

It has been stated, near the close of the chapter on the Musgrove's Mill expedition, that Shelby and his associates on that service had agreed, that as soon as they could collect the necessary force, they would embody their several detachments, and attack Ferguson. It was correctly anticipated that so soon as that British leader and his forces should exhaust the beef supply in the Spartanburg region, he would be quite certain to advance into Rutherford and Burke Counties, in North Carolina, where, in the latter especially, there were large stocks of fine cattle; and it was enjoined on Colonel Charles McDowell, to devise the best means possible to preserve these stocks from the grasp of the British and Tories.

Colonel McDowell called the leading men of the Upper Catawba valley together, and suggested, simply to meet the present emergency, that they should repair to Gilbert Town, take British protection, and thereby save the Whig stock, so necessary for the support of the country, from being appropriated by the enemy; that no man would thereby become a Tory at heart, but would merely exercise a wise stroke of public policy—that the end would justify the means and render the country a good service. Daniel Smith, afterwards Colonel, Captains Thomas Lytle and Thomas Hemphill, Robert Patton, and John McDowell, of Pleasant Garden—better known as Hunting John McDowell—absolutely refused to engage in any such course, and stated that they would drive all the stock they could collect into the deep coves at the base of the Black Mountain; that others might, if they would, take protection and save the remainder that could not be readily collected and concealed. Captain John Carson, a distinguished Indian fighter, afterwards known as Colonel Carson, Benjamin and William Davidson, and others, were designated to take protection, and thus save many valuable herds of cattle from the grasp of the enemy.* It was a very ungracious act on their part;