Robert King, the subject of this sketch, was born in Donegal County, Ireland, on January 3, 1747. (1) Little is known of his ancestry beyond the fact that it was Scotch-Irish, and, of course, Presbyterian. His forbears, at the time of the Ulster Plantation, in the reign of James the First, doubtless migrated with hundreds of others from the Lowlands of Scotland. That stock, historians generally agree, had as little Gaelic blood in it as any in the northern half of Great Britain. The aim of Sir Francis Bacon and other Jacobean statesmen in the Ulster Plantation was to establish a permanent garrison to protect British interests in Ireland against the encroachments of the native Celts, always a source of worry to the government in England. The memorable defenses of Londonderry and Inniskilling in the Revolution of 1688 showed how well the Scotch-Irish colonists were fitted for the purpose of their "plantation." Yet, both before and after the overthrow of the Stuarts, these Ulstermen received but scant courtesy from their British overlords. Irish shipping was restricted to narrow bounds by the Navigation Acts. The export of Irish wool, the staple industry of the island, was totally prohibited; and the Dissenters (three-fifths of the Protestant population) were excluded from holding any office, civil or military, above the lowest grade. (2)

*The writer contemplates an additional publication on the subject of Robert King, and anyone having papers or other information about him, not contained in the above article, will confer a favor by communicating with the writer.
These measures brought about an extensive migration from Ireland to America, and mainly to Pennsylvania. Two authorities, separated from each other by a half century of time, Archbishop Boulter in 1728 (3), and Arthur Young in 1776,, agree that this exodus was confined almost entirely to Scotch-Irish Presbyterians engaged in the linen trade. When that business was brisk, says Young, emigration was slack, and *vice versa*. Linen making was a cottage-industry, and linen manufacturers were capitalists in a small way. When business prospects were bad, the linen maker sold his equipment, and paid his and his family’s passage to the New World. (4)

Under conditions such as these, it may be surmised, Thomas King broke up his home in Donegal and sailed for Pennsylvania in the year 1753, bringing with him his six-year-old son, Robert. (5) Of the latter’s education nothing is known, and all that can be inferred with certainty is that he learned to compose a good letter, and to spell far better than many of his superior officers.

Robert first appears in the records as a grown man. In a letter of his written to Judge Charles Huston, he explains that in the year 1769 he was hunter for the surveyors in what is now Centre County. To appreciate his surroundings and activities, it is necessary to delve into the colonial history of Pennsylvania.

In 1768, the Penn family made their last Indian purchase. It had always been their boast that they had never forcibly deprived the Indian of his hunting-ground, but had taken only what they had bought. Thus, the vicinity of Philadelphia had been acquired through the famous Treaty, made by the Founder with the Lenape under the Great Elm at Shackamaxon. And so, before 1760, the Penns had purchased from the Redmen all the lands in their province that lay East of the Alleghany Mountains and South of Penn’s Creek (near the centre of Pennsylvania) and a line drawn from the Susquehanna to the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware rivers. After Pontiac’s conspiracy had been crushed, the whites and the Indians met at Fort Stanwix, New York, and there on November 5, 1768, the “Proprietaries,” as the Penns were called, negotiated the
purchase of a belt of land running from the Northeast corner of their province to its Southwest corner. The "New Purchase" was bounded to the North and West by the New York line, by Towanda and Tiadaghton creeks, the West Branch of the Susquehanna, by the Allegheny and Ohio rivers, and by the Virginia line. This irregularly shaped tract, resembling on the map a crude dumbbell, includes the whole of twelve of our present counties and parts of thirteen others. It contained nearly fourteen thousand square miles of land, overlying the greater portion of the coal, anthracite and bituminous, on which the present prosperity of the State is based. The price paid by the Penns to the Indians for this Golconda was $10,200.00. (6) If one-fifth, only, of its area had been available for farms, the rates at which it was immediately offered to the public would have made that fifth worth $448,000.00.

The first step taken by the Proprietaries in this real estate operation was to reserve one-tenth of the land as "Manors," or private estates. Then came the turn of Bouquet's officers who had overcome Pontiac's Indians at Bushy Run. These veterans had planned to form a military colony, somewhat on the model of the Ulster Plantation. (7) To them were allotted 24,000 acres, partly on Bald Eagle Creek, near the present site of Bellefonte. Then 1,500 acres were set off to Dr. Francis Allison, the Schoolmaster of the Revolution, another native of Donegal. And then on April 3, 1769, the Land Office was opened to the general public. Any citizen might buy 300 acres for fifteen pounds sterling, and one penny per acre, a year, quit-rent; but a survey had to be made on each "application" within six months and the full price paid within twelve. (8) A wild fever of land-speculation at once seized the Province, a craze never since surpassed in intensity. Pennsylvania then had 240,000 inhabitants, of whom about 39,000 were taxable persons. (9) Before August 31, 1769, no less than 4,000 applications for land in the "New Purchase" were entered (10), nine-tenths of which were for acreage on the West Branch of the Susquehanna. The proceeding was simple. Captain Grant, "a particular friend" of Robert King, paid a dollar for the privilege of applying for 300 acres "just above the Pro-
prietary's land at Muncy Creek, including Wolf Run”. (11) On each "application," thus loosely expressed, a warrant issued to the deputy-surveyor of the district to locate and run the lines of the tract applied for; and when the survey was returned and the purchase price paid, a deed, or patent, was delivered to the applicant or his assigns. Surveys cost a considerable sum, and probably were never made on half of the applications, although the Land Office regularly extended the six months period allowed for surveying. On the other hand, some of the most desirable lands would be surveyed half a dozen different times on as many applications. The rule was always to find some tract to suit the application. It became quite an art to locate the best acreage in this land of mountain ranges and fertile valleys, and required the services of expert woodsmen and explorers, such as Hawkins Boone (a cousin of Daniel Boone), who will be encountered later.

The whole territory was uninhabited and uncultivated, without roads in most places, and to enable the surveyors to perform their labors it was, of course, necessary to supply them with provisions. To do so, in a region teeming with game, the hunter became an adjunct to the surveyor. Robert King, then twenty-two years of age, followed this calling. Many years later, when interrogated about a disputed land-title he wrote that in 1769, 1770 and 1771 he was hunter for the surveyors, and that, incidentally, he himself had entered an application for a tract on March Creek, on the north side of Bald Eagle and adjoining the “Officers Survey,” (12) near the present village of Milesburg, Centre County. King wrote, “I should be one of the most ungrateful wretches on earth, if I did not do everything in my power to serve Mr. Grant, as I know him to be my particular friend”—but adds that in the suit against Gunsaulus he can be of little assistance. He remembers that the agent of Samuel Wallis, the “land king” of the day, got a number of surveys made in that vicinity, but he is uncertain of their exact location—“as I did not carry the chain the whole of the time. I was hunter for the surveyors.” And then he mentions another man who might be a good witness in the pending suit of Captain Thomas Grant, Sheriff of
Northumberland County in 1785.

William Maclay, Charles Lukens and William Scull were deputy-surveyors for these districts, and John Lukens was the Surveyor-General. When Robert King says, "I was along with Messrs. Lukens, I think in the year 1769-1770 and perhaps 1771," he implies that he was working in Charles Lukens' district including the Bald Eagle Valley. Between the 3rd of March and the 16th of May, 1769, these "Officers' Surveys" were made (13). The surveyors' work can be followed, day by day, in the records of their field notes. On May 12, 1770, they surveyed the Thomas Sutherland place in Dry Valley, now in the Township and County of Union, ten miles west of Northumberland Town. The surveyors noted on their maps—"This land Robert King has bought." This was his first residence. He sold part of the tract in 1773 to David Emerick, who, with his wife, was captured there by marauding Indians in 1781. They killed and scalped Emerick and carried his wife off to the wilds, where she married one of her captors. Years afterward, the mixed couple came back, and received the widow's share of the estate of this Hamlet of the Susquehanna, slain by this Iroquois Claudius. (14)

At this period of his life, King was a true frontiersman, hunter and settler, clad in a costume part Indian, part European. His hunting shirt was a loose frock reaching half-way down his thighs and so wide as to lap over a foot or more behind. Its cape was fringed with cloth of a color different from the shirt itself. Its bosom served as a wallet where food or tow for wiping his rifle might be kept. The belt, always tied behind, held the bullet bag, and from the right was suspended the tomahawk, from the left, the scalping knife in its leathern sheath. Breeches and leggings enclosed his thighs and legs, and his feet were supplied with moccasins. (15)

Philip Fithian, a Presbyterian missionary, visited the "New Purchase" about this time and has left a graphic account of his journey, picturing the diversity of living conditions in the same neighborhood. First, he tells of his visit to the home of Andrew B.—— on Bald Eagle Creek: "We dined there on fish—suckers and chubs—and veni-
Two Indian boys came in with a gift of seven large fish. In return, Mrs. B.—gave them bread and venison. Down they sat, stirred up the coals and laid on their flesh. When it was roasted they devoured it with the greatest rapacity.

"This house looks and smells like a shambles—raw flesh, fish and deer, mangled, wasting on every shelf. Hounds licking up the blood from the floor. An open-hearted landlady, naked Indians and children, and ten thousand flies and flees!

"Four Indians come in, each with a large knife and tomahawk. Bless me! they are strapping fellows! all stand dumb before us.

"Some of these Indians have the outside rim of their ears slitted and it hangs dangling strangely. Some have rings, others drops of silver in their noses and ears; ruffled shirts, but many of these very greasy. On the trees, near their camps, are painted in red and black colors, wild and ferocious animals in furious gestures."

Next day the missionary came into Penn's Valley and stayed at Colonel Potter's. "A neat house, an elegant supper, all expressions of welcome, and—not a flea! * * * Colonel Potter has Blackstone's Commentaries, Pope's Works, Harvey's Meditations, and many theological tracts." (16)

As the surveyors proceeded with their tasks, settlers flocked into this part of the "New Purchase," and the County of Northumberland was erected by the Act of March 21, 1772, for their convenience. The new county extended as far west as Lake Erie, as far east as the head of the Lehigh River, to the Indian land on the north, and Mahantango Creek on the south. Col. Francis, late of Bouquet's army, Dr. William Plunket, and other prominent residents, were appointed Justices of the Peace. On April 9, 1772, they held a court of "Private Sessions" at which this new county, as large as many an old state, was cut up into provinces, or townships. Buffalo Township began at the mouth of Penn's Creek and ran west to Millheim, now in Centre County, then north to Lock Haven, and down the Susquehanna. It included the whole of the present
Union County and parts of Snyder, Centre, Clinton and Lycoming counties. Its area exceeded six hundred square miles. The first peace-officer, charged with maintaining order in this huge bailiwick, was Robert King, then in his twenty-sixth year, appointed April 9, 1772. (17)

Other distinctions followed. On August 14, 1772, the Proprietaries, Thomas Penn and Richard Penn, by letters patent, granted to Robert King, his executors and assigns, the franchise of operating a ferry over the Susquehanna River at Sunbury, the new county seat. This franchise he sold November 30, 1773, to Adam Haveling. (18)

At May Term of Court in 1773 Robert King and others were appointed viewers to lay out a road from the site of Lewisburg through Buffalo Valley. (19)

The family Bible shows that he married Elizabeth McCullough, born on June 26, 1756, in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, but omits the date of their wedding and the Christian name of her father. There were McCulloughs listed as tax-payers in West Pennsboro and Middleton Townships, Cumberland County, in 1762 (20) and the name appears many times in the later records of the Carlisle Presbyterian Church. But no relationship with any of them can be traced.

His first child, Eleanor, was born June 1, 1774, in Northumberland County, the family Bible records. Soon afterwards, the young couple moved to the new village of Northumberland at the forks of the Susquehanna. In the first assessment of that township, made before 1775, he and Hawkins Boone are each accredited with the ownership of a house and lot, being two of only eighteen such householders. (21) King's lot was No. 18 in the new town-plan. The original proprietors of the town, John Lowden and William Patterson made him a deed for it on September 9, 1776, subject to a quit-rent of two shillings and six pence. (21 a)

And it was here that his first son, John, was born September 14, 1775—the family Bible notes the event as having occurred in the "Town and County of Northumberland."

To this little settlement came the missionary Fithian
in the stirring month of June, 1775. After drinking a friendly bowl of toddy with the "pleasant Dutchman," he crossed the river to Northumberland. "This infant village," he says, "seems busy and noisy as a Philadelphia ferry-house. I slept in a room with seven boatmen and in bed with one of them. He was clean and civil. * * * Going up and down the river are many boats, canoes, etc., plying about. * * * I stayed with Mrs. Scull, who has a pleasant and valuable garden with a neat summerhouse. She has a well-furnished parlor with four paintings of Hypocrates, Tully, Socrates and Galen. * * * She took me into Mr. Scull's library. It is charming to see books in the infancy of this remote land. I borrowed for my amusement Critical Review No. 44. * * * Mr. Haines, the proprietor of the town, took me to see a lot he is going to give to the Presbyterian Society. * * * I dined with Dr. Allison and Mr. Barker at Mrs. Scull's. It has been entertainment worthy of royalty * * * books and literary improvement were the subjects of conversation." (22)

Fithian, the Presbyterian, was deeply interested in this section of Pennsylvania, because it had been peopled largely by men of his denomination, driven from Ireland by the rapacity of their landlords or by commercial oppression; men who, as Lecky puts it, had left their old homes "with hearts burning with indignation." In that critical epoch there were no more zealous advocates of American Independence than these sons of Erin. Generals Robertson and Lee of the opposing forces, and the Tory, Speaker Galloway, agree that one-half of Washington's army were Irish. (23) The British officers, who wintered at Philadelphia, called the Revolution a "Scotch-Irish Rebellion." (24) And on the Upper Susquehanna the Scotch-Irish controlled the situation.

One manifestation of their attitude in politics is often cited by local historians, but does not seem to have found its way into the general literature of the period. It is known as "The Pine Creek Declaration of Independence," and is fairly comparable to the Mecklenburg Declaration. It seems that the whites were doubtful whether the boundary stream, called by the Indians in the Treaty of 1768,
"Tiadaghton," was the Lycoming or Pine Creek. With Quaker prudence, the Proprietaries adopted the former water course as the Indian boundary, and so reduced the salable area of their purchase by some five hundred square miles. Between these creeks no land titles could be lawfully acquired, and white settlements were forbidden under severe penalties. Nevertheless, this no-man's land was settled by the hardy Scotch-Irish of the frontier, who became, literally, a law unto themselves. They elected "Fair-play men" to be their judges (25), and in all respects governed themselves without leave or license from the Penns. These adventurous souls issued a call for a meeting to discuss public affairs at Great Isle, two hundred miles northwest of Philadelphia, and many days distant from news of the Continental Congress. By a curious coincidence the meeting took place on July 4, 1776, and then and there these liberty-loving pioneers adopted a set of resolutions declaring their own independence of Great Britain, and absolving themselves from all allegiance to George III. (26)

Breathing such an atmosphere, it is no wonder, that notwithstanding his family ties, Robert King presently joined the patriot forces. On April 19, 1776, he was commissioned First Lieutenant in the First Battalion of Northumberland County Associators (or patriot militia) under Colonel Samuel Hunter (27), another native of Donegal. This appointment was made by order of the Pennsylvania Assembly, of which John Morton was speaker. (28) The tide of battle had not then reached the Middle States, and this body of soldiery, apparently, was not called into active service. But before many months had passed, Congress authorized the Twelfth Regiment of the Pennsylvania Line to be raised in Northampton and Northumberland counties. William Cook, delegate to the State Constitutional Convention, was selected as its colonel, on September 28th, and the Supreme Executive Council on October 4th appointed Hawkins Boone one of its captains, and Robert King one of its second lieutenants.

The greater portion of the regiment was recruited on the West Branch of the Susquehanna in that gloomy autumn. (29) On December 1st, the Committee of Safety
offered a bounty of ten dollars to each man in Northumberland County, who, on or before the eighteenth of that month, should march to join General Washington. (30) But this inducement does not seem to have been essential, as Colonel Cook, on the 2nd, reported to the Committee that his officers had been very successful in recruiting and most of his companies were nearly full. What kept him back was lack of "guns, cloaths, blankets, etc.," he said. $2,000.00 had been sent to him, but that fund had been completely exhausted and more was needed before he could obey the orders he had received to move on New Brunswick. (30 a) Whether he got the needed "cloaths" or not the Archives do not reveal. The country was then miserably poor in what Bagehot calls "disposable wealth." The coast towns had for some years been cut off from most of their sea-borne commerce, and the interior was too newly settled to have much to spare for the army. However, the worthy Colonel did get his regiment off in boats from Sunbury on the 18th, equipped or not equipped—the latter more likely. (31)

Washington’s fortunes were then at their lowest ebb. His army had been beaten in the battle of Long Island and at Fort Washington, and he had been driven through the Jerseys to Pennsylvania. Almost in despair he wrote to his brother at this time: "If every nerve is not strained to recruit the army with all possible expedition, I think the game is nearly up." (31 a)

"These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman," wrote Thomas Paine on December 19, 1776, as the Twelfth Pennsylvania were floating down the Susquehanna, or disembarking on the Lancaster Road for their march to the Delaware. General Mifflin had then come back to Pennsylvania, and had gone as far West as Lancaster to arouse the citizens to a realization of their danger, and to hurry forward recruits to Washington’s dwindling army. (31 b)

And then the tide turned. Washington took the offensive: crossed the Delaware on Christmas night, and in the Battle of Trenton captured whole regiments of Hes-
The Life And Times Of Robert King

sians. Lord Cornwallis’ arrival made his position perilous, although on the 29th Miffin brought into New Jersey some 1500 Pennsylvania recruits (31c), of whom, it may be presumed, the Twelfth Regiment formed a large part. On the second of January, Washington had his “raw levies” on one side of the Assanpink Creek, a hundred and fifty yards away from Cornwallis with his veterans. Back of the Americans ran the Delaware, full of floating ice, impossible to cross. “If ever there was a crisis in the affairs of the Revolution, this was the moment,” said General Wilkinson. At dark, a council of war was held and the decision reached to turn the enemy’s flank and attack the British garrison at Princeton. Washington ordered working-parties to intrench, the campfires to be redoubled and everything to be done to indicate his intention to defend that position to the last. Then the troops were silently withdrawn and by daybreak reached Princeton. (31d) Wilkinson followed their course for miles by the bloodstained tracks which their half-shod feet left in the snow. (31e) At dawn, General Mercer in the van encountered the British near Stony Brook Bridge, and to support him after the first onset, Washington, himself, led the Pennsylvania militia. Encouraged by the irresolution of these new levies, the British charged; but other regiments coming up, and the militia gaining confidence, the enemy halted and then fled, as the Americans in turn advanced on them. The British soon retreated full tilt to Brunswick, after making a show of defending Princeton. (32) It was here, the college tradition relates, as the American guns were battering the walls of Nassau Hall, that the portrait of George III was shot from its frame, never to be replaced. This was the last battle of the campaign of 1776—a triumphant ending of a chequered twelve-month, that earned Washington the ungrudging admiration of European critics, and crowned him with the title of the American Fabius and Camillus. (33) He now went into winter quarters on the Heights at Morristown, and no engagements of sufficient moment to warrant the attention of historians of the Revolution took place for several months.

The Twelfth Pennsylvania, with headquarters at the Five Cross Roads, near Metuchin, New Jersey, were de-
tailed under General Conway on picket and skirmish duty. General St. Clair, writing on February 10, 1777, said: "The enemy are still in Jersey, but they have little rest. We give them a brush every other day, and we are certain that they are in great want of forage and provisions." (33 a)

The Twelfth had its full share of this outpost work in the skirmishes of Bound Brook, Bonhamtown and particularly in the "bold enterprise" of Piscataway, where on May 10th Robert King received a wound in the skull—so painful that he remembered it for forty years. (34)

Piscataway is now a suburb of New Brunswick, which was the extreme point held by the British. At Bonhamtown, Raritan Landing, and Perth Amboy, they had posts supporting each other; while Washington's cantonments extended from the neighborhood of Metuchin (five miles inland from Perth Amboy) northwardly through Dismal Swamp, Chatham and Ash Swamp, some twenty miles to the Heights at Morristown. General Stephens on May 10th ordered some 800 Pennsylvanians, Virginians and Jerseymen to collect at the "quarters" of Col. Cook of the Twelfth, then about nine miles from Metuchin Meeting House. The Americans had learned the enemy's dinner hour and, after marching over Dismal Swamp, "gave them time to take a drink" (wrote a participant) and then made a sudden attack, "about half an hour after four," on the pickets of two regiments of Royal Highlanders. Stephens' advance guard engaged some 300 of the enemy, and after making a feint retreat over a narrow causeway, "turned suddenly and repulsed them with great slaughter." The British were then reinforced by six companies of light infantry and the 33rd Regiment of Foot. The skirmish became general—"was pretty warm for a time, and the enemy gave way," until a large body of their artillery from New Brunswick came into action. Stephens then fell back in good order to a hill where "they did not dare to pursue us."

"We had a number of good marksmen well posted in the woods and other suitable places and the enemy [were] in the open field frequently in confusion," wrote a Continental officer, accounting for the disparity in the losses of the contending forces. The American casualties were:
two killed; and one captain, three subalterns (including Lieutenant King), and eleven privates wounded; one subaltern and 23 privates, mostly wounded, made prisoners. The British Highlanders, "obstinately brave, were too proud to surrender, which cost them dear;"—Major McPherson, six officers and 60 privates were killed; Major Frazier, Captain Stewart and 120 privates were wounded. "This great advantage gained over the best troops of the enemy has compelled them," wrote an American, "to send from New York one battalion of Hessian Grenadiers, the 10th and 55th British Regiments to reinforce their posts." (34 a)

The Twelfth Pennsylvania suffered more than any other Continental unit—22 of its members were taken prisoner. One of them, Joseph McHarge, later escaped and returned to Northumberland, where he reported that he had been so badly treated while in captivity, that his eyesight had failed. On that account he was discharged in 1779 from the service by a Court of Quarter Sessions, his regiment having then ceased to exist. (34 b) Another private, Wendell Lorenz, made his escape at Piscataway by hiding among a flock of sheep, till the enemy had withdrawn. (34 c)

Skirmishes, such as this, in their aggregate effect did not lack importance. The marksmanship of the frontier riflemen of the Twelfth and its sister regiments, if uniformly as effective as at Piscataway, must have produced a fine crop of casualties among General Howe's stragglers, foragers and outposts armed with muskets only. Galloway, the Tory, estimated that from this source alone the Royal Commander's losses were greater than he would have suffered in surrounding and defeating, or starving out Washington's main army in the Highlands of North Jersey. (35)

These losses, and Howe's inability to maneuver Washington from his strong defensive position, were weighty factors in altering the British plan of campaign. Their strategy aimed rather at taking Philadelphia, the capital of the Confederation, than at the destruction of the Continental Army. And so Howe consumed the summer of 1777 in executing the astonishing coup de main of moving his whole command by sea to the head of Chesapeake Bay. From his landing place, there, the distance to the Capital
was no less than from New Brunswick. But this line of march now lay through Chester County, whose almost unbroken surface (35a) afforded little natural protection to a commander defending, in that quarter, the approaches to the American metropolis. It was on this Southern route that the two armies met in the Battle of Brandywine September 11, 1777. And here General Howe was able to reap the advantage of his superior numbers.

In that battle the Twelfth Pennsylvania formed part of the American right commanded by General Sullivan. To meet Lord Cornwallis' flanking movement, "the Twelfth came on at double quick, as the cannon balls were ploughing up the ground, and the trees were cracking over their heads the branches riven by the artillery and the leaves falling as in autumn by grapeshot. They had scarcely time to obey the stentorian order of Colonel Cook, 'fall into line', when the British made their appearance. The Twelfth fired sure and fast, and many a Royal officer leaped forward in death after the sharp crack of their rifles. As the fight grew furious and the charge of gleaming bayonets came on, other troops, that had not had time to form, reeled before the burnished rows of steel. But the Twelfth stood firm, as Lieutenant Boyd fell dead before his captain. * * * The day ended in disaster to our arms, and the Twelfth quit the field nearly cut to pieces" (36).

At this juncture the Marquis de Lafayette, who had acted as a volunteer, while rallying the troops was wounded in the leg (37). His aide-de-camp, Gimat, helped him to mount a horse, and, "as General Washington arrived with reinforcements, Lafayette started to join him, when loss of blood compelled the young Frenchman to stop and have his wounds bandaged by Dr. Cochran, so that he barely escaped capture as the fleeing soldiers, the cannon and the army wagons were thrown back, pell mell, on the Chester Road" (38).

It is a legend, in the family of Robert King, whatever foundation the story may have, that their ancestor helped Lafayette off the field of battle. A great-grandson of the Lieutenant told this tale to the Marquis' grandson some forty years ago, adding that it was an honored tradition in
the American’s family. The Frenchman hastened to reply, “I need not tell you, it is the same in our family.” When the Marquis visited this country in 1825 he recognized King at a distance, and when he came up, threw his arms around the old man’s neck and kissed him on both cheeks, saying, “How do you do, my venerable friend” (39).

After the defeat at Brandywine, Washington reformed his shattered forces, and in the following month fiercely attacked the outer lines of the British at Germantown. The Twelfth were among the leaders on the left wing of the American advance, and lost heavily in men. Later, the regiment endured the privations of the trying winter at Valley Forge. At the last general engagement fought against the British on Northern soil, the victory of Monmouth, June 28, 1778, the remnants of the organization were nearly destroyed (40). This was the end of the Twelfth as a fighting unit. The Assembly had previously directed that its surviving members should be incorporated in the Third Pennsylvania, and on July 1st, King and other officers were ordered to be transferred to that regiment (41). Before this he had been commissioned first lieutenant and that was his rank thereafter (42). But, almost at once, he and Captains Brady and Boone were detached from the Third by General Washington, and ordered to their homes on the Susquehanna to assist Colonel Hartley in the defense of the frontier (43).

The British plan of campaign in 1777-8 had three objects: First, an attack on Washington’s army and Philadelphia; second, Burgoyne’s attempt to sever New England from the other Colonies; and third, an onslaught on the American sources of food supply in central New York and Pennsylvania. The second failed, the first and third only partially succeeded. Major John Butler commanded the British Provincial, Tories and Indians, who carried death and destruction to the patriots of the Upper Susquehanna. That region had sent its able-bodied men to Washington’s army, and its protection was left to old men and boys (44). In July, 1778, Major Butler’s command, eight hundred strong, fell upon Wyoming Valley, near Wilkes-Barre, overcome its defenders and massacred all but five of those who were not killed in battle. The night after
their victory, the Indians built fires and formed circles around them and "ran amuck" among their prisoners, stripped stark naked; while on occasions a squaw, Queen Hester of Tioga, tomahawked her chosen victims. 227 scalps were taken in the fray and afterward paid for by the British at ten dollars apiece. A thousand houses, mills and forts were plundered and burned, and the surrounding country laid waste (45).

The news of the calamity spread like wildfire—down the North Branch, past Northumberland Town and up the West Branch, striking terror to every heart. Then ensued a wild, precipitate fight, known locally as "The Great Runaway." The whole frontier with one accord abandoned their homes. Covenhoven, the scout, describes the part of the Runaway that he saw:

"At Lewisburg I met the whole convoy from all the forts above. Such a sight I never saw in my life. Boats, canoes, hog-troughs, rafts hastily made of dry sticks, every sort of floating article, had been put in requisition and were crowded with women, children and plunder. * * * Whenever any obstruction occurred at shoal or ripple, the women would leap out into the water and put their shoulders to the boat or raft and launch it again into deep water. The men of the settlements came down in single file on each side of the river to guard the women and children. The whole convoy arrived safely at Sunbury, leaving the entire range of farms along the West Branch to the ravages of the Indians." (46)

The Commander at Sunbury, Colonel Hunter, wrote to the State authorities: "You may figure to yourselves men, women and children butchered and scalped, many of them after being promised quarter; people in crowds driven from their farms, most of whom have not money to purchase one day's provisions" (47).

Prothonotary William Maclay wrote: "I never saw such scenes of distress. The river and roads leading down to it were covered with men, women and children flying for their lives. In short, Northumberland County is broken up" (48).

It was to meet this situation that Colonel Hartley's command was ordered to the frontier. It reached Sunbury
on July 28th and established posts as far west as Lock Haven (49). Hartley planned a retaliatory expedition against the savages as the best means of preventing more inroads. He had some seven hundred men, all told, under his orders, but after leaving detachments to guard the several blockhouses of the district, less than two hundred remained for the expedition. Of this little army Robert King was assistant quartermaster (49a). It started on September 21st from Muncy and went up Lycoming Creek and across the mountains to Tioga (50). The troops carried two boxes of ammunition and twelve days' supplies.

They waded or swam the Lycoming twenty times. Hartley related that the difficulties in crossing the Alps could not have been greater than they encountered on these Appalachian ridges. An advance party met and defeated a band of the savages on the 26th and killed their chief. At the Indian town of Tioga they beheld the log "castle" of the notorious Queen Hester, and the huts where her tribe "dried and dressed the scalps of the helpless women and children who fell into their hands"—and applied the torch to the whole village. On the 28th they reached the North Branch and went down it to Wyalusing—the men "much worn, their whiskey and flour all gone." Here they stayed till they had killed and cooked some beef-cattle and laid hands on some canoes for their return trip. This delay enabled the Indians to bring down a war-party from their stronghold at Chemung, New York.

Hartley's forces went down the Susquehanna in three divisions, mostly afoot, but seventy of the weary veterans made use of the canoes they had picked up. Captain Sweeny was in command of the rear-guard and kept strict watch against surprise. The Indians attacked him. The infantry faced about ready for the encounter. Hartley observed a hillside commanding the Redmen's position and sent some of his men to occupy it, and others toward the enemy's rear. The doubtful point was whether his rear-guard would hold against the assault. At this critical moment the canoeists hove in sight, paddling rapidly upstream. "Captains Boone and Brady and Lieutenant King with a few brave fellows landed from their canoes, joined Sweeny and renewed the action there. The war-hoop was
given by our people below and communicated round. We advanced on every side with great shouting and noise. The Indians conceived themselves nearly surrounded and fled with the utmost haste by the only passes that remained” (51). So Hartley reported the action. The expedition arrived safely at Sunbury on October 5th after making a circuit of 300 miles in two weeks, having defeated the enemy, wherever met, destroyed his towns, and recovered much property of the whites (52).

The Supreme Council expressed its thanks to Colonel Hartley for this successful exploit, and requested him to transmit to his officers and men the Council’s appreciation of their courage and zeal (53). The Colonel, writing from York on May 10, 1779, to General Hand commended Captain Boone and Lieutenant Robert King as “brave soldiers and good woodsmen” (54).

Hartley’s force consisted of some two hundred regulars, and its effort to cover the far flung chain of blockhouses on the Northumberland frontier was not always successful. The case of “Fort” Freeland illustrates the weakness of these outposts. It was defended by only twenty-one men, and so poorly supplied with ammunition that when danger threatened, Phoebe Vincent and other women in the stockade had to melt their pewter spoons and plates into bullets. Robert King brought down word to this Fort before July 19, 1779, that Ferguson’s party of haymakers on Lycoming Creek had lost three men in an Indian attack (54a). On the 20th three hundred British and Indians laid siege to the little stronghold. It soon capitulated (55). The Indians’ leader, Hioketoo, who had married a Scotch-Irish lass, Mary Jemison, captured many years before, was unexpectedly merciful and allowed the women and children to depart unmolested for Northumberland Town, while the men were made prisoners. Next day Captains Hawkins Boone and Samuel Daugherty arrived with a relief of thirty men. They supposed that the fort still held out, and made a dash across Warrior’s Run to reach it, but were at once surrounded by the savages and the two leaders and half their followers were killed (56). The remainder, among whom, from his constant association with Boone, it may be inferred, was King, escaped with
their lives.

General Sullivan's expedition to Central New York is rated as one of the great achievements of border warfare. It left Wyoming July 31, 1779, and after destroying many flourishing Iroquois villages and ripening cornfields, and making a round trip of 450 miles, without a wagon-road in its whole course, returned to its base October 7, 1779 (57). General Hand, to whom Hartley had in the previous May commended Lieutenant King, held a subordinate position under Sullivan in the campaign (57a), but it is not known whether King was of the expedition or not.

The Indian retaliation for this invasion was scattered, but effective. At many points attacks were made by them in 1780, 1781, and 1782 (58). The town of Northumberland was abandoned and not re-occupied till 1784 (59). The settlers north and west of the river left their habitations in the winter of 1779-80, and the history of this section of Northumberland County is a blank till 1784—the assessment-books for Bald Eagle, Potter and Muncy Townships in 1782 show that there were no inhabitants in those districts at all. In fact, Armagh Township, Cumberland County, became the new frontier (60). South of the river, the remaining inhabitants of the county met at Sunbury in 1782, and decided that there was nothing to do but seek safety from the Indians in flight (61). Many residents went beyond the Blue Mountains to the neighborhood of Carlisle in Cumberland County, among them Lieutenant John Boyd, formerly of the Twelfth (King's companion in arms). Boyd commanded the Frontier Rangers until his capture by the Indians in a foray on the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River (61a). King, likewise, took his family to Carlisle, where he, too, joined the Frontier Rangers—the service for which Washington had dispatched him and his ill-fated captain. And until the end of the war in 1783, he did duty on this force (61b).

His name appears as a taxable in West Pennsboro Township, Cumberland County, in the years 1780-1782 (62); and it was in or near Carlisle, in that county, that his son, Thomas, was born October 24, 1780 (63).

In 1784, peace being restored and the Indians quieted, he returned to his home in Northumberland Town, and
there his next child, Samuel, was born June 2, 1784 (64).

On July 1st of that year three hundred acres of land in the “Last Purchase” from the Indians were surveyed for him; and on February 22, 1785, an additional tract of four hundred acres (65). Then he seems to have started to clear one of these tracts, for his name is found in 1785 among the taxpayers residing in Bald Eagle Township, marked as a tenant of John Fleming (66), and in 1788 he is in Lower Bald Eagle Township, above the head of Great Island, at Parr’s (67), and again in 1793 (68). In 1794 his name is set down as a warrantee of four hundred and two and one-half acres of land in the Last Purchase (59). While he was living on or near Great Island, a daughter, Elizabeth, was born April 19, 1788 (70).

It was in this neighborhood that the “Walker Tragedy” occurred, which was to alter the course of his life. The savages had killed and scalped John Walker in 1781. Nine years later, in the month of June, Walker’s three sons met a couple of Seneca Indians at Stephenson’s Tavern near the mouth of Pine Creek, where the Redmen got drunk. The older of the two threw himself on the floor of the inn, and went through some outlandish performances, making the most horrible grimaces and contorting his face in a sickening way. Then he got up and said to the Walkers: “That is the way your father acted when I scalped him.” The Walkers were, naturally enough, outraged. But the presence of their neighbors kept them from resenting the affront then and there. The same evening, however, in company with a friend named Doyle, they tracked the Indians up the creek to their camp, murdered them in cold blood and sank their bodies in the stream, from which a freshet soon afterwards washed them ashore. Robert King lived hard by, and made information of the crime before a magistrate. Warrants were issued for the murderers; but the Walkers, forewarned, fled the country. Doyle was arrested. His trial caused great excitement among the frontiersmen. Crowds of his partisans, who justified the homicide, attended Court and threatened to rescue him if he were found guilty. Of course he was acquitted.

When the news of the killing of their fellow-warriors reached the Senecas beyond the mountains, they were
greatly incensed, and began to put on their war-paint, and get ready for a raid on the white settlers in Pine Creek valley (71). It was in some such way as this, that Indian "wars" often started; and the more cool-headed among the whites, who felt they had already suffered a-plenty from the depredations of the savages, made up their minds to put a stop to further hostilities. Some half hundred of the settlers, including Robert King, met at Great Isle on Independence Day, 1790, and drew up a petition to the State authorities. They told in it of their failure to arrest the Walkers and the fears of the neighborhood of Indian reprisals—fears so great, that for a score of miles round frontier families were then abandoning their homes. And they besought the Supreme Council to make a new treaty with the Senecas, and in the meantime to give them military protection.

President Mifflin of the Council was much exercised by the disturbance; he laid the matter before that body on July 9th, and they offered a reward of $800 for the arrest and conviction of the Walkers, and decided to make an earnest effort to conciliate the Senecas. They ordered dispatches to be sent to the Indians expressing the Government's utter condemnation of the crime, and their fixed resolution to punish the guilty. And with these dispatches they sent a copy of the Proclamation offering the reward for the apprehension of the accused (72).

To carry these tidings through the wilderness to a tribe of savages roused to the point of fury by the murder of their kin, was a task fit for a "brave soldier and good woodsman." The Council had directed that a "trusty and intelligent man" should be engaged, says Mifflin. The choice fell on Robert King. And he, comments Mifflin, "Notwithstanding the obvious hazards, undertook the charge with cheerfulness and performed it with such alacrity, propriety and success, that he may be considered a Principal in preventing a war." (73)

King with his relatives, Captain Lee, (73-a) traveled over a hundred miles through the virgin forests to the Indian town of Canandaigua, which they reached on August 14th. Here King delivered Mifflin's dispatches to the chiefs of the nation, and made intercession with the famous Chief, Corn-
planter, to head off the threatened war party (74). In his pow-wow with the Sachems, tradition relates, he asserted that the whites were the true friends of the Indians; and when a chief asked to be informed when any of the Palefaces had ever done a kindness to a Redman, King arose and told how once, when he was out hunting, he had run across a young Seneca, lost and almost starved to death, and how he had divided his stock of food with him and guided him back to the Indian's camp. A messenger was sent to fetch in this young Indian; when he arrived, he at once recognized King as his deliverer; and then the warriors made great demonstrations of respect and goodwill, and acceded to the white men's plea for peace. (75) And King went back to Mifflin at Philadelphia bearing the wampum-belt of friendship and messages of amity. (75-a)

Some of his neighbors seem to have been more implacable than the Indians. Walkers' and Doyle's adherents and relatives were numerous, and their resentment was bitter against the prosecutor of the murderers and the preventer of Indian reprisals. Mifflin says (76) King's life was "menaced, and through the dread of assassination, after the loss of a crop, and the dispersion of his family", he was obliged to quit his home on Pine Creek.

When, however, the first General Assembly under the Constitution adopted in 1790, met in February, 1791, Mifflin, now become Governor, took occasion to call their attention to King's services and sufferings in the cause of peace and to recommend the propriety of remunerating him. (77) And accordingly an act was passed, "To Compensate Robert King" (3 Smith's Laws, p. I.) : it was signed by William Bingham, first Speaker of the House, and by Richard Peters, first Speaker of the Senate, and approved by Governor Mifflin on March 21, 1791.

The statute tells briefly of King's actions, and directs the Governor to draw an order on the State Treasurer for one hundred and thirty-nine pounds, three shillings and ten pence, to be paid to King for his services from July 18th to October 3d, 1790. Then it empowers the Governor to grant a patent to King and his heirs forever for a tract of land situate in the Ninth District of Donation Lands, adjoining the South end of a tract reserved for the State on
The East branch of French Creek, the tract to contain 400 acres, and to be “granted in him clear of all expence.”

The money grant, if regarded as compensation only for time spent, is equivalent to rate of nearly forty shillings a day. As the ordinary unskilled laborer was, in that age, considered well paid at two shillings a day (77-a), the State’s appropriation meant, then, as much as an allowance of $60.00 per diem would now. The gift of the land evidenced the appreciation of the Commonwealth in being saved from an Indian War.

The Ninth District of Donation Lands lay along the Southern tier of townships in what is now Erie County. It was bounded to the North by the Triangle purchased from the United States in 1792 to give Pennsylvania access to a Lake Erie harbor. On the tract next King’s, reserved for the State, Fort LeBoeuf was to be built and garrisoned with a small troop of soldiers, nearness to whom would afford the settlers some protection against the Indians and therefore add to the value of his lands.

Nor were the Senecas forgotten by the State. The Walkers had not been apprehended. And the State now gave the sum of money offered for their conviction—eight hundred dollars—to the tribe whose members; the fugitives had slain. By the Act of February 1, 1791, that amount was granted to Cornplanter, Halftown and Big Tree, their chiefs, in trust for the Seneca nation, and these Sachems, a week later, left Philadelphia, expressing their satisfaction with the Government’s liberality. (78)

It was not till four years had passed, however, that the Governor had occasion to complete the grant to King. For the grantee had to have his tract surveyed before the patent could issue. And as the United States were at war with the Ohio Indians, and the Erie lands lay close to the scenes of their activity, white settlements in that country were taboo. General St. Clair’s defeat—a disaster second only to Braddock’s—on November 4, 1791, checked all plans for migration. (79) The Supreme Court judicially ruled that it was totally unsafe to move families west of the Allegheny River until the year 1796. (80) But General Wayne’s great victory at Fallen Timbers in 1794 cleared the way for the pioneer; and on March 4, 1795, King re-
ceived from Mifflin's hands the State's patent for four hundred and seventeen acres of land in what is now Le Boeuf Township, Erie County—which was duly enrolled in Patent Book No. 17 page 382 in the Rolls Office of the Commonwealth.

Before this he had made all his preparations for departure, first selling the Northumberland lands he held to George Eddy on March 24, 1794 (81): then, to have a survey made of his land-grant he set off in the summer of 1794 on a three hundred mile trek through the woodlands of the Northwest. His journey started near Lock Haven, and ran for half its course along the line afterward appropriated by the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad—up the Susquehanna to the Sinnemahoning, up that creek and the Driftwood Branch, over the Indian trails a few score of miles across the foothills of the Alleghany Mountains to the Ohio watershed. Sometimes, at his camps, his surveying habits would assert themselves, and with a marking-iron he would cut his name and the date of his encampment on beechtrees. While making the first exploratory survey for the railroad, forty-four years later to the day, his grandson (who wrote an account of this journey) (82) on July 17, 1838, found, near the town of Sheffield, Warren County, one of these blazes—"Robert King, July 17, 1794." At this camp the voyageur made a canoe out of a pinetree, and in it he and his "attendant man" paddled down the Tionesta River to the Allegheny, up that stream to French Creek, and then up it to a point afterwards known as "King's Bridge," a short distance South of the present Borough of Waterford, Erie County. From there he went over the French Road to Fort Presque Isle, now the City of Erie, and found the Deputy Surveyor, Thomas Rees, in a tent, with a squad of soldiers to guard him against the Indians. With Rees' instruments, King himself made his survey, marking the lines by blazing the trees, and having plotted his grant, back he went to Northumberland County, this time varying his route by going down the Allegheny, up the Kiskiminetas (where, in August, 1794, he again left his autograph on a beech tree) and over the Hollidaysburg Portage. His patent granted according to survey, in March, 1795, he moved West
again with wife and children by the Kiskiminetas route and arrived at Fort Le Boeuf May 15, 1795, escaping all the dangers which (as the Court afterwards found) then rendered settlements unsafe. Here, on his own land, he built a log cabin, generally believed to have been the first permanent home of a settler in Erie County. Here he was soon joined by Amos Judson and others, and here in 1797 came John Wilson, formerly of Newtownards, near Belfast, Ireland, whose daughter, Sarah, in the year 1800 married Thomas, son of Lieutenant King. (83)

In that year King dated his letter to Judge Huston from “King's Garden, to be put in the post-office at Pittsburgh.” He seems to have been fairly prosperous. Waterford became a busy place. Salt was then carted over the land portage from Erie, and near King's Bridge loaded on bateaux and floated down French Creek and the Allegheny to Pittsburgh. Before 1820 salt wells were opened on the Kiskiminetas, and this trade fell off and Waterford's decline set in. (84)

King sold 60 acres of his land grant to John Simpson in 1814 for $150; 82 acres to his son, Samuel, the same year, and in the following year 40 acres to his son, Thomas. In 1817 he and his wife conveyed 86 acres to their son, John, in consideration of an annual payment of $50 during the lives of the parents. (85)

On April 18, 1818, he appeared before Judge Moore of the Common Pleas Court at Erie and made affidavit to his application to the Federal Government for a pension, reciting his services in the Twelfth and under Col. Hartley. The application was granted, and he is listed as a pensioner in 1820 and 1825 (86), and a pension was paid to his widow, Elizabeth, till her death in 1840.

A leaf of his daybook is now in the possession of a greatgranddaughter. The entries in it seem to be principally of transactions with his sons and son-in-law. They illustrate the range of prices a century ago.

On March 4th, 1820, Peter Ford, a son-in-law is given credit “by 1½ bushel of oats...47c
“George W. King to one gallon of Whiskey...75c
and half pound tea...87½c
Robert King, Jr., to one pair of shoes...$2.50
Brown, farmer, to use of my canoe...........25c
3 July, 1820, "George W. King cr. at a settlement
in full of all acc'ts that stand charged against
him in this book twenty-four Dollars and ninety-
six cents..............................................$24.96

Robert King."

He died in 1826 and was buried on his own land. The
tombstone that for many years stood over his grave desig-
nated him as "Captain." There is no evidence that he ever
held such a commission. But doubtless he was often
addressed by that title, like other leaders in the new settle-
ments, and so he is commonly spoken of by his descendants.

No better epitaph could be found for his final resting
place than the commendation of his colonel:

"Robert King
Brave Soldier and Good Woodsman". (87)

REFERENCES AND NOTES

(1) Copy of Family Bible Record.
(2) Froude's The English in Ireland: Lecky's Ireland in the Eigh-
teenth Century, passim.
(3) C. A. Hanna's The Scotch-Irish, p. 177 et seq.
(5) Papers of Mrs. Chas. Himrod.
(9) C. A. Hanna, Scotch-Irish, vol. I, p. 82.
(10) Meginniss' History of Lycoming County, p. 61.
(11) History of the West Branch, p. 43.
(12) Linn's History of Centre County, p. 12.
(14) Buffalo Valley, pp. 35, 201.
(15) Doddridge's Notes, Chap. XI and I. Beveridge's John Marshall
(16) Linn's History of Centre County, p. 16.
(17) Buffalo Valley, p. 42.
(18) Buffalo Valley, p. 44.
(19) Buffalo Valley, p. 51.
(20) Warren's History of Cumberland County, pp. 28-29.
(21) Bell's History of Northumberland County, p. 519.
(21a) Deed Book "H" page 338 Northumberland County.
(22) Bell's History of Northumberland County, pp. 88, 89, 95.
   This writer has figured the percentage of Irishmen in that
   army at 35.83 per cent.
(25) When the State Courts assumed a jurisdiction over this district
   many years later, Chief Justice McKean inquired about the Fair
Play system from an old Irishman, Peter Rodney, who answered, "All I can say is, that since your Honor's Courts have come among us, fair play has ceased." Meginness History of Lycoming County, p. 205.

(28) Pension Application.
(30a) Pennsylvania Archives, 1st Series, Vol. V, p. 84.
(31a) St. Clair Papers, p. 29.
(31e) St. Clair Papers, p. 37.
(32) Winsor as above, p. 376.
(33) H. R. Johnston's Campaign of 1776.
(33a) St. Clair Papers, p. 382.
(34) Pension Application.
(34b) Linn's Buffalo Valley, p. 167.
(35a) Egle's History of Penna. Chester County, p. 523.
(37) Winsor as above, p. 381.
(38) Lafayette-Sparks Mss., transcribed through the courtesy of W. C. Lane, Harvard Librarian, June 27, 1921.
(39) Letter of Wilson King, Jr., May 5, 1921.
(40) Penna. Archives as above.
(41) Do.
(42) Do.
(43) Do.
(44) Winsor as above, p. 634.
(47) Meginness' West Branch, p. 217.
(48) Buffalo Valley, p. 155.
(49) Bell's Northumberland, p. 124.
(49a) Pension Application.
(50) Shimmell's Border Warfare in Penna, p. 99.
(51) Bell as above, p. 124.
(52) Do.
(54a) Egle's History of Penna, p. 1001.
(55) Buffalo Valley, p. 177.
(57) Winsor, as above, pp. 639, 643.
(57a) Jenkins, as above, Vol. II, p. 69.
(58) Shimmell, as above, pp. 118, 131, 139.
(59) Bell as above, p. 518.
(60) Linn's Centre County, pp. 20, 21.
(61) Shimmell as above, p. 139.
This John Wilson was a son of Hans Wilson who was the son of Nathaniel Wilson, all of Ireland, where the family had lived since the reign of Charles I. They were no kin to one, Woodrow Wilson, whose family came from Carlisle, England. An unusual story is told of John Wilson's wife's family: In the 17th century a certain William Warnick and Jane, his wife, at a watering place met another William Warnick and Jane, his wife, no known relatives of the first couple. Together they agreed that, if they had children, one a son, the other a daughter, the parents would bring them together; and so in time it happened that their children, William Warnick, Jr., and Jane Warnick, Jr., married. They had a daughter Elizabeth who married Hugh Bailey (an Englishman) and they had a daughter Elizabeth, born in 1740, who married John Wilson and was the mother of Sarah Wilson, who married Thomas King, and was the mother of Josiah Wilson, and Alfred King and others. Papers of Mrs. Charles Himrod and the two Wilson Kings.

Considerable confusion has arisen because of the existence of another Robert King, a native of Ireland, a resident of Northumberland County and a Revolutionary soldier. “John of Lancaster” writing in “Notes and Queries” (Harrisburg) 4th Series, Vol. I, p. 179, asserts that this other Robert King—here termed the “Lycoming King”—was on Hartley’s expedition and died in Lycoming County aged 90. This is incorrect, although W. H. Egle, in speaking of the 12th Regiment Lieutenant Robert King, repeats this error. This Lycoming King, was
The Life And Times Of Robert King

the grandfather of the wife of J. F. Meginness, the local historian so often cited above (see his History of Lycoming County, p. 1153), and whose son lived with Meginness when the latter wrote; the Lycoming King's grandson, Robert King Jr., was the subject of a biographical sketch in one of those histories. The historian of the West Branch makes no claim that his wife's grandfather held a commission in the 12th or any other regiment or took part in Hartley's expedition. Meginness, too, carefully omits the name of the "express" he records as having been sent by Mifflin to the Senecas in 1790, although his account of the Walker Tragedy is otherwise full. Doubtless, the Lycoming King was the co-hero with Covenhoven of the curious Indian capture (related in Sherman Day's Historical Collection p. 455) of the fruits of which, says Covenhoven, "the two poor provincials were cheated by the Continental officers" on their arrival at Sunbury. One of these officers was the Erie Robert King, as the Pension Application and Col. Hartley's report show.

This Lycoming King was assessed in Mahanoy and Lycoming Township, Northumberland County, in 1785-1786 (Archives 3rd, Series Vol. XIX, pp. 635, 680, 710 and 788) while at the same time the Erie King was assessed in Point (including the town of Northumberland) and Bald Eagle Townships, same county, (ditto pp. 468, 758).

The Pension Application and Family Bible entries giving the birthplaces of his several children should remove all doubt as to the matter of identity.