyal Land Company "to go Westward in order to discover a proper place for settlement," went exploring into this wild country and met Samuel Stalnaker in April, 1748, between Reedy Creek settlement and the Holston River. Walker stated in his diary, "I hoped Stalnaker would pilot me as far as he knew," but Stalnaker was on his way to the Cherokee Indians and his affairs would not permit him to go with Walker.

It is apparent that Samuel Stalnaker at this early date, 1748, was known as a guide, hunter, and Cherokee trader. The Cherokee Indians occupied East Tennessee and a part of Northwest Georgia adjacent. They were at times, and until 1759, friendly and very faithful to the whites, furnishing volunteers in the early part of the French and Indian War. They were thus deadly enemies to the Shawnees and the other tribes of the Ohio, but in the Revolutionary War they united with them under British influence against the Americans.

Samuel Stalnaker's route to the Cherokees was westward through the great gap in the mountains later to be named, by Dr. Thomas Walker, Cumberland Gap and Cumberland Mountains in honor of the Duke of Cumberland, son of the British King, George II, and to become famous in war and history. Samuel Stalnaker was the first white man to discover this gap, or pass, and was the first to enter Kentucky and traded with the Indians there many years before Daniel Boone ever entered it.

Samuel Stalnaker made known this route westward, and other routes he had discovered, to many hunters and explorers, including Dr. Thomas Walker and the English traveler, J. F. D. Smyth. This route, described by historians as a "large buffalo road", was known as "Warriors Path" and later was called "Wilderness Road" and "Boone's Trail" when it became the route used by Daniel Boone on his expeditions into Kentucky.

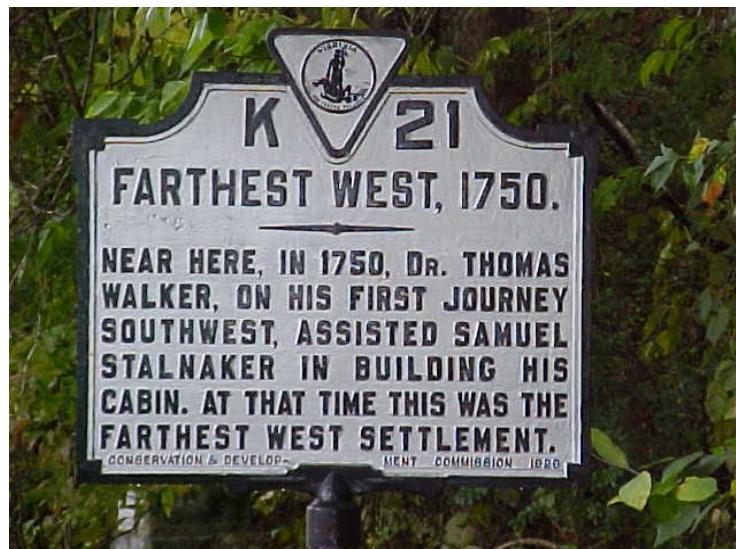
Historians believe it was at the time of Walker's journey in April 1748, that Samuel Stalnaker told Walker of the route westward through Cumberland Gap. According to the History of Southwest Virginia, "Dr. Thomas Walker and his associates met Samuel Stalnaker on the waters of the Holston River, at which time it is evident, from a journal kept by Dr. Walker, that Stalnaker told Walker of the Cumberland Gap and made an engagement with Dr. Walker to pilot him upon a trip to Kentucky at a subsequent date."

The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography states "Samuel Stalnaker, probably one of the German emigrants from Pennsylvania to the Western part of Virginia, was at one time the latter colony's most western inhabitant. Dr. Thomas Walker, in his journal states that in April 1748, he met Stalnaker between Reedy Creek settlement and the Holston River, on his way to the Cherokee Indians. Stalnaker was already known as an experienced hunter and trader, and is believed to have told Walker of the Cumberland Gap at this time." Almost two years later, in March 1750, Dr. Walker and his associates on their way to Kentucky, again met Stalnaker on the middle fork of the Holston, where he had just come to settle, and they helped Stalnaker build his house. This was the last settlement in Virginia to the westward. On Fry & Jefferson's map, 1751, Stalnaker's settlement is located on the Middle Fork of the Holston River, on the north side, a few miles above its juncture with the South Fork.

In the book titled *Westward-the Romance of the American Frontier*, it is stated that Walker and his five companions stopped on March 17, 1750, at a well-known saltlick near Staunton. They found frontiersmen "killed buffaloes for diversion and the elk and deer for their skins". They continued on and left an "Dunkard settlement on the upper waters of New River, and rode on past scattered cabins to the Holston River, where Walker found a hunter and Indian trader, Samuel Stalnaker, who had just decided to curb his restlessness, and to have a quiet home of his own-the farthest cabin west. The explorers helped Stalnaker to build his cabin; and Walker received information as to his route and the localities beyond."

Of this, Walker himself states in his journal: "March 23rd, we kept down the Holston River about four miles and camped; then Mr. Ambrose Powell and I went to look for Samuel Stalnaker, who I had been informed was just moved out to settle. We found his camp, and returned to our own in the evening. Mar. 24th, we went to Stalnaker's, helped him to raise his house and camped about a quarter of a mile below him." Stalnaker's cabin, on the waters of the Holston, was about nine miles below "Davis' Bottom", and about nine miles west Stephen Holston's cabin on the head springs of the Middle Fork of the Holston River.

Of this study frontiersman who did no small service to his country in pushing the frontiers of Virginia westward, the History of Tazewell County states, "It is wonderful, how in those primitive days, persons traveling through almost pathless wilderness, could, in some way learn that a bold pioneer had plunged into the wilds, with axe and rifle, to build a home for himself and family. Stalnaker had already cut and prepared logs for his rude dwelling when Walker and his party came upon the scene and helped him 'raise his house'. That was the first 'house raising' to occur in the Holston Valley.



Stalnaker's settlement on the Middle Fork of the Holston River is put down on Hutchin's "New Map of the Western Parts of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina, as "S. Stalnaker's" with the notation that this was the farthest west settlement in 1755. This map by Thos. Hutchins, "Captain in the 60 Regiment of Foot", was published in London during the Revolutionary War (perhaps for certain military value) under an Act of Parliament, Nov. 1, 1778. On this map the trail to the west ends at S. Stalnaker's house.

After Walker and his companions helped Stalnaker build his house, they camped about a quarter of a mile below him and spent the Sabbath there (March 25, 1750). Monday, the 26th, they left the frontiers of civilization, Stalnaker's settlement being the farthest west at the time. Their trip was not eventful until the 30th, on which day they caught two young buffaloes, and on the 31st, they traveled down the Reedy Creek to the Holston River at the foot of Long Island, where they measured an Elm tree 25 feet in circumference, three feet above the ground." (History of Southwest Virginia) It is interesting to note that in this country buffalo, elk, deer, bear, panther, wildcat, wolf, fox, beaver, otter, and other kinds of animals, wild fowls, etc., common to forest countries, were abundantly plenty. Walker and his party followed a "large buffalo road" and on April 13th passed through Cumberland Gap.

The location of Samuel Stalnaker's cabin is referred to later that year, September 1, 1750, in a land description in James Patton's will as "the land on which Samuel Stalnaker and others is living, known as Indian Fields, on the waters of Holston's River, a branch of the Mississippi." The list of tax levies for that year in Augusta County also states: "1750. Samuel Stalnaker lives on Holston River."

The next record of Samuel Stalnaker is two years later, November 1752. He had doubtless seen, by this time, great possibilities in his location on this route westward. He had been hunting in the trackless wilderness, making friends with the Indians and learning new routes over the mountains into the farther western country. Travelers, explorers and hunters were frequenting this route to the west past his door. They sought lodgings and accommodations for horses and desired a meeting place where they might barter and trade with the Indians. On November 7, 1752, Samuel Stalnaker made bond, in the amount of ten thousand pounds of tobacco, to the British King, George II, for the privilege of keeping an Ordinary (a tavern or inn). The original document itself, dusty and yellowed with age, is still in the early Will files in the office of the County Clerk of Augusta County, at Staunton, Virginia, and reveals as follows:

Know all men by these presents that we, Saml. Stalnaker and Alexander Sayers are held and firmly bound to our sovereign Lord, George the Second, in the sum of ten thousand pounds of tobacco to which the payment well and truly to be made we bind ourselves and every of us and every of our heirs, executors, administrators, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents sealed with our seals and dated this 7th day of Nov. 1752.

THE CONDITION of this obligation is such that whereas the above bound Saml. Stalnaker hath obtained a license to keep an ordinary in this county; if therefore, the said Stalnaker doth constantly find and provide in his ordinary good, wholesome and cleanly lodgings and diet for travelers and stabling and fodder and provender, or pasturage and provender as the season shall require for horses, for and during the term of one year from this seven day of Nov. and shall not suffer or permit any unlawful gaming in this house on the Sabbath day or suffer or permit any to tipple or drink more than is necessary; then this obligation to be void and of none effect or else to remain in full force and virtue."

The existence of this old bond indicates why the militia often camped at Stalnaker's, why Patrick Henry, when Governor, designated Stalnaker's as the rendezvous for troops, why Col. Byrd's regiment was quartered there one winter, why the Indians used Stalnaker's as a place to meet the early settlers and to make treaties with the representatives of the Virginia government. Samuel Stalnaker had equipped his place to care for travelers, to provide accommodations for them and their horses.



On top of the round, steep hill above the two monuments marking the cabin site by the highway at Chilhowie, Virginia, still stands an old building decaying rapidly, very likely the original log cabin of Samuel Stalnaker which later had been weather-boarded and enlarged into an Inn. It is a two-story, rambling building obviously used as a tavern. Numbers are still on the doors upstairs. State officials of the Virginia Conservation Commission who have inspected this historic spot state they have no authentic knowledge of the age of this building, but they are inclined to the opinion that nothing is left of the early Stalnaker house. This opinion seems to be erroneous. Since the D.A.R. monument discloses this spot on top of the hill to be the location of the "first settlement in this region" and it is now known that Stalnaker's cabin was the first built in this locality, and since history reveals "Stalnaker's" as a well-known meeting place for settlers, Indians, soldiers, and others, and further, since logs of a cabin are visible behind rotting weatherboarding of the Inn, it is highly probable the early Stalnaker house still stands, largely due to the fact that the logs have been preserved by the weatherboarding and the covering above.

Later the same month, that Samuel Stalnaker made bond to keep an Ordinary, he qualified as Captain in the militia, November 1752. According to the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, "In 1752, Samuel Stalnaker, after whom a fort was named, qualified as Captain in the militia." "Samuel Stalnaker took the usual oath to his Majesty's person and government as Captain of Foot, Nov. 21, 1752." Just what fort was named after him is not definitely known. Perhaps it was the fort he built four years later at Drapers Meadow, under instructions from the Governor.

Two months later, in January 1953, James Patton wrote a letter to Governor Robert Dinwiddie in which Patton told of trouble between Erwin Patterson and Samuel Stalnaker growing out of trade with the Cherokees. Doubtless Capt. Stalnaker's friendliness and barter with the Cherokees had attracted others who wished a part of this trade, Patterson being one of them. Probably jealousy prompted Patterson to make the charge that Capt. Stalnaker was charging the Cherokees too much for corn. That Patterson's statement was a falsehood is clearly established by the fact that the

Cherokees took side with Capt. Stalnaker in this difficulty, and the same letter to Governor Dinwiddie disclosing the trouble between Patterson and Stalnaker also contained "a complaint of the Emperor of the Cherokee Nation against Patterson."

Later that year, Samuel Stalnaker signed as surety on a bond made by John Smith as guardian of Catherine King, August 16, 1753. The original bond is in the early Will files in the office of the County Court Clerk at Staunton, Virginia. This bond, and the bond given by Samuel Stalnaker the year before in the amount of "ten thousand pounds of tobacco" indicate that Samuel Stalnaker was a man of some considerable means and property.

Samuel Stalnaker, like Daniel Boone and other frontiersmen of that day and locality, was a poor scribe. He ordinarily signed his name with his initials "S.S.", having doubtless become accustomed to using his initials by hewing them on trees when blazing trails or when laying claim to property through the early-day custom of "tomahawk rights" recognized by pioneers. In the book titled *Indian Wars of Western Virginia*, it is stated, "Tomahawk rights were made by deadening a few trees at the head of a spring, and marking the bark of one or more of them with initials of the name of the person making the improvement. Early pioneers recognized these tomahawk rights."

These two bonds mentioned heretofore, the only original documents now known to exist signed by this early frontiersman, were both signed with his two initials "S.S."

Road Builder Court records of Augusta County show that same year, Nov. 24, 1753, a road was ordered from "Saml. Stalnaker's to James Davis's". Samuel Stalnaker was named overseer with his three sons: Jacob, George, and Adam, and about twenty others, as workers. The court records also disclose that Samuel Stalnaker, as a witness in a case in court, made a deposition to the effect that "James Conolly said Humberstone Lyon stole 15 red deer skins and also 28 red deer skins which Conolly had left at the house of James Scagg.

About two years later, Samuel Stalnaker served as a Captain in the militia during the French and Indian War, under George Washington as Colonel of the Virginia regiment protecting the frontier.

About one month before General Braddock's defeat, the hostile Shawnees made incursions into this section of Virginia, attacked the Stalnaker settlement, and massacred or carried away captive every person found at Draper's Meadow. (Dunmore's War)

According to the *History of Tazewell County, Virginia*, "In the summer of 1755, just about the time of the Indian attack upon Draper's Meadow, a scalping party of Shawnees made an incursion into the Middle Holston Valley. They attacked the more-exposed settlements, killed several settlers and captured others. Capt. Samuel Stalnaker who then had his cabin home some four or five miles west of the present town of Marion, Smythe County, Virginia, was made a captive, and Mrs. Stalnaker and Adam Stalnaker were killed. The presumption is that they were his wife and son. Stalnaker and the other prisoners were taken through our across Glinch Valley by the Indians on their return trip to their towns in Ohio. This is evidenced by the journal of Col. Andrew Lewis, on his expedition known in history as the 'Sandy Expedition' and which was made in the months of February and March, 1756. While traveling down that stream that Col. Preston called 'Sandy Creek' on Sunday 29 of Feb. 1756, he wrote in his journal: 'The creek has been much frequently used by Indians both traveling and hunting on it, and from . . . I

am apprehensive that Stalnaker and the prisoners taken with him were carried this way'. Capt. Stalnaker made his escape from the Indians, but when, where, or how is unknown to any history, nor is there any record showing what was the fate of the other prisoners."

The men for this expedition just mentioned, had rendezvoused at Fort Frederick (built the year before by Capt. Stalnaker's son, George, on New River near Inglis' Ferry or Dunkard's Bottom) and the array numbered 346 men, including 130 Cherokees.

The date of the attack on Stalnaker's settlement seems to have been June 18, 1765. It is evident that Capt. Stalnaker was a prisoner quite some time before he escaped, almost a year perhaps, because after his escape, he went to Governor Dinwiddie at Williamsburg, Va., the capital, to report his experience and the number of Indians and French officers he had seen, and it was the middle of June, 1756, when Capt. Stalnaker reached Williamsburg, according to Dinwiddie himself. It is presumed that Capt. Stalnaker went there immediately upon his escape, because the message he carried Dinwiddie was of great importance, as will later be shown.

In the meantime, after his capture by the Indians and before his escape, his fellow officers in the militia, doubtless thought he had been killed. After his capture, almost three months passed by, apparently without any word from Capt. Stalnaker, and his fellow officers, evidently assuming he was dead, set about to administer his estate on Aug. 20, 1755. John Buchanan, Samuel Stalnaker's colonel in the militia, was appointed administrator, and Isreal Christian and Pat. Martin, captains with Samuel Stalnaker in the militia, were sureties on Buchanan's bond as administrator.

It seems a fair inference that Capt. Samuel Stalnaker had not yet made his escape in February of the following year when Col. Andrew Lewis on his Sandy Expedition wrote in his journal on Feb. 29, 1756, "from late signs I am apprehensive that Stalnaker and the prisoners with him were taken this way."

But, not long thereafter, Capt. Stalnaker made his escape and went to report to Governor Dinwiddie, reaching Williamsburg the middle of June. Later, historians refer to Capt. Stalnaker as the "celebrated Stalnaker", and doubtless the exploit that made him celebrated in the eyes of his contemporaries was his encapture, followed almost a year later by his miraculous escape after he had been believed dead and after an administration of his estate had begun.

According to tradition, it was during the Indian raids of this summer and presumably during the attack upon Stalnaker's settlement, that Mrs. Stalnaker (thought to have been the wife of Samuel Stalnaker and mother of Adam who was killed with others in this attack) was wounded but finally escaped the Indians and made her way up a creek from the Middle Fork of the Holston River, taking up her child with her. A rescue party of white men pursuing the Indians, followed the trail she had made by breaking twigs, and found her dead body by the bank of the creek far up its course, with the child nearly starved at her breast, crying "hungry, mammy! Hungry, mammy!" The cry of the starving child rang in the ears of the men so that ever afterward she was referred to as "Hungry Mother" and this creek was called Hungry Mother Creek. Here the state of Virginia has established a park named "Hungry Mother State Park", one of the most beautiful spots in Virginia. This creek, still known as Hungry Mother Creek, is probably the creek referred to in early land records as Stalnaker's creek. Samuel Stalnaker's cabin was on the Middle Fork of the Holston River near the mouth of this creek. The following is taken from a

booklet published by the Virginia Conservation Commission titled *Stories of Hungry Mother State Park*, on sale at the Park: "It is possible that this is what happened . . . Indians came down the Middle Fork of the Holston and attacked the Stalnaker cabin, near the mouth of Hungry Mother Creek. In the confusion of the fight, the woman slipped off with her child and went up the creek, marking her trail. Their bloody work over, the Indians would miss her, but knowing that the white men were hot on their heels, they would leave her and make off with the prisoners, booty, and scalps taken at Stalnaker's. The pursuers would come upon the smoking ruins and scalped bodies about Stalnaker's place, find the woman's trail, follow it until they came up with her, and then go across the mountains and warn the Crockettes. Whether it really happened this way or not will probably never be known, for the details of the story, beyond what is remembered and told above, are lost in the mists of the forgotten past."

During the period of Capt. Samuel Stalnaker's captivity, or at least between the time of his capture and the date of his appearance at Williamsburg before Governor Dinwiddie, a treaty was held by the representatives of Virginia with the Catawba and Cherokee Indians for the purpose of securing the aid of these two nations of Indians against the French. Though war had not yet been declared between the French and English colonies in America. The Chief of the Cherokee nation was "old and infirm" at the time of this treaty known as "The Indian Treaty of 1756". The Chief was not able to "cross the mountains", and he desired to hold the next meeting with the representatives of the Virginia government at Stalnaker's, and he sent to Governor Dinwiddie the message that he would on any occasion meet the Governor "at Stalnaker's" and he hoped the Governor would not refuse him a meeting there.

This treaty, with the Catawba-Town and Broad River in the months of February and March, 1756, "by virtue of a Commission granted by the Honorable Robert Dinwiddie, Esquire, His Majesty's Lieutenant Governor, and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia, to the Honorable Peter Randolph and William Byrd, Esquires, Members of His Majesty's Council of the said Colony." The Cherokee Chief's answer at the treaty was given by his son, Culloughculla, as follows:

"March 15th, 1756

"The Honorable Peter Randolph and William Byrd, Esquires, Commissioners. Thomas Adams, Esquire, Secretary.

"The Sachems and Warriors of the Cherokees.

"Richard Smith, Abraham Smith, Daniel Carrol, Interpreters.

"Culloughculla's Answer to the Commissioner's Speech Delivered Yesterday.

"This day is appointed from above, for our meeting, and I rejoice in seeing our eldest brothers, the Virginians here; and that we may give you the earliest assurance of our affection for you, I present you this string of Wampum. I have been in England and have seen the Great King, you so often have had occasion to mention. He then acknowledged the Cherokees to be his children, as well as the English, and desired that we might be Brethren forever. I shall remember my father's command, and shall whenever I have an opportunity, give the strongest demonstrations of my readiness to obey them. It gives me

the greatest concern to hear of the horrid murders committed by the Indians on the Frontier inhabitants of Virginia, and our endeavors shall not be wanting to prevent such massacres for the future; although I must tell you that all our people, who, by their situation, can be most helpful on this occasion, live in the upper towns who are so much exposed to the incursions of the French and Indians, as your Frontier inhabitants; and unless we have a Fort built for the protection of our wives and children, in absence of our warriors, it will not be safe for us to leave them. We have had frequent promises from the Governor of South Carolina, to build us a Fort; and it was stipulated at a treaty held at Saludy last summer, when we signed a release for our lands to the Great King George; but we do not find that that Governor has yet made the least preparation towards performing his engagement. Wherefore, we are sorry to tell you, that we don't much rely on him. The King, our father, told me that we should mutually assist each other and therefore, as we are not acquainted with the manner of building forts, and had not the necessary materials, we thought ourselves justifiable in making our application to Governor Glen (Governor of South Carolina), who, I must again repeat it, has forfeited his word. I have a hatchet ready, but we hope our friends will not expect us to take it up, 'till we have a place of safety for our wives and children. When they are secured, we will immediately send a great number of warriors to be employed by your Governor, where he shall think proper. I have given you the true state of the condition of our country, and desire that you will make a true representation of our situation to your governor, and at the same time tell him that if not steps are taken for our security, the French will extinguish the friendly fire between us. If he should have any message to send us hereafter, or should think it expedient to send Commissioners again to us, we desire they may come the Northward path, it being the nearest. As it is a very dangerous way, we need not recommend it to him to send a strong guard. Our governor is old and infirm, and can by no means pass the mountains, to meet you on the southern path. But I am instructing you to tell you that he will on any occasion meet you at Stalnaker's, and he hopes the Governor of Virginia will not refuse him a meeting there. To convince you of our attachment to your interest, and to enforce our request, we give you this string of wampum."

Samuel Stalnaker, as a Cherokee trader, was doubtless well familiar with wampum, as a medium of exchange in bartering, and handled much of it in the place of coin. "Wampum was the bead shell-money of the North American Indians. It consisted of beads made of shells, and required a considerable measure of skill in its manufacture. Wampum was of two colors, dark purple and white, of cylindrical form, averaging $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch in diameter. Its color determined its value. The term Wampum, or wampum peage, was apparently applied to the beads only when strung or woven together by a hole through the middle. In trading between whites and Indians, wampum so completely took the place of ordinary coin that its value was fixed by legal enactment, three to a penny. These belts or scarves of wampum also served as symbols of authority and power and were surrendered on defeat in battle. Wampum served as a mnemonic use as a tribal history or record. The belts that passed from one nation to another in all treaties, declarations, and important transaction, were carefully preserved in the chief's cabins, and served not only as a kind of record of history, but as a public treasury."

This Indian Treaty of 1756, which discloses the desire of the Cherokee Chief to hold a future meeting at Stalnaker's indicates that Stalnaker's was a noted meeting place, well-equipped with accommodations for travelers and their horses.

Capt. Samuel Stalnaker made his escape from the Shawnee and went to report to Governor Dinwiddie at Williamsburg, the capital. Much information about Capt. Stalnaker's activities during the following months, with the French and Indian War in progress, is contained in the Dinwiddie Papers, "The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie," who was Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1751 to 1758. Governor Dinwiddie, under whom Samuel Stalnaker served as Captain, gave George Washington his first military commission (the rank of Major) about the time Stalnaker was qualified as Captain. Governor Dinwiddie was well acquainted with Samuel Stalnaker.

Dinwiddie considered the message brought him by Capt. Stalnaker, after his escape from the Indians, of great importance. So important was it that Governor Dinwiddie wrote letters to the Governors of several other states advising them of the capture and escape of Capt. Stalnaker and of the probable approach of the large force of French and Indians that Capt. Stalnaker had seen, and Dinwiddie, acting on the information Capt. Stalnaker had brought him, instructed George Washington, then colonel in command of the militia, to be on the defensive. War had been declared in London, Dinwiddie related, the month before, May 17, 1756, against the French.

Governor Dinwiddie's letter to Sir Charles Hardy, of New York, dated July 1, 1756, stated that Samuel Stalnaker, "who was settled in Augusta County on our frontiers was taken prisoner by the Shawneese about a year since, has made his escape and come here in the middle of June. He says that a little before he left the Shawneese towns there came 6 French officers with 1,000 Indians from Outbatch and back of the Lakes; that they intended to invade our back settlements." Governor Dinwiddie wrote similar letters, advising of the escape of Stalnaker and Governor Sharpe of Maryland, June 21, 1756; to Governor Shirley of Massachusetts, July 1, 1756, and on July 1, 1756, to Lord Loudon, who had just arrived in New York with two battalions of regulars from England. The Earl of Loudon was later appointed Commander-in-Chief of all forces in America.

In the letter to Governor Sharpe of Maryland, Dinwiddie added, "Stalnaker who was taken prisoner by the Shawneese, made his escape and says he saw 6 French officers with 1,000 Indians from Outbatch, bound for Fort Duquesne, and reports they intend to visit our Fronts this summer. Next post from New York may give us account of the arrival of the 1st Detachment and Lord Loudon with the others may soon be expected. I can't see what we can do but be on the defensive, and I have given Col. Washington orders accordingly." This force reported by Capt. Stalnaker was doubtless the force of about 900 French and Indians from Fort Duquesne that, with very small loss to themselves, fell upon General Braddock's army, shot four horses from under Braddock, left him mortally wounded, killed, or wounded 63 of 86 officers, and 914 of 1,300 men. Washington, the only one of Braddock's aids uninjured, hastily retreated with the remnant of the army.

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According to tradition, it was during the Indian raids of this summer and presumably during the attack upon Stalnaker's settlement, that Mrs. Stalnaker (thought to have been

the wife of Samuel Stalnaker and mother of Adam who was killed with others in this attack) was wounded but finally escaped the Indians and made her way up a creek from the Middle Fork of the Holston River, taking up her child with her. A rescue party of white men pursuing the Indians, followed the trail she had made by breaking twigs, and found her dead body by the bank of the creek far up its course, with the child nearly starved at her breast, crying "hungry, mammy! Hungry, mammy!" The cry of the starving child rang in the ears of the men so that ever afterward she was referred to as "Hungry Mother" and this creek was called Hungry Mother Creek. Here the state of Virginia has established a park named "Hungry Mother State Park", one of the most beautiful spots in Virginia. This creek, still known as Hungry Mother Creek, is probably the creek referred to in early land records as Stalnaker's creek. Samuel Stalnaker's cabin was on the Middle Fork of the Holston River near the mouth of this creek. The following is taken from a booklet published by the Virginia Conservation Commission titled *Stories of Hungry Mother State Park*, on sale at the Park: "It is possible that this is what happened . . . Indians came down the Middle Fork of the Holston and attacked the Stalnaker cabin, near the mouth of Hungry Mother Creek. In the confusion of the fight, the woman slipped off with her child and went up the creek, marking her trail. Their bloody work over, the Indians would miss her, but knowing that the white men were hot on their heels, they would leave her and make off with the prisoners, booty, and scalps taken at Stalnaker's. The pursuers would come upon the smoking ruins and scalped bodies about Stalnaker's place, find the woman's trail, follow it until they came up with her, and then go across the mountains and warn the Crockettes. Whether it really happened this way or not will probably never be known, for the details of the story, beyond what is remembered and told above, are lost in the mists of the forgotten past."

During the period of Capt. Samuel Stalnaker's captivity, or at least between the time of his capture and the date of his appearance at Williamsburg before Governor Dinwiddie, a treaty was held by the representatives of Virginia with the Catawba and Cherokee Indians for the purpose of securing the aid of these two nations of Indians against the French. Though war had not yet been declared between the French and English colonies in America. The Chief of the Cherokee nation was "old and infirm" at the time of this treaty known as "The Indian Treaty of 1756". The Chief was not able to "cross the mountains", and he desired to hold the next meeting with the representatives of the Virginia government at Stalnaker's, and he sent to Governor Dinwiddie the message that he would on any occasion meet the Governor "at Stalnaker's" and he hoped the Governor would not refuse him a meeting there.

This treaty, with the Catawba-Town and Broad River in the months of February and March, 1756, "by virtue of a Commission granted by the Honorable Robert Dinwiddie, Esquire, His Majesty's Lieutenant Governor, and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia, to the Honorable Peter Randolph and William Byrd, Esquires, Members of His Majesty's Council of the said Colony." The Cherokee Chief's answer at the treaty was given by his son, Culloughculla, as follows:

"March 15th, 1756

"The Honorable Peter Randolph and William Byrd, Esquires, Commissioners. Thomas Adams, Esquire, Secretary.

"The Sachems and Warriors of the Cherokees.

"Richard Smith, Abraham Smith, Daniel Carrol, Interpreters.

"Culloughculla's Answer to the Commissioner's Speech Delivered Yesterday.

"This day is appointed from above, for our meeting, and I rejoice in seeing our eldest brothers, the Virginians here; and that we may give you the earliest assurance of our affection for you, I present you this string of Wampum. I have been in England and have seen the Great King, you so often have had occasion to mention. He then acknowledged the Cherokees to be his children, as well as the English, and desired that we might be Brethren forever. I shall remember my father's command, and shall whenever I have an opportunity, give the strongest demonstrations of my readiness to obey them. It gives me the greatest concern to hear of the horrid murders committed by the Indians on the Frontier inhabitants of Virginia, and our endeavors shall not be wanting to prevent such massacres for the future; although I must tell you that all our people, who, by their situation, can be most helpful on this occasion, live in the upper towns who are so much exposed to the incursions of the French and Indians, as your Frontier inhabitants; and unless we have a Fort built for the protection of our wives and children, in absence of our warriors, it will not be safe for us to leave them. We have had frequent promises from the Governor of South Carolina, to build us a Fort; and it was stipulated at a treaty held at Saludy last summer, when we signed a release for our lands to the Great King George; but we do not find that that Governor has yet made the least preparation towards performing his engagement. Wherefore, we are sorry to tell you, that we don't much rely on him. The King, our father, told me that we should mutually assist each other and therefore, as we are not acquainted with the manner of building forts, and had not the necessary materials, we thought ourselves justifiable in making our application to Governor Glen (Governor of South Carolina), who, I must again repeat it, has forfeited his word. I have a hatchet ready, but we hope our friends will not expect us to take it up, 'till we have a place of safety for our wives and children. When they are secured, we will immediately send a great number of warriors to be employed by your Governor, where he shall think proper. I have given you the true state of the condition of our country, and desire that you will make a true representation of our situation to your governor, and at the same time tell him that if not steps are taken for our security, the French will extinguish the friendly fire between us. If he should have any message to send us hereafter, or should think it expedient to send Commissioners again to us, we desire they may come the Northward path, it being the nearest. As it is a very dangerous way, we need not recommend it to him to send a strong guard. Our governor is old and infirm, and can by no means pass the mountains, to meet you on the southern path. But I am instructing you to tell you that he will on any occasion meet you at Stalnaker's, and he hopes the Governor of Virginia will not refuse him a meeting there. To convince you of our attachment to your interest, and to enforce our request, we give you this string of wampum."

Samuel Stalnaker, as a Cherokee trader, was doubtless well familiar with wampum, as a medium of exchange in bartering, and handled much of it in the place of coin. "Wampum was the bead shell-money of the North American Indians. It consisted of beads made of shells, and required a considerable measure of skill in its manufacture. Wampum was of two colors, dark purple and white, of cylindrical form, averaging $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch in diameter. Its color determined its value. The term Wampum, or wampum peage, was apparently applied to the beads only when strung or woven together by a hole through the middle. In trading between whites and Indians, wampum so completely took the place of ordinary coin that its value was fixed by legal enactment, three to a penny. These

belts or scarves of wampum also served as symbols of authority and power and were surrendered on defeat in battle. Wampum served as a mnemonic use as a tribal history or record. The belts that passed from one nation to another in all treaties, declarations, and important transaction, were carefully preserved in the chief's cabins, and served not only as a kind of record of history, but as a public treasury."

This Indian Treaty of 1756, which discloses the desire of the Cherokee Chief to hold a future meeting at Stalnaker's indicates that Stalnaker's was a noted meeting place, well-equipped with accommodations for travelers and their horses.

Capt. Samuel Stalnaker made his escape from the Shawnee and went to report to Governor Dinwiddie at Williamsburg, the capital. Much information about Capt. Stalnaker's activities during the following months, with the French and Indian War in progress, is contained in the Dinwiddie Papers, "The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie," who was Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1751 to 1758. Governor Dinwiddie, under whom Samuel Stalnaker served as Captain, gave George Washington his first military commission (the rank of Major) about the time Stalnaker was qualified as Captain. Governor Dinwiddie was well acquainted with Samuel Stalnaker.

Dinwiddie considered the message brought him by Capt. Stalnaker, after his escape from the Indians, of great importance. So important was it that Governor Dinwiddie wrote letters to the Governors of several other states advising them of the capture and escape of Capt. Stalnaker and of the probable approach of the large force of French and Indians that Capt. Stalnaker had seen, and Dinwiddie, acting on the information Capt. Stalnaker had brought him, instructed George Washington, then colonel in command of the militia, to be on the defensive. War had been declared in London, Dinwiddie related, the month before, May 17, 1756, against the French.

Governor Dinwiddie's letter to Sir Charles Hardy, of New York, dated July 1, 1756, stated that Samuel Stalnaker, "who was settled in Augusta County on our frontiers was taken prisoner by the Shawneese about a year since, has made his escape and come here in the middle of June. He says that a little before he left the Shawneese towns there came 6 French officers with 1,000 Indians from Outbatch and back of the Lakes; that they intended to invade our back settlements." Governor Dinwiddie wrote similar letters, advising of the escape of Stalnaker and Governor Sharpe of Maryland, June 21, 1756; to Governor Shirley of Massachusetts, July 1, 1756, and on July 1, 1756, to Lord Loudon, who had just arrived in New York with two battalions of regulars from England. The Earl of Loudon was later appointed Commander-in-Chief of all forces in America.

In the letter to Governor Sharpe of Maryland, Dinwiddie added, "Stalnaker who was taken prisoner by the Shawneese, made his escape and says he saw 6 French officers with 1,000 Indians from Oubatch, bound for Fort Duquesne, and reports they intend to visit our Fronts this summer. Next post from New York may give us account of the arrival of the 1st Detachment and Lord Loudon with the others may soon be expected. I can't see what we can do but be on the defensive, and I have given Col. Washington orders accordingly." This force reported by Capt. Stalnaker was doubtless the force of about 900 French and Indians from Fort Duquesne that, with very small loss to themselves, fell upon General Braddock's army, shot four horses from under Braddock, left him mortally wounded, killed, or wounded 63 of 86 officers, and 914 of 1,300 men. Washington, the only one of Braddock's aids uninjured, hastily retreated with the remnant of the army.