

**They Passed This Way:
An Almanac of Harnett County**



- **The Epic Journey of the Highland Scots,
Restless Pioneers, and River Matriarchs**

The Deep Roots: Tracking the Wandering Kilt



The Primeval Wilderness: The Tuscarora Domain

Dominated by vast forests of longleaf pine, mighty oaks, and white-boled sycamores.

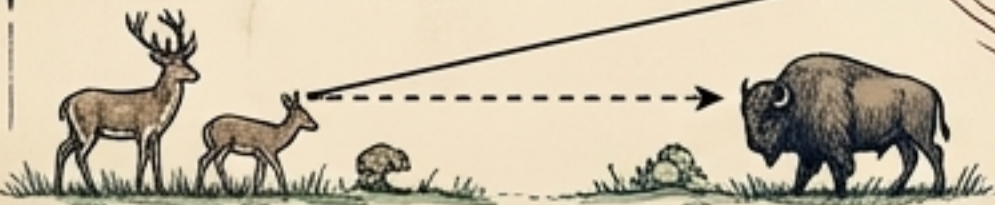


Ock-noc (rock pot):

The Tuscarora used local mineral rocks to paint red and yellow designs on their hides—the same rocks colonists later converted into iron billets.



Undergrowth kept clear by grazing deer and occasional buffalo, allowing visibility up to 200 yards on horseback.





Lore & Legend: The Day the Birds Quit Singing



The Trespass: During a drought, over 100 Drowning Creek warriors encroach on Cape Fear hunting grounds, lured by the flavor of sandhill deer.



The Huckleberry Bog: Marching parallel to Cypress Creek, an uneasy warrior notices an unnatural silence, shouting: "There are no birds singing! Run!"







The Ambush: A cloud of arrows hisses from the bog. Perfectly concealed Cape Fear Indians rise and butcher the invading party.




Evidence: In 1940, an excavation uncovered thirteen skulls in a three-foot area, one containing the broken blade of a stone tomahawk.

The Vanguard: The Legion of Restless Men

Obsessed with an unquenchable desire to see what hid beyond the curve of the river. They asked no odds and claimed no reward, taming the wilderness and making it safe for the permanent settlers.



Archibald MacDonald:
The tall soldier telling tales of bloody battlefields.



Felix O'Neil:
The irrepressible, wild Irishman with a chip on his shoulder.

Timothy Cleaven:
Gentle and kindly.



Archie Buie:
The bow-legged little piper droning Highland melodies into the wilderness.

Hendrick Gaster:
The tough Dutch Voortrekker.



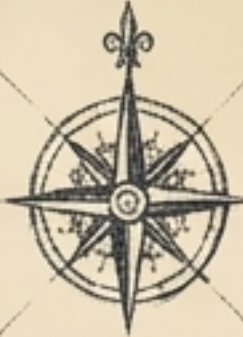
Maaskwizzid: The Big Red One

Name: Neill MacNeill (known as Niall Ruadh or Red Neill).

Description: An ex-sailor standing six-foot-six. Flame-thatched hair and a curly beard the color of a western sky at sunset. Named Maaskwizzid (The Red Person) by the Tuscaroras.

The Land Tycoon: Wandered the valley entering claims for choice soil, disposing of them to new settlers, and moving continually westward.

Culinary Legacy: Introduced barbecued meat to the Valley. Named "Barbecue Creek" from the French words "barb" (beard) and "que" (tail), meaning to cook a hog from whiskers to tail. He would fell a beef with a single blow of his fist before roasting it.



Lore & Legend: The Unquiet Grave of Red Neill

The End:

In 1759, a devastating bone-breaking fever crept out of the river mists. Knowing his time was near, Red Neill split a ten-foot gum log and chiseled his own coffin.

The Last Request:

He asked to be buried across the river on the westward-facing brow of Smilie's Hill, accompanied by the skirl of the pipes.
















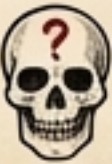


The Reality:

The river was flooded. Archie Buie couldn't cross. Neill was buried on the east bank instead.

The Haunting:

For generations, locals reported seeing a giant ghost standing on a rock overlooking Smilie's Falls, pointing westward toward the grave he never reached.

Epoch 3: Two Waves of Pioneers

	 The Restless Men (Pre-1740s) 	 The Permanent Settlers (Post-1739) 
Origin & Motive	Nomadic trailblazers looking for the next horizon. 	Post-Culloden Scottish Highlanders escaping English rule for a permanent roost. 
Relationship to Land	 Claimed land only to sell it and move further west. 	Fenced and cleared land to build multi-generational homes. 
Ecosystem	 Lived alongside the Tuscarora; survived via nomadic hunting. 	Displaced the wilderness; established gristmills, schools, and courthouses. 
The End of an Era	 Wiped out or moved on by the devastating 1759 fever epidemic. 	The "Hundred-Acre Boys" who built the agrarian foundation of the county. 

The Cashless Economy of the "Hundred-Acre Boys"



The Longleaf Pine: Trees were the central economic engine, not just timber.



The Return: Rafters walked back or poled flat boats upriver, bringing manufactured necessities back home.



The Barter: A raft sold for \$500 in goods. Settlers paid taxes directly in produce.



Naval Stores: Pines were boxed for turpentine, distilled, and burned for tar and pitch.



The Cape Fear Artery: Drained trees were assembled into massive timber rafts and floated to Wilmington.

Epoch 4: Bound by Blood

After the disastrous defeat of Bonnie Prince Charles at Culloden Moor in 1746, King George II instituted a brutal campaign of beheading and banishment. Highlanders were exiled only after signing a terrifying vow with their own blood.

I, Donald McDonald, do swear...

*I have not, nor shall I have in my possession any **gun, pistol or arm...** and will **never** use **plaid, tartan** or any part of **Highland garb...***

*And should I break this, my solemn oath, may I be cursed in all my undertakings... may I be killed in battle as a coward and lie without Christian burial... **May** all this come across me if I break my oath.*

Saddled with this terrifying vow, the Harnett Highlanders faithfully answered the Royal Governor's summons to fight their new American neighbors during the Revolution.



The Divided Land: A Localized Civil War

The Tories

Demographics: Settled heavily by post-1746 Scottish Highlanders bound by the Blood Oath.

Allegiance: Loyalists to the Crown.



Key Figure: "Scalthead Dave" Fanning—a ruthless, brilliant tactician wearing a red silk kerchief to hide a scalp disease, leading a vicious scourge of the valley.

Moore's Creek
Battleground



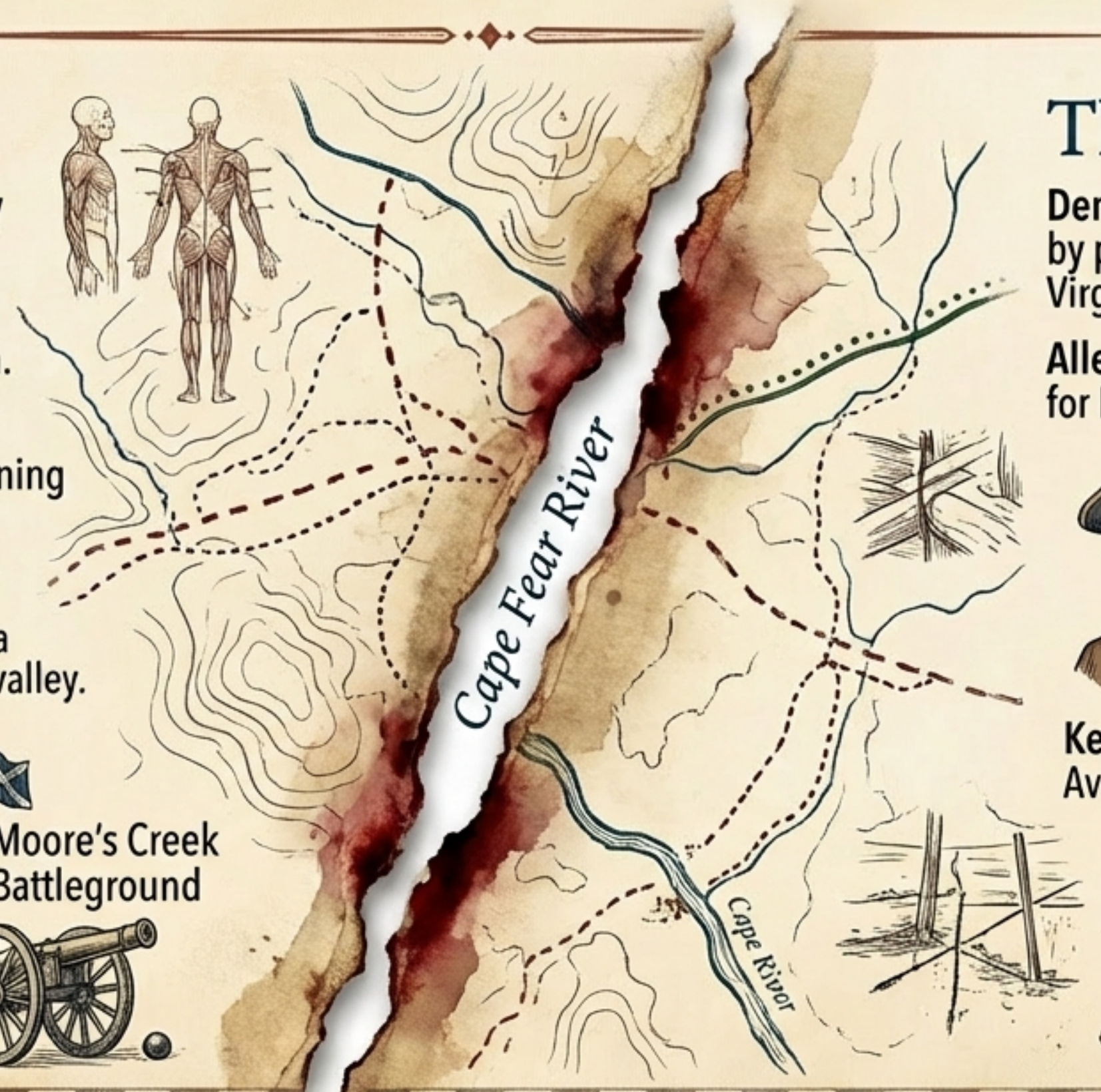
The Whigs

Demographics: Settled largely by people from Eastern NC and Virginia via Green's Path.

Allegiance: Patriots fighting for Independence.



Key Figures: Capt. Alexander Avera and Col. Ebenezer Folsome



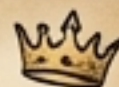
Epoch 5: The Matriarchs of Harnett



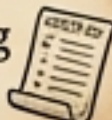
Flora McDonald (The Tragic Loyalist)



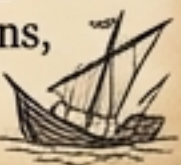
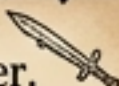
Claim to Fame: Saved Bonnie Prince Charles after Culloden, serving time in the Tower of London.



Life in NC: Settled at Cameron's Hill, then Killiegrey. A powerful aristocratic force in raising the Loyalist army.



Fate: Misfortune dogged her. Her army was crushed at Moore's Creek, her husband jailed, and she returned to Scotland stripped of all possessions, dying broken in 1790.



Jennie Bahn McNeill (The Pioneer Pragmatist)

Claim to Fame: Piercely independent, highly attractive redhead with a fiery complexion and fair temperament.



Life in NC: Married "Archie Scrubblin" (known mostly for hanging around cider barrels), leaving Jennie to build an empire alone.



Fate: A titan of industry. Successfully drove herds of 3,000 cattle all the way to markets in Philadelphia, buying feed from roadside planters along the route.



The Footprints Left Behind

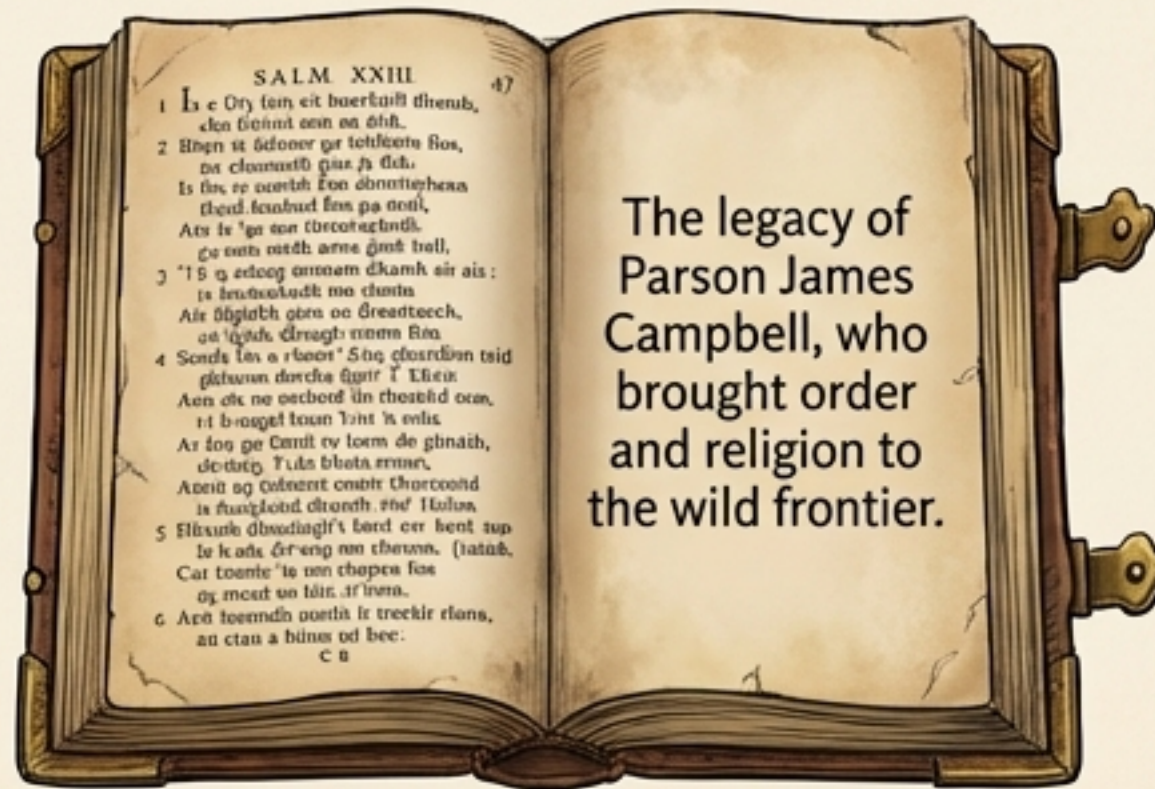
The Restless Men, the agrarian Homesteaders, and the warring Matriarchs passed away, but their cultural DNA permanently forged the Cape Fear Valley.

The Language of the Land



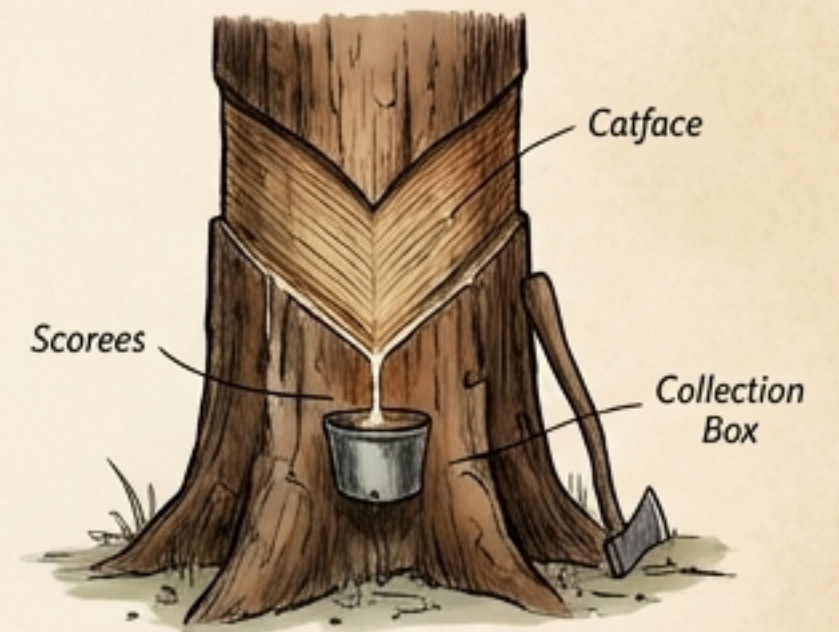
The French/Sailor origins of 'Barbecue Creek', lingering Gaelic names like Buie, McNeill, and McLeod, and the ghost stories haunting Smilie's Falls.

The Presbyterian Anchor

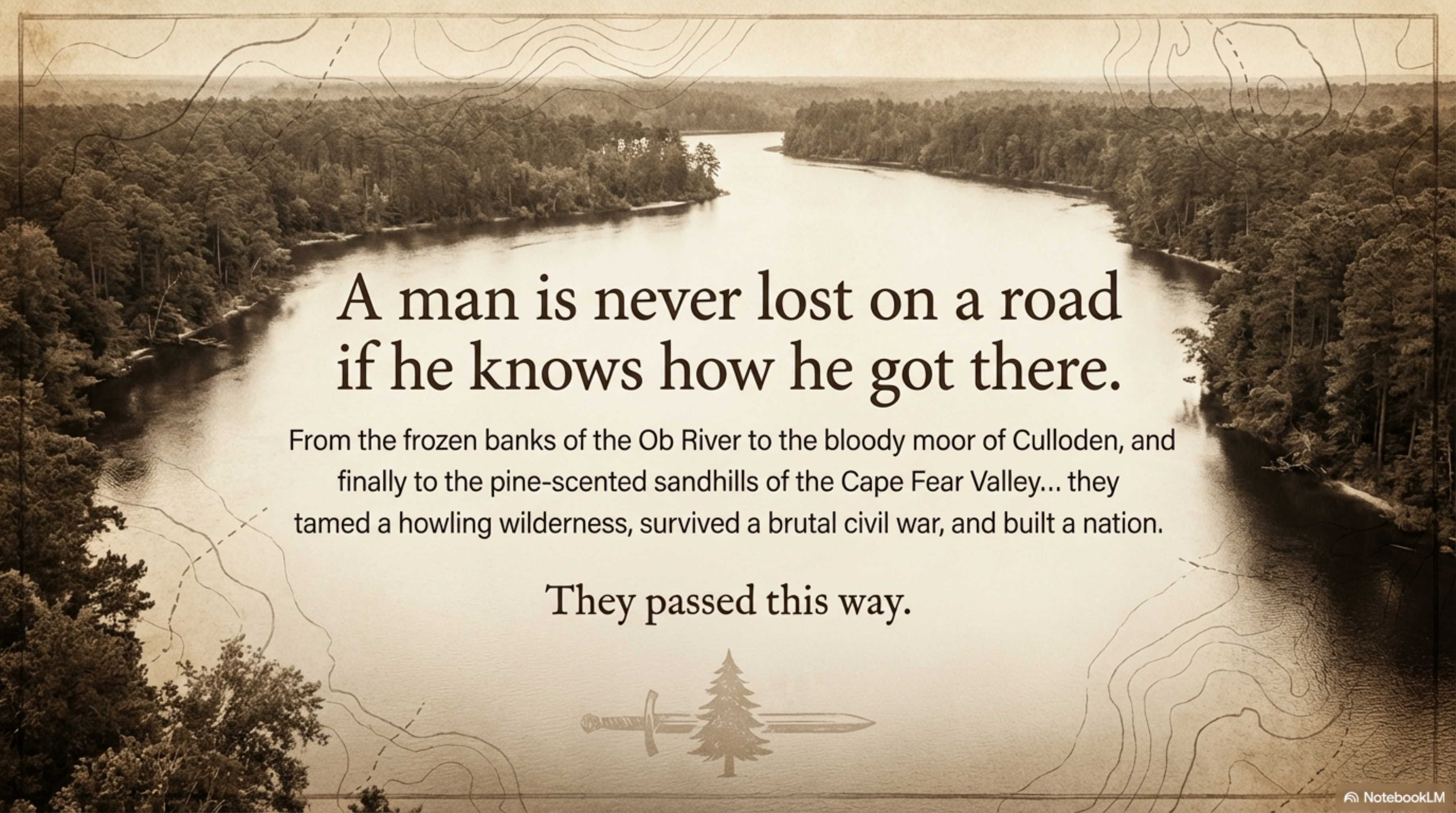


The 23rd Psalm from an old Gaelic Bible

The Pines



The vast longleaf pine forests that were bled for turpentine and felled for timber, entirely funding the region's leap from log cabins to frame houses.



A man is never lost on a road
if he knows how he got there.

From the frozen banks of the Ob River to the bloody moor of Culloden, and
finally to the pine-scented sandhills of the Cape Fear Valley... they
tamed a howling wilderness, survived a brutal civil war, and built a nation.

They passed this way.

