

ious months, however, passed away, and still he failed to join them. The mails in those days were slow and precarious, and it was, perhaps, autumn before Benjamin heard of their arrival at Cape Girardeau. He then started on horseback through the wilderness for Missouri. He was last heard of crossing the Mississippi to its west bank, at or near the mouth of the St. Francis river, on Christmas day, 1809. It has always been assumed that he was thereabouts murdered for a sum of money he was believed to have had with him, though he may have been lost, and have perished in the almost uninhabited wilderness, which then stretched over eastern Arkansas. His failure to reach Cape Girardeau led to the family permanently remaining in that place.

The following correspondence throws light on Benjamin's character and career :

FROM BENJAMIN SCRIPPS TO WILLIAM SCRIPPS, MORGANTOWN, VA.

CAPE GIRARDEAU, July 23, 1801.

*Dear Parents:*

This being the first opportunity I have had of writing to you since June, 1800, which letter, I hope, came safe to you. It gives me great uneasiness that I have not received a single letter since I left home, though I have heard of and seen several that have come down from Monongalia, in particular a Mr. Dial from Western Port on the North Branch. He was in Morgan Town about the middle of March, and was at Mr. Crear's till he started. He was followed by his son-in-law, a Mr. Bayley, and his family a few weeks after. Since that time Sommerville the pedler & two of the Cunninghams from the forks of Cheat, but I expect you have not been apprised of their coming. I had a slight spell of the fever & ague last summer while at Mr. Ramsey's, which place I left last August, & engaged to crop with one Conly this summer. In the course of last winter I cleared 10 acres of land and planted it in corn this summer, together with about six acres more, the whole of which I laid by on the 9th of July in a very promising condition, & am to have  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the new &  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the old ground, which, as soon as I can sell, I propose to go down to