Signers of the CONSTITUTION (PART 1)

William Blount (1749-1800)

William Blount was born March 26, 1749 in Bertie County, North Carolina. He later served in the American Revolution as paymaster of the 3rd North Carolina regiment and for the state militia. He soon pursued two passions: western lands and public office. He served in the state legislature. He later represented North Carolina in the Continental Congress.

In 1787 he was appointed as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. He was one of the signers of the new U.S. Constitution.

At the Constitutional Convention, Blount caught the attention of George Washington. It later served him well. Present-day Tennessee was then part of North Carolina. It stretched from the crest of the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River. Washington selected William Blount to be governor of the territory.

Remember, acquiring western lands was one of Blount's passions. He had acquired a million acres of western land. His appointment as governor would only make protecting his land even easier.

Blount arrived in Tennessee in October 1790. He was also Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Secretary of War Henry Knox asked Blount to resolve the ongoing dispute regarding the Cherokee boundary. In June 1791, Blount signed the Treaty of Holston. It set a new boundary with the Cherokee. It was meant to solve the problem at a fort on the Holston River. Cherokee, however, believed Blount had treated them unfairly.

Problems with the Cherokee continued. One way to solve this problem was for the territory to obtain statehood. After much negotiation, Tennessee became a state on June 1, 1796.

By the time Tennessee became a state in 1796, Blount was no longer governor. He had secured an appointment as Senator from Tennessee. He schemed to manipulate land prices in the west. The land had not earned profit as he had hoped. He was convinced, though, that land values would soon rise. The British, however, needed to control the port of New Orleans. He planned for Creek and Cherokee to assist the British in capturing the city from the Spanish. When his plot was discovered, he was expelled from the Senate. That was 1797.

Despite these controversies, William Blount remained popular in Tennessee. He was elected to the state senate. In March 1800, Blount complained of a chill and died after a six-day illness. He is buried at the First Presbyterian Church in Knoxville.
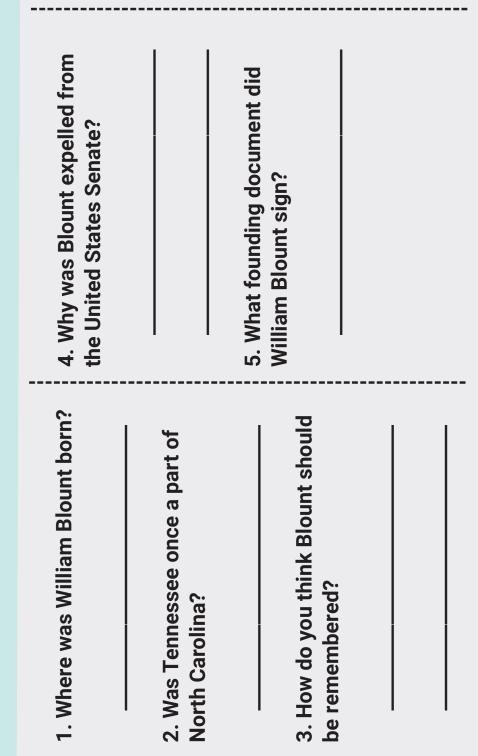
NORTH CAROLINA
HISTORY
PROJECT

William Blount

1. Where was William Blount born?

_____

2. Was Tennessee once a part of North Carolina?

_____

3. How do you think Blount should be remembered?

_____

4. Why was Blount expelled from the United States Senate?

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5. What founding document did William Blount sign?

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Instructions: Cut out the three sections as one piece. Then, fill out the information. Accordian fold the piece with the signer's portrait on top.