

Robert B. Barker, Atty.
P. O. Box 579
Andrews, N. C. 28901

March 30, 1963

Hon. David Leroy Corbitt
1207 Cowper Drive
Raleigh, North Carolina.

Re: Maj. Gen. John Charles Fremont
The "Pathfinder" & c.

Dear Dave:

Regarding our exchange of letters of the 25th & 27th March, relative to my trip south, I may be delayed leaving here and in view of the fact that the documents, map and papers regarding a proposed article in the North Carolina Historical Review, are quite voluminous, I have decided to send them on to you, by separate cover, direct from the Archives, in order to give you some time to study over the records, and this will enable you to be in a position to discuss the matter, and you might, in the meantime, sound out the NCHReview, to ascertain possibility of publication, if you think such action advisable.

Dave, I am almost certain, that since no source of reference, I have been able to find, (and I enclose zerox facsimiles of several) on General John Charles Fremont, refers to his tour of duty in 1837-1838, of the Cherokee Territory in North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee, following the Treaty of New Echota of December 29, 1835, providing for the Removal of the Cherokee Indians, that few persons, if any at all, in North Carolina, are aware of General Fremont's connection with this survey.

I may be in error, but it does seem to me, that the fact that the first Governor of California, who seized most of that State from Mexico, without firing a shot in 1846; first U. S. Senator from California, after that State was admitted to the Union 1850 (as a Free-Soil Democrat); first candidate for President of the United States on the Republican Ticket in 1856 (being defeated by Buchanan 174 to 114 elect. votes and 1,838,169 to 1,341, 264 popular votes); Major General of Union Volunteers, May 14, 1861 by appointment of Pres. Lincoln; Governor of Arizona Territory, &c &c., started out his meteoric career as the later celebrated "Pathfinder" in Western Carolina in 1837 at the age of 24, apparently as a civilian employee of the U. S. Army Topographical Engineers under Captain William George Williams, also a native of South Carolina, (and a West Point graduate of 1824, who was mortally wounded on 21st September 1846, in the Battle of Monterey, Mexico,) would be of interest to the readers of the NCHReview.

You will note from Heitman's Register of U. S. Army Officers, that Fremont was first commissioned as a 2nd Lt. of Top. Engineers 7th July 1838, some months after Captain Williams had made his 34 page report from Ft. Butler (Murphy, N. C.) 8th February 1838. On page 34, Captain Williams mentions the valuable service rendered by Fremont and others on the survey of the Cherokee Territory in Western Carolina.

Captain Williams' "memoir" of 34 pages to the War Department, to which was attached the large map, photostat of which I send separately with the other documents, is in my opinion, a classic example of faithful duty to details and might warrant publication in full, in the NCHReview.

I believe the contents of this memoir would be of wide interest in the Western Counties of North Carolina since it has not, insofar as I can ascertain, ever been published and same does contain a great deal of interesting and historical information.

Before leaving Captain Williams, please note among the zerox facsimile documents sent, a reproduction of the original letter of September 25, 1846, bearing the personal signature of Maj. Gen. Z. Taylor, U. S. A., in which he reports, in the last paragraph, just above his signature, the death of Captain Williams.

General Zachary Taylor, a Louisiana Whig, was elected President of the United States in 1848 and served 1 year and 4 mos., of a four year term, dying in office on July 9, 1850. He was a native of Va. He defeated Lewis Cass (Democrat) and Martin Van Buren of New York, (Free Soil).

I have taken the liberty of attaching some notes of explanation to the large map and to Captain Williams' memoir, &c.

Since I might be delayed leaving here, I wish you would write me, after you have made a study of the matter, if in your opinion, the NCHReview would consider publication of these papers.

With kind regards and best wishes, I am

Your devoted friend,

Robert B. Barker

P. S. On reading your letter again, I would prefer to meet you at your home in the afternoon of the day I arrive, from Danville, Va., and, as you suggest, this will give me an opportunity to meet Mrs. Corbitt.

On an after thought, Dve, when I first came on these papers, I questioned the staff in the Map Division of the National Archives, if this "C. Fremont" or J. C. Fremont" was actually General John Charles Fremont, the celebrated "Pathfinder" &c., and was assured that they were identical and I was shown the 13 books of Field Notes of the Cherokee Survey, filed in the Records of the General Land Office, which seemed to settle the matter beyond doubt. Fremont surveyed the road from Ft. Butler to Co Co Creek (Coker Creek), shown on the map as Unaka Road, (built by the British in 1756 or earlier) to Fort Armistead in present Monroe County, Tennessee, a few miles from the North Carolina line, tho his survey, by the map, seems to end at the Tennessee State Line.